



ST. MARK JI TIANXIANG (1834-1900)
Patron saint of all addicts and those who can't receive the sacraments
Feast day: July 7

While we are faced with a current opioid epidemic, we should remember one saint who was addicted to the drug and couldn't overcome it before his death — St. Mark Ji Tianxiang.

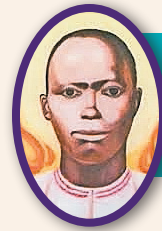
He was a Christian leader in China and a doctor known for serving the poor. When he was plagued with a stomach ailment, he treated himself with a popular medicinal drug at the time, opium. However, he quickly became addicted.

He battled his addiction, confessing often, but was unable to overcome it. His confessor did not understand addiction at the time and thought

St. Mark Ji had no desire to conquer this sin. He eventually told St. Mark Ji not to return since he could not fulfill the requirements for confession.

St. Mark Ji suffered from addiction for 30 years and was unable to receive the sacraments when he attended Mass. Instead of growing bitter, he continuously showed up to Mass and prayed to die a martyr's death, believing it was the only way he could be saved.

In 1900, the Boxer Rebels in China arrested and killed him and his family for not denouncing Christianity. It is believed St. Mark Ji died while singing the Litany of Loreto.



ST. BRUNO SSERUNKUUMA (1856-1886)
Patron saint of those who are tempted by excessive drinking, violence, lust, and those who are not properly married in the Church
Feast Day: October 6

As the son of a Buganda kingdom chief, St. Bruno Sserunkuuma struggled with temptation from a young age. Born in 1856 in Uganda, St. Bruno had a cruel and violent temper and was known as a drunk.

He managed to control his rage and was eventually found to be worthy of being baptized into

the Catholic Church. Although he later found himself in a sinful and illegal marriage to two women, he was encouraged by friends to confess his sins.

He ultimately devoted himself to prayer, penance, and doing works of mercy. He even offered to die for Christ.



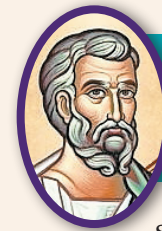
ST. MONICA (332-387)
Patron saint of homemakers, married women, mothers, abuse victims, alcoholics, and widows.
Feast day: Aug. 27

St. Monica, while known as the prayer warrior for her son, Augustine, also had her own weakness to overcome — alcohol. In fact, she might be the first recorded alcoholic in history, as St. Augustine documented her struggles with the drink in his book "Confessions."

Once St. Monica was old enough, her mother asked her to fetch wine to have at lunch with their maidservant. St. Monica used to sneak a few sips as she filled up the jar. As she got used to the taste, she gradually started to add more wine, eventually filling her own cup to the rim.

The maidservant laughed it off until one day St. Monica was reprimanded. "It is not for a wine-bibber like you to find fault with me," the maidservant said. St. Monica was mortified and saw the consequences of her actions. She never drank again.

This self-denial and resolve to overcome the addiction helped her in her perseverance when praying and fasting for her family. In addition to her son's conversion, her pagan husband, Patricius, also converted and was baptized. Monica had two other children and is an example to all wives and mothers who pray often for their family members.



ST. MATTHIAS (AD 10-AD 80)
Patron saint of carpenters, tailors, those with smallpox, and in prayers for perseverance and hope.
Feast day: May 14

St. Matthias is the patron saint of all who struggle with alcohol addiction because he preached the need for self-control.

After Jesus died, St. Matthias was chosen to replace Judas as one of the 12 disciples.

He would then go on to spread the Gospel around the world and encourage people to suppress their own desires in order to experience the joy of the Holy Spirit.

THE GOOD & THE SAINTLY

The Patron Saints of Addiction

by Melissa Butz Corsi and Raquel DeLuca



“Saint” and “addiction” aren’t commonly used in the same sentence, but along with overcoming attachment to sin, some saints also had to gain control of addictions to drugs or alcohol. Their perseverance and dedication to mastering their weaknesses are two aspects that helped lead them down the path of sainthood.



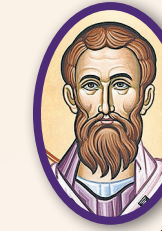
FOR A LIST OF RESOURCES PLEASE VISIT: [DIOCESEOFBROOKLYN.ORG/ADDICTION-RECOVERY-MONTH](https://dioceseofbrooklyn.org/addiction-recovery-month)



ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE (1894-1941)
Patron saint of drug addicts, people with eating disorders, families, journalists, amateur radio operators, prisoners, and the pro-life movement
Feast day: Aug. 14

Saint Maximilian Kolbe is often remembered for being a selfless and understanding person who was committed to helping those in need, even going as far as sacrificing his own life for a fellow prisoner in Auschwitz.

His compassionate nature was attributed to his struggles with addiction. By channeling his devotion to God and the Virgin Mary's intercession, he was able to not only walk the path of recovery and healing but help others battling addiction.



ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354-430)
Patron saint of brewers, printers, and theologians
Feast day: Aug. 28

St. Augustine of Hippo was a theologian, author, preacher, and bishop. However, he is also known for his life of pleasure, wealth and the pursuit of fame in his youth. He led an impure life of partying for years until he overheard a child say, "Take up and read."

Augustine picked up the Letters of St. Paul and read Romans 13, "Let us throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness."

From that moment on, he was a changed man.

About this time, he also befriended St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, who baptized him at age 33. St. Augustine became a priest at 36 and was ordained bishop of Hippo at 41. His writings and homilies left a lasting impression on the Catholic Church, and Pope Boniface VIII made him a "Doctor of the Church" in 1298.

Throughout his life, his mom, St. Monica, never wavered in her faith as a devout Catholic. She prayed daily for a conversion for her son, Augustine. It eventually worked. St. Augustine overcame his sins to live a life of chastity, sobriety, and excellence.



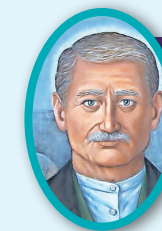
ST. PADRE PIO (1887-1968)
Patron saint of civil defense volunteers, stress relief, and adolescents
Feast day: Sept. 23

Padre Pio is the saint people pray to when they're stressed.

He is well known for his message to "pray, hope, and don't worry" — a significant message when fighting to overcome mental health challenges.

Having lived a life of suffering from acute illnesses and battles with demons, he offered himself to God as a victim to end World War I.

This caused him much depression, leading to him becoming the patron saint of healing, suffering, and pain.



VENERABLE MATT TALBOT (1856-1925)
Patron of alcoholics
Commemoration day: June 19

It wasn't unusual for children in 1800s Dublin, Ireland, to be expected to help support their families. So, being the second oldest of 12 children, the young Matt Talbot dropped out of school at just 12 years old to work for a wine merchant. By his early teens, he developed a dependency on alcohol, and by the time

he was 30 years old, he was an alcoholic.

When he was ready to clean up his act, he started attending daily Mass and praying the rosary. He passed away on Trinity Sunday on his way to church. Fifty years after his death, Pope Paul VI raised him to the rank of "venerable" on the road to canonization.