



# 15 MODERN SAINTS FOR *Teenage Girls*



Dedicated to Building strong  
Christ-centered families

**“THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HEARTS  
AND IN YOUR HANDS.”**



*“God is entrusting to you the task, at once difficult and uplifting, of working with him in the building of the civilization of love. Dear young people, let yourselves be taken over by the light of Christ, and spread that light wherever you are.”*

St. JOHN PAUL II



*“Remember that you are never alone, Christ is with you on your journey every day of your lives! He has called you and chosen you to live in the freedom of the children of God. Turn to Him in prayer and in love. Ask Him to grant you the courage and strength to live in this freedom always. Walk with Him who is ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life.’”*

St. JOHN PAUL II

# 1



## ST MARIANNE COPE

1838 - 1918

**M**arianne was born in Germany on January 23rd, 1838. When she was only a year old, her family immigrated to the US, to Utica, NY, and eventually became US citizens. In 8th grade, her father became crippled. As the oldest child, she went to work in the factories to support her family.

When she was 24 years old, she joined the Sisters of St Francis in Syracuse, NY. As a nun, she was a teacher, and then a principal. She was also involved in opening one of the first Catholic hospitals in NY. In 1883, she received a request from King Kalakaua, in Hawaii, to come and help care for the people with leprosy. Marianne and six other nuns went to Hawaii to work in a hospital caring for the sick and lepers. The extreme cases of leprosy were sent to Molokai where St. Damien was working in the leper colonies. She started a new hospital and a home for children who lost their mothers to leprosy.

In 1888 she moved to Molokai to take care of Fr. Damien, since he had contracted leprosy. She also took on all his work caring for the lepers there. She died on August 9, 1918. On May 14, 2005, Marianne was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI, and in October 2012, she was canonized as a saint.



## *Prayer*

*Lord Jesus, if I am ever presented with the opportunity to help those who are sick or alone, let me follow the example of St Marianne and rise to the occasion. Give me the integrity to always do what is right no matter how difficult.*

# 2

## ST ANGELA OF THE CROSS

1846 - 1932



### *Prayer*

*LORD, Help me to follow the example of St Angela of the Cross and find good friends who help me be a better person and help other people around me. Help me to be a person who inspires my friends to do good and helps those in need.*



**M**aría de los Ángeles Guerrero González was born in 1846, in Spain. Her family was quite poor, and both of her parents worked in a Monastery, her father as a cook and her mother as a housekeeper. She was barely able to go to school. When she was 12 years old, she went to work in a shoe repair shop to help support her family. She worked there until she was 29 years old. Angela's supervisor at the shoe repair shop was Antonia Maldonado, a devout lady who encouraged her employees to pray together, recite the rosary, and read about the lives of saints. Angela applied to be a nun a few times but was not allowed because of her delicate health.

Finally, the Daughters of Charity accepted her to their convent. She soon fell sick again and returned to the shoe factory to work and live at home. Angela had three best friends - two of the women were poor, and one was quite wealthy. They all believed in helping the poor, so together they rented a room downtown and fed and took care of the poor and ill.

It became so popular that they started a community of women who helped the poor, that later became the Sisters of the Cross. She became the director of the congregation and started 23 centers to help the poor and ill. She died in 1932, when she was 86 years old. She was canonized in 2003 by Pope St. John Paul II.



## ST CLELIA BARBIERI

1847 - 1870

Clelia was born in Italy, in 1847, to a poor family. She had a younger sister. Their father died when Clelia was just eight years old, and she went to work alongside her mother, spinning hemp to support the family.

At an early age, Clelia began to spend her time in contemplative prayer. She was raised in a deeply religious household and became a teacher's assistant when she was 14 years old. Clelia became such an inspirational leader in the community that the parish priest entrusted her with teaching and guiding young girls in Christian doctrine.

By the time she was 17, she rejected marriage offers, opting instead to lead a pious life and consecrate her life to God. Clelia eventually founded a group called the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows when she was only 21 years old.

She is the youngest founder of a religious community in the history of the Catholic Church. The group began to minister to the poor and sick in the community. Two years after founding the congregation, Clelia Barbieri died of tuberculosis, in 1870. There are now 35 centers of her group across Italy, India and Brazil. She was canonized by Pope St. John Paul II in 1989.





## *Prayer*

*Lord, help me to imitate the virtues of St Clelia and let me never doubt that you have big plans for me and my life. Don't let me be discouraged if people think I am too young to do important things for God. Help me remember that you are never too young to make an impact in your community.*



# 4

## ST FRANCES XAVIER CABRINI

1850 - 1917



### *Prayer*

*Lord, St Frances Xavier Cabrini helped so many children and people in her life. Let me be inspired by her energy and enthusiasm to do good and try to find ways to help improve the world around me. Give me courage like St Frances to not give up when obstacles come my way.*



**S**t. Frances was born in Lombardi, Italy, in 1850, one of thirteen children. At eighteen, she wanted to become a nun, but caught smallpox while helping people in her town and could not join right away.

She helped her parents until their deaths, and then worked on a farm with her brothers and sisters. When she was 24 years old, her parish priest asked her to help run a girls' orphanage, which she did for six years. At the request of her Bishop, she founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart to care for poor children in schools and hospitals. After hearing about the need of Italians who immigrated to the US, she decided to go to the United States with six nuns, in 1889, to work among the Italian immigrants. Soon after arriving, she opened her first orphanage in New York's *"Little Italy"*.

She had a deep trust in God and was also a great organizer and businesswoman. She soon founded schools and orphanages to help immigrants and children in New York, Nicaragua, and New Orleans. In 1892, she opened her first hospital in New York City where doctors would offer their services to the poor at no charge. She travelled west to Chicago, Denver, Seattle, and Los Angeles, founding schools and orphanages along the way.

In 1909 she became a citizen of the United States. On Dec 22, 1917, while working in Chicago with a group of nuns on a Christmas party for the kids in one of their orphanages, she had a heart attack and passed away.

She left a legacy of over 70 hospitals, schools, and orphanages, in England, France, Spain, the United States, and South America. In July 1946, she became the first American citizen to be canonized a saint.

# 5



## ST KATHERINE DREXEL

1858 - 1955

**K**atherine was born in Philadelphia, on November 26th, 1858. Her family was wealthy, and she and her sisters were educated by tutors, traveling around the US and Europe. Her father taught her that wealth was meant to be shared with those in need, so they would open the doors of their home 3 days a week to serve the poor. Katherine and her sisters also taught Sunday school and catechism to their neighbors and children of her father's employees.

When Katherine was 21, her stepmother was diagnosed with cancer and Katherine took care of her through three years of suffering. Katherine decided she wanted to become a nun and asked the bishop who told her to *"Think, pray and wait."* She and her two sisters went to Rome and had a private audience with the Pope, where she asked him to send missionary priests to the United States to help take care of the poor. The Pope responded, *"Why not, my child, yourself become a missionary?"* Katherine was confused because she thought being a nun meant praying, not doing missions. The Pope's words made her think about dedicating her life to God in a different way.

After their father died, Katherine and her sisters visited poorer areas in the United States. She realized the poverty they lived in and began building schools, providing food, clothing, and financial support. A Bishop approached Katherine and asked her to found a group of nuns who would help work with the poor people in missions in the US. She accepted and started the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Within the next 10 years, Katherine started several schools in New Mexico, Virginia, Arizona, and other parts of the Midwest and south.



## *Prayer*

*Lord, let me follow the example of St. Katherine and always try to use my talents to help those in need. You place inspirations and ideas in my heart to be creative and help the world. Let me act on them with courage and determination so that I too can make a difference in people's lives.*



# 6

## ST MARIA CHIARA

1872 - 1900

**C**elia Nanette was born on in 1872 in Italy. She was lively, joyful, and energetic, and was loved by her family and the people of the village. She was known to be a bit impulsive by nature, and an intelligent girl. She was also charming and beautiful, and so had many suitors.

However, she felt called to be a nun and missionary. When she was 18, she asked for permission to join the convent, but her parents asked her to wait a few more years. She did, even though she had a great desire to serve God. Her brother was a Franciscan, who helped her follow the path of her vocation, and introduced her to the Institute



of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. When she was 24, she joined the order and received the name Maria Chiara (Clare in English). She showed true missionary joy in all she did, being generous and self-forgetful, often too hasty but always ready to sacrifice for others.

A bishop from China came to Rome asking for a group of missionary nuns to return to China to help start orphanages, serve in hospitals, and spread the gospel. Maria Chiara's director agreed that a group of nuns would go, and they began to learn Chinese. When the group of nuns arrived in China, they began working right away in an orphanage with over 200 girls, while at the same time helping build a hospital. The people loved the nuns, and young women started to join their religious order.

Religious persecutions by the government began shortly after, and in fear for their lives, the Bishop encouraged the nuns to hide and dress like civilians instead of in their habits. Sister Chiara responded, *"Flee? No, we came here to exercise charity and to shed our blood for the love of Jesus Christ if need be."*

They refused to hide and leave the people. Shortly after, the bishops, priests, and the seven missionary nuns – including Sister Maria Chiara were imprisoned for their faith. A few days later, they were sentenced to death. Before they died, they embraced each other and sang a hymn to God. She was declared a martyr and canonized by Pope St. John Paul II in Rome in 2000.

## Prayer

*Jesus, help me learn from the example of St Chiara to be dedicated and committed in my desire to do good. Don't let me take the easy way out when it is offered to me. Let me do what is right.*

# 7

## ST GEMMA GALGANI

1878 - 1903



**G**emma Galgani was born in 1878, in a small Italian town. At a very young age, Gemma developed a love for prayer. Her mother and some of her siblings died from tuberculosis when she was still a child. As a pupil at the school run by the Sisters of St. Zita, Gemma was loved by her teachers and her classmates. She excelled in French, arithmetic and music. Although quiet and reserved, she always had a smile for everyone.

Throughout her life, Gemma was blessed with many mystical experiences and special graces. These were often misunderstood by others, causing people to make fun of her. Gemma suffered these moments by offering them up to God and remembering that Our Lord Himself had been misunderstood and ridiculed.

Gemma had an immense love for the poor and helped them in any way she could. After her father's death when she was 19, she took care of her seven brothers and sisters.

When some were old enough to share this responsibility, she lived briefly with her aunt. At this time, two young men proposed marriage to her. Gemma however, wanted to become a nun and dedicate her life to prayer



and the poor. She returned home and almost immediately became very ill with meningitis. Throughout this illness, her one regret was the trouble she caused her relatives who took care of her. Gemma was miraculously cured.

She still wished to become a nun, but her poor health prevented her from being accepted. She offered this disappointment to God as a sacrifice. When she was 25 years old, Gemma was diagnosed with tuberculosis. She died quietly, in the company of the parish priest. She was beatified in 1933, and canonized on May 2, 1940, only thirty-seven years after her death.



## *Prayer*

*Lord, let me turn to you when people make fun of me or don't understand me, like St. Gemma did. She took that suffering and offered it up to you in prayer, finding peace. You are my God and creator, who always understands me. Help me to not forget that.*



# 8

## **BLESSED LAURA VICUNA** 1891 - 1904

**L**aura was born in 1891, in Santiago, Chile. Her parents were wealthy aristocrats and her father was in the military. The Chilean Civil War of 1891 forced the family into exile, and they took refuge in a poor house in Temuco.

Soon after, her father died, and her mother fled with her two daughters to Argentina. Laura's mother went to work for a man named Manuel, at a hotel, so that she could pay for her daughters to go to school.

Laura and her sister soon entered a Catholic school, run by nuns, where Laura was taught a love for religion, and took a deep interest in the Catholic faith.

When she was 10 years old, she made her first communion, and told everyone she loved God and wanted to serve the poor and needy, and die without having sinned or hurt Him. She spent time daily in the school's chapel praying and told her best friend that she wanted to be a nun when she grew up. Even from a young age, Laura was mature enough to understand her mother's problems and the immoral situations her mother had to face every day. Her mother's boss, Manuel, became very possessive of Laura's mother and her sister. He tried to convince Laura to forget about becoming a nun, and threatened to stop paying her mother so she could not afford to send Laura to school.

When the nuns learned of the conflict, they gave Laura a scholarship. Although she was grateful to her teachers, she still worried about her mother's situation. In time, Laura became seriously ill with tuberculosis. Before she died, she told her mother, *"Mama, I offer my life for you, I asked our Lord for this. Before I die, would I have the joy of seeing you be closer to Jesus and not sin?"* Her mother agreed. On January 22, 1904, Laura died of her disease, weakened by the physical abuse from Manuel. She was only 13 years old. She was beatified by Pope St. John Paul II.



## Prayer

*Lord, help me to follow the example of Blessed Laura Vicuna and avoid sin at all costs. Give me the fortitude to stand up for what I know is right. Let me remember Lord to pray for my parents every day.*

# 9



## BLESSED DINA BELANGER

1897 - 1929

**B**lessed Dina Belanger was born in 1897, in Québec, Canada. Her mother and father were very charitable and would take Dina with them on their errands of mercy to the poor.

Her mother took her to daily mass and taught her to pray at an early age. She studied music and planned to become a concert pianist. While studying in a boarding school, she visited the nuns at a nearby convent and felt called to be one of them, but she was too young.

She was known for being kind, talented, and timid, but very devoted to prayer. She would encourage the other girls to come and make visits to the Blessed Sacrament with her.

Dina returned home, and although she spent time with friends and family, she dedicated time to prayer. She continued to show how talented she was at the piano and received the opportunity to go study at the conservatory in New York City.

While there, she stayed at 'Our Lady of Peace', a home run by the nuns of Jesus and Mary, which was founded to provide a safe place for girls and women coming to the big city to study or work. After her studies were complete, she returned home and started to investigate different orders of nuns because she felt called to a life of prayer.

To everyone around her, she was a normal young girl enjoying life. But she also had a very deep life of prayer and would frequently hear Jesus speaking to her heart.

She joined the Congregation of Jesus-Marie when she was 24 years old. As a nun, Dina Belanger taught music until she caught scarlet fever. On the request of the nun in charge of the convent, Dina began writing her autobiography and spiritual journey. Dina died in 1929, at the age of 32 of tuberculosis, and was beatified by Pope St. John Paul II in 1993.



## *Prayer*

*Jesus, help me to follow the example of Blessed Dina and use my talents and gifts to bring joy to those around me. Give me the strength to make time to pray every day so that I too can have a real friendship with God.*



# 10

## **BLESSED CHIARA BANDANO**

1971 - 1990

Chiara was an only child, born in Italy on Oct. 29th, 1971. Chiara seemed to have everything going for her as a teen. She had a loving, holy family, and a rock-solid faith that was nurtured by retreats and youth ministry programs.

She tried to go to mass daily. She was popular amongst her friends and was liked by boys. Chiara excelled at tennis, swimming, and mountain climbing. Her outgoing personality and adventurous spirit made everyone think Chiara had a bright life ahead of her.

When she was 17, one day while playing tennis she felt a strong pain in her shoulder. The doctors discovered it was bone cancer. She struggled through the pain of chemotherapy but was able to accept her disease and say “yes” to God’s plan for her life.

She went through surgery, which was unsuccessful, and she could no longer walk. One of her doctors remarked, *“Through her smile, and*



## Prayer

Lord, help me to follow the example of Blessed Chiara and be a light for my friends, leading them closer to God and always trying to do good. Help me to be grateful for my life and a joyful witness of my faith.

*through her eyes full of light, she showed us that death doesn't exist; only life exists."* A priest who visited her in the hospital asked her, *"The light in your eyes is splendid. Where does it come from?"* Chiara's reply was simple: *"I try to love Jesus as much as I can."*

Like any teenage girl, she loved her hair, but with each lock that fell out she'd pray, *"For you, Jesus."* Her best friend helped her prepare for her own funeral during the last summer of her life. She never cried or complained. She just prayed often. Chiara picked the songs and she picked a white dress because she felt as a bride going to meet Jesus. She died on Oct. 7th, 1990 and her last words to her mother were, *"Be happy because I am happy."* 2000 people attended her funeral.

11



## **BLESSED MIRIAM TERESA DEMJANOVICH**

**1901-1927**

**T**eresa Demjanovich was a 20th Century American girl born in Bayonne, New Jersey in 1901. She was the youngest of seven children and her parents moved to the United States from Eastern Slovakia. After high school, she wanted to join the Carmelites, but she had to take care of her sick mother. After her mother's death, she attended the College of St. Elizabeth in Convent Station, New Jersey, graduating in 1923. For a year she taught at the Academy of Saint Aloysius in Jersey City.

Two years later, in 1925, she decided to become a nun and joined the community of Sisters of Charity. As a nun, Teresa taught at the girls' school - the Academy of Saint Elizabeth. Her spiritual director, Father Bradley, asked her to write a series of conferences for the younger nuns. She wrote 26 conferences which, after her death, were





published in a book called *Greater Perfection*. She was admitted to the hospital in 1927 for appendicitis and died two days later because of complications when she was only 26 years of age.

Her life was short but she has been declared venerable because of her saintly life. In 2002, Pope Benedict XVI declared her life full of heroic virtue and we call her venerable. In 2013, Pope Francis declared her blessed thanks to a miracle attributed to her intervention. She was beatified at a ceremony on October 4, 2014, held at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, NJ. This was the first time a beatification had been held in the United States.

## *Prayer*

*Lord Jesus, help me to remember that my life is short compared to all eternity that I could be with you in heaven. Like Blessed Teresa, help me to be close to you and holy today, when I am young and not wait until later in life. Give me the grace to serve and help others.*

# 12

## BLESSED IRENE STEFANI 1891-1930



**A**urelia Mercede Stefani was born in 1891 in a small village in Northern Italy. She was the fifth of eleven children. Her mother died young so she took care of her younger brothers and sisters and worked avidly with the youth at her parish.

When she was twenty years old, she joined the Consolata Missionary Sisters in 1911 and she was trained in religious life as well as a nurse. In 1914, she took her vows as a sister and soon after was sent to Kenya. After a long and exhausting journey by ship, she arrived in Mombasa on January 1915.

World War I had already begun and because of her training in nursing, the British asked her to take care of the soldiers and Courier Corps who were wounded in the war both in Mombasa and Tanzania. As the war was ending she was able to join the Consolata missionaries to serve the people as a nurse. She worked there for 10 years. She gave herself, body and soul as a nurse giving healthcare, caring for the sick. Because of this loving service and total dedication,

the people of that area nicknamed her as “Nyaatha” which is a name translated as “a person of mercy”. There was an epidemic plague and Sr. Irene got sick soon after arriving in that area. She contracted the disease as she was treating one of the patients.

Out of love, faith, dedication, prayer and full obedience to God, she identified herself with the sick, the hopeless and the dying. She died in 1930 when she was only 39 years old. She was declared a Servant of God and later Blessed by Pope Francis.



## Prayer

*Lord, help me to follow the example Blessed Irene and try to reach out to people who are sick, suffering or lonely. Help me to realize that a friendly call or conversation can make a difference in someone's life. Let me be known in my actions as a merciful person too.*



# 13

## ST LUCY YI

1815- 1862

**L**ucy Yi was born in 1815 in China. Lucy was the youngest child in her family and very dedicated to prayer and God. When she was 12 years old, she decided she would consecrate her life to God. When she was 20 years old, she fell ill while in college.

After her recovery, Lucy took her spiritual life still more seriously. She knew she could not leave her family to become a nun because they needed her financial help. So, she prayed daily and worked to support them. After her father died, she lived with her brother and mother, using part of her time to teach the faith to children nearby. The parish priest asked her to teach at the school. He noticed her devotion and knowledge of her faith. After four years, her brother went to school to practice medicine, and Lucy and her mother moved with him. In Chongqing, the priest also asked her to help teach the women in the parish. When she was offered money for her work, she refused to take it and offered her work to God. She



wanted to do missionary work and join a convent, but her poor health forced her to move back home. She taught when she was able and went on mission trips.

In 1862, while on a mission trip in another province, the missionary group entered a region with encountered hatred and hostility towards Christians. The local governor hated Christians. He imprisoned and sentenced to death the priest and several missionaries with the group. Lucy was jailed and put on trial that very day, because she refused to renounce her faith. The following day she was executed.

Pope John Paul II canonized St. Lucy Yi and her companions, the Martyr Saints of China on October 1, 2000.

## Prayer

*Lord, help me to imitate the virtues of St Lucy in persevering in my faith and not being afraid to stand up for my beliefs. Every day I face people who don't understand or dislike Christianity. Let me be a witness of the love of God and Christian virtue.*

# 14

## BLESSED MARIA TUCI 1928- 1950



**M**aria was born in Albania in 1928. Catholics were a small minority in her country but still persecuted by the communist government after World War II.

Even in the midst of this reality, Maria loved her faith and wished to share it with others. She grew up going to Catholic school and thought about being a nun herself.

She became a teacher in the same school run by nuns. The children loved her and she would often spend her own money to buy them supplies. She was an example of faith, walking five miles to go to mass.



## *Prayer*

*Lord, Blessed Maria is a heroic example of forgiveness and faith. Give me the grace to be courageous, modest and dignified always. Help me to learn how to forgive those who hurt me emotionally or physically. Let me learn to teach others about my faith by the example of my life.*

In 1949, when she was only 21 years old, Maria was arrested for teaching in a Catholic school. In prison, she was treated horribly for her faith, humiliated and hurt by the prison guards. Despite terrible treatment in prison, she did not betray her faith and personal dignity.

She forgave her tormentors and the prison guards. After being injured in prison, Maria was admitted to the hospital. She died in 1950 from her injuries, holding a rosary in her hands. Before she died, she said “*I thank God because he gave me the strength to die free.*” She paid the ultimate price for her faith and religious freedom. She was beatified and declared blessed in 2016 by Pope Francis as a martyr.

# 15

## ST MARIA GORETTI 1890- 1902



**S**t. Maria Goretti was born in Italy in 1890. Her father died when she was young and her mother had to struggle to feed her children. Maria helped as much as she could in her family home to alleviate the burden for her mom. She was a fervent and devoted girl, who was an example of virtue in her community. She had a strong relationship with God and would often be found praying.

When Maria was just 12 years old, an eighteen-year-old neighbor, named Alessandro, tried to do impure things to Maria. When Maria said that she would rather die than consent, Alessandro stabbed her. As she lay in the hospital, she forgave Alessandro before she died. Alessandro was arrested and sentenced to thirty years in prison.

He stubbornly refused to repent, until one night, Maria came to him in a dream and forgave him. When he woke, he repented and lived a different life.

When he was released from prison, he went directly to Maria's mother to beg her forgiveness, which she gave. *"If my daughter can forgive him, who am I to withhold forgiveness,"* she said. Maria was declared a saint in 1950 and Alessandro was there at the canonization ceremony.





## *Prayer*

*Lord, let me follow the example of St Maria Goretti's modesty, purity and fidelity to God. She was courageous and heroic in her fight to remain pure. She is an example of forgiveness and prayer. Help me Lord to fight for my beliefs and not succumb to the temptations of the world.*





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