

**St. Bonaventure (O.F.M.) [1221, but some sources say 1217, – July 15, 1274]**

**Bishop and Doctor of the Church (Feast Day: July 15)**



Bonaventure, Franciscan, theologian, doctor of the Church, was both learned and holy. Because of the spirit that filled him and his writings, he was at first called the Devout Doctor; but in more recent centuries he has been known as the Seraphic Doctor after the “Seraphic Father” Francis because of the truly Franciscan spirit he possessed.

In 1221, he was born at Bagnoregio in Tuscany. He received the name of Bonaventure in consequence of an exclamation of St. Francis of Assisi, when, in response to the pleading of the child’s mother, the saint prayed for John’s recovery from a dangerous illness, and, foreseeing the future greatness of the little John, cried out “O buona ventura”- O good fortune!

At the age of twenty-two, Bonaventure entered the Franciscan Order. Having made his vows, he was sent to Paris to complete his studies under the celebrated doctor Alexander of Hales, an Englishman and a Franciscan. After the latter’s death, he continued his course under his successor, John of Rochelle. In Paris, he became the intimate friend of the great St. Thomas Aquinas. He received the degree of Doctor, together with St. Thomas Aquinas, ceding to his friend against the latter’s inclination, the honor of having it first conferred upon him. Like St. Thomas Aquinas, he enjoyed the friendship of the holy King, St. Louis.

In 1257, Bonaventure was chosen Minister General of his Order and restored a perfect calm where peace had been disturbed by internal dissensions. He did much for his Order and composed *The Life of St. Francis*. He also assisted at the translation of the relics of St. Anthony of Padua. He was nominated Archbishop of York by Pope Clement IV, but he begged not to be forced to accept that dignity. Gregory X obliged him to take upon himself a greater one, that of Cardinal and Bishop of Albano, one of the six suffragan Sees of Rome. Before his death, he abdicated his office of General of the Franciscan Order. He died while he was assisting at the Second Council of Lyons, on July 15, 1274.