



Saint of the Week

Peter Canisius

Feast Day—December 21
1521–1597



This Doctor of the Church was born in Holland and studied canon law in Belgium before turning to the study of theology in Germany. In 1543, after meeting St. Peter Faber, one of St. Ignatius of Loyola's companions, he entered the Society of Jesus and soon became a well-known preacher. He attended two sessions of the Council of Trent and was an important figure in the post-conciliar Catholic revival in Europe. After completing his doctorate, St. Ignatius assigned him to renew the Catholic faith in Germany. As the Jesuit provincial in southern Germany, Austria, and Bohemia, Peter Canisius started schools, colleges, and seminaries. He wrote three catechisms in German and is credited with keeping the southern German peoples Catholic.

"Characteristic of St. Canisius' spirituality was his profound personal friendship with Jesus. For example, on 4 September 1549 he wrote in his journal, speaking with the Lord: 'In the end, as if you were opening to me the heart of the Most Sacred Body, which it seemed to me I saw before me, you commanded me to drink from that source, inviting me, as it were, to draw the waters of my salvation from your founts, O my Savior.' Then he saw that the Savior was giving him a garment with three pieces that were called peace, love and perseverance. And with this garment, made up of peace, love and perseverance, Canisius carried out his work of renewing Catholicism. His friendship with Jesus—which was the core of his personality—nourished by love of the Bible, by love of the Blessed Sacrament and by love of the Fathers, this friendship was clearly united with the awareness of being a perpetuator of the Apostles' mission in the Church. And this reminds us that every genuine evangelizer is always an instrument united with Jesus and with his Church and is fruitful for this very reason."

—Pope Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, February 19, 2011



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