

The Feast of St Bartholomew, Apostle – Monday 24th August 2026:

Bartholomew (*also known as Nathaniel*) is initially sceptical of Philip's claim he has found the Messiah because He does not meet his expectations – how could the Messiah be a Nazarene? Philip, though, is undeterred, inviting him to '*come and see*', and that encounter with Christ is so authentic that Nathaniel is the first to make a declaration of faith in Jesus as the Son of God! Later, as an apostle, Tradition tells us, that Bartholomew brought the gospel to India and Armenia, where he was martyred for the faith. Faith is a response to an invitation to come and encounter the Lord: in the Church's people, liturgy, devotions and sacraments. We must ensure that the liturgy is celebrated with great reverence and devotion so people may see the Lord is present and that He is bringing about the work of our redemption.

Tuesday in 21st Week in Ordinary Time – 25th August 2026:

The Thessalonians are unsettled because some people have erroneously claimed a special charismatic gift and prophesied that the 'Second Coming' is imminent. They have been spreading their own ideas as if they came from God. Teaching on faith and morals must be consistent with sacred scripture and the tradition of the Church; we should avoid being led astray by unsound and unreliable teaching, just because it sounds nice. On some matters, like the date and time of the Second Coming, no one has the authority to determine these things, As Jesus said, '*we do not know the day or the hour of his Coming*'. The Church does teach that we should always be on watch, ready to joyfully meet the Lord. We should use today to co-operate with God's grace to grow in holiness. We should constantly thank God for having been chosen to be incorporated into the 'body of Christ', the Church; our gratitude an expression of joy.

Opt. Mem of Blessed Dominic Barberi of the Mother of God: Wed. 26th Aug. 2026:

Blessed Dominic Barberi was a Passionist priest who served English Catholics, contributing to the conversion of John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman, helping him see that the fulness of the Church '*subsists*' here in the Catholic Church. Passionists are aware that ecumenism is part of our mission, to accompany those adults who feel called to '*come home to Rome*', entering into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, but they will only do this if they find a sincere Eucharistic community that also looks outward into the wider community. And only when we demonstrate an intimate knowledge of Christ will others appreciate their destiny of sharing the divine life.

Memorial of St Monica, St Augustine's mother – Thurs. 27th August 2026:

Monica did not want worldly happiness for Augustine, but that he would give his life to God. Augustine lived a wayward life, not worthy of his baptism. Monica did not lose faith; she fasted, prayed and wept to God on his behalf. She asked the bishop for help in winning over Augustine. He counselled her to be patient, saying that *'God's time will come'*. Monica persisted in asking the bishop for help and he said: *'Go now, I beg you; it is not possible that the son of so many tears should perish'*. Monica followed Augustine to Italy, where she met Bishop Ambrose. He had a high opinion of her, for she was foremost among women in charitable works and in her devotions. She fell ill at Ostia and knowing her work was accomplished she told Augustine, that all she had wished for him, was for him to return to the Church and see him as a Catholic and a child of heaven. The daily example of her gentleness and kindness had its reward in seeing Augustine return to the Church and despite his earlier infidelities, he finally consecrated himself to God's service, becoming a great bishop and theologian.

Memorial of St Augustine of Hippo, Bishop & Doctor – Fri. 28th Aug. 2026:

Augustine loved Jesus but initially wandered far from him. As an intelligent man he searched for the Truth, attracted to a heretic called Mani, whose *'reason'* encouraged Augustine's sexual impropriety. These *'Manicheans'* promised a total rational religion, enabling him to maintain a dualistic lifestyle; enjoying worldly passions with the security of an organised religion. As Augustine grew in wisdom, he realized the truth of humanity was incomplete without Christ. In reading the scriptures, he had wrestled with the two disciplines of philosophy and theology, a reminder to us to keep our faith and reason in balance, two gifts that help us reach the Truth. Augustine struggled to reconcile the chaos he found in the Old Testament with the beauty he saw in philosophy's tight rhetoric. Augustine went to Milan to teach, where he met Bishop Ambrose, who helped him bring his faith and reason into balance. In opening the Old Testament for him, especially its typology pointing to Christ, he came to see him as the Eternal Logos, The Word made flesh who is found as the pinnacle of all philosophy.

The Passion of St John the Baptist – Saturday 29th August 2026:

John was executed because he spoke truth to power, having the courage to tell Herod that his union with his sister-in-law was wrong. We pray we have the courage to speak about the dignity of Christian marriage, even if this brings the condemnation of society.