

Stewardship Saint for May: Saint Bernard of Montjoux

A JUAREZ | MAY 2, 2024



SAINT BERNARD OF MONTJOUX

Saint Bernard of Montjoux is the patron saint of hikers, backpackers, mountain climbers and alpine skiers. The accounts of his charity, hospitality, and courage on behalf of travelers in the Pennine Alps between Switzerland and Italy are renowned.

Although little is known of his early life, Bernard was thought to be born in Italy around 923. He studied for the priesthood and was ordained for the

Diocese of Aosta, which was in northwestern Italy at the foot of the Alps.

In time, Bernard was appointed Vicar General of Aosta, and spent more than four decades building churches and schools, evangelizing and exercising pastoral care over those who lived in the nearby mountains. He is especially remembered for the alpine monastery and hospices he built to aid travelers in the mountain passes leading to Aosta.

Since the most ancient times, there has been a path across the Pennine Alps used by French and German pilgrims on their way to Rome. The traditional route of this pass is covered with perpetual snow and drifts sometimes accumulate to the height of forty feet. The pass could be dangerous, especially in the springtime when avalanches occurred. For the safety of the pilgrims, Saint Bernard founded a monastery and established travelers' hospices; one at the highest point of the pass, 8,000 feet above sea level, in the year 962.

Bernard also established a religious community of men who rescued travelers, ministered to those who had fallen victim to mountain

hazards, and cleared the passes of bandits. At all seasons of the year, but especially during heavy snow storms, these heroic monks, accompanied by their well-trained herding dogs, went out in search of stranded travelers. They provided them with food, clothing, and shelter.

Even through the 20th century, Bernard's hospices were well known for the generous hospitality extended to all travelers over the Great and Little St. Bernard alpine passes, named in his honor.

Bernard was canonized in 1681, and then paid a unique tribute in the late 1800's when European dog breeders renamed their alpine herding and rescue dogs, the St. Bernard. His feast day is May 28.

May Stewardship Prayer

ICSC | MAY 2, 2024



Gracious and Loving God,

Gracious and Loving God, When your Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost, they spoke the languages of those who came to hear their testimony.

They proclaimed a new covenant in Christ Jesus, sanctified by his blood, bound by the Holy Spirit, and sealed in the waters of Baptism.

We give you thanks and praise for releasing your Spirit upon us; and in these anxious times pray that it will break through the many barriers that divide people.

Let your Spirit open our eyes as a communion of faith to your ongoing presence among us, so we can recognize you when we serve one another.

Let your Spirit open our minds so that we may gain the wisdom to work together to show love for our neighbors, and unite our talents to build a better, safer world.

And let your Spirit open our hearts so that together we can live more fully in Christ, shine his light of mercy and hope and prepare for the day of his glorious return.

We pray this through your son, Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen.