

Saint Raymond Nonnatus Cardinal Saint of the Mercedarian Order

Saint Raymond Nonnatus was born at the end of the twelfth century in Portell, Catalonia, Spain. According to tradition, he was taken from the womb of his mother by cesarean section following her death, hence, his name Nonnatus, which means not born. For this same reason he has often been designated the patron saint of expectant mothers, the unborn and of Christian families.

As a child, Raymond had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and frequently used to visit her shrines. To deepen this filial love and devotion, in 1221 he entered the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy, founded by Saint Peter Nolasco in 1218 to ransom Christian captives. Raymond received the white Mercedarian habit and made rapid progress in the religious life so much so that he was soon sent to carry out the work of redemption. Sent to Algiers, Africa, he bought the freedom of many Christian captives with the alms gathered for that purpose by his fellow friars, and when money failed he gave himself as a hostage.

His zeal in preaching the Christian faith brought him so many converts that the Moslems, angered by his success, imprisoned him. To prevent him from preaching Christ, his captors pierced his lips with a red-hot iron and closed them with a padlock. However, this failed to impede Raymond from preaching for he received the miraculous gift of speech even though his lips were locked. After several months of this torture, another Mercedarian arrived to ransom Raymond and other captives. After his return to Spain, he was elevated to the College of Cardinals, with the titular

church of Saint Eustace, by Pope Gregory IX in 1239 and was called to Rome to receive his insignia of a cardinal from His Holiness. Raymond made it as far as Cardona, Spain, where he became gravely ill. According to the best Mercedarian tradition, before dying, Raymond was privileged with a vision of Our Lord who comforted him and gave him Holy Viaticum

Raymond's body was carried to the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lerida, Spain, where he used to pray as a youth. Afterwards a church was built in his honor there, the Sanctuary of Saint Raymond Nonnatus, which soon became popular place for pilgrimages.

In 1657 Pope Alexander VII placed Raymond's name in the Roman Martyrology. His immemorial cult was approved in 1625 and the celebration of his feast was extended to the universal Church in 1677. His feast is celebrated August 31st.

Many people, particularly expectant mothers, have experienced his miraculous intercession throughout the centuries. Saint Raymond is the patron of pregnant mothers, especially those experiencing difficulties. He is a heavenly advocate for Christian families and a zealous protector of the unborn.

Lord, Father Almighty! The family is the most ancient institution of humanity, for it is as old as man himself. But because it is your own institution and the only means by which man can come into this world and develop to the greatest perfection, the forces of evil are assaulting it, causing mankind to despise this basic unit of Christian civilization. In suicidal fury they seek to deal it a mortal blow. Let them not succeed, Lord, in their destructive designs on the Christian family. Through the intercession of Saint Raymond Nonnatus, advocate in heaven for the happiness, welfare, and peace of Christian families, we beg you to hear our prayers. By the merits of this great saint grant that our homes may ever be modeled after the Holy Family of Nazareth. Let not the enemies of Christian family life triumph in their sacrilegious attacks, but rather convert them to the truth for the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Prayer for Christian Families

Pray for me, Saint Raymond Nonnatus, and bless me with your protection in my hour of need. Intercede that I may have the joy of bearing a healthy child, who will be a good Christian and faithful member of the Church.

May I be given the grace to be a loving Catholic mother so that together with you and our mother of Mercy, we may praise the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our heavenly home forever. Amen.

Prayers for the Unborn

Saint Raymond Nonnatus, the Church honors you because of your love and powerful intercession with God. Since you were brought into this world through cesarean birth following your mother's death, intercede for those unborn children whose parents are considering the sin of abortion.

Saint Raymond, throughout your life you ransomed Christians from captivity and slavery. Through your powerful intercession, may God liberate those infants whom the waters of baptism will never claim as freely adopted children of God.

By your witness, you taught that love consists in helping others on their way to salvation. Inspire Christian mothers to realize the sanctity of the human life they carry within their bodies. May they have the courage and strength to choose life and not yield to the deadly sin of abortion.

Pray, also, for the conversion of all that advocate the taking of life, disregarding the human dignity of each person.

Inspire our nation to uphold the sacredness of all life and to promote Christian family life by assisting parents in their vocation of cooperating with God to bring forth-new life into our world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

In the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy, commonly known as the Mercedarians, there is an ancient tradition to **ble^ss water** in honor of Saint Raymond Nonnatus, to be used by expectant mothers during childbirth. In addition to this sacramental, the Order has **special blessings for expectant women** and **ble^ssed candles** in honor of this saint. These may be obtained from any Mercedarian community listed below, and in particular, by writing:

Saint Raymond Nonnatus Guild

Mercygrove

7758 East Main Road
LeRoy, NY 14482-9701
716-768-7110
mercygrove@aol.com



St. Rocco Parish
3205 Fulton Road
Cleveland, OH 44109-1495
216-961-8331



Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish
6928 Detroit Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44102-3093
216-651-5043



Monastery of O.L. of Mercy
6398 Drexel Road
Philadelphia, PA 19151-2596
215-877-4858



St. Peter Nolasco Residence
5650 7th Avenue, North
St. Petersburg, FL 33710-7112
727-343-1571



Church of the Transfiguration Parish
4000 43rd Street, North
St. Petersburg, FL 33714-4335
727-525-0262



St. Raymond Nonnatus

PATRON SAINT OF
EXPECTANT MOTHERS
CHRISTIAN FAMILIES
THE UNBORN