

## Saint Dominic Savio

Born 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1842 in Castelnuovo near Turin, the second of ten children to Charles, a blacksmith, and Briget, a seamstress. His parents saw him always trying to bring joy to their hearts and a smile to their faces.

He could say his prayers by himself by the age of 4 and later attended Mass every day, if the Church was locked he knelt in front of the door and prayed whatever the weather. Served Mass from the age of five but was so small he could only move the missal if it was placed on the edge of the altar and he stood on tiptoe. Allowed to make his first Communion at 7 instead of 11 or 12, calling it "the happiest, most wonderful day of my life" and wrote four promises in a little book which became the principles by which he lived his life:

1. I will go to Confession and I will go to Holy Communion as often as I am allowed
2. I will try to give Sunday and Holy Days completely to God
3. My best friends will be Jesus and Mary
4. Death, but not sin.

He walked three miles to school each morning, never missing a day, whatever the weather and said "I am not alone: my guardian angel is with me." He only made friends with boys who were obedient and tried hard, not allowing himself to be drawn into trouble.

Don Caglieri asked Don Bosco to take Dominic to the Oratory when he was 12 and they met at the Becchi in October 1854. He couldn't wait to know how he had done and when Don Bosco said he could become a beautiful garment for Our Blessed Lord, Dominic's response was "Wonderful! I am the cloth and you are the tailor. You will work on me to make something beautiful for Jesus". He already knew he wanted to be a priest.

Two years later he was inspired by a talk on sainthood and told Don Bosco "I feel that I must become a saint." His name Dominic meant belonging to God, and he was taking it literally.

He had a special devotion to Mary and co-founded the Company of Mary Immaculate, meeting weekly to say the rosary and litany. He raffled a book he had been given to raise his share of the cost for a dormitory altar to her.

He undertook various penances until strictly forbidden.

One day he attended Mass but then missed breakfast, lessons and dinner. He was found standing motionless in the chapel behind the high altar saying "Is Mass over".

With his declining health he was reluctant to be sent home, wanting to end his days at the Oratory but left on 1<sup>st</sup> March having made the Exercise of Happy Death and said goodbye to his companions. His last words to Don Bosco were "please pray for me that I may die a holy death: and goodbye until we meet again in heaven". He had spent three years at the Oratory.

After Confession and Communion he told his parish priest "Now I am happy, I have a long journey to eternity but with Jesus at my side I fear nothing..."

On 9<sup>th</sup> March 1857 he told his father it was time and asked him to read the Prayers for the Exercise of a Happy Death. His final words were "Goodbye, Daddy, Goodbye...oh, what wonderful things I see." And died with a beautiful smile. He was just fifteen.

About a month later his father wrote to Don Bosco saying Dominic had appeared to him confirming he was in heaven. Charles was prepared to swear an oath that this had happened.

Beatified March 5<sup>th</sup> 1950 by Pius XII and Canonised 12<sup>th</sup> June 1954.

His Feast Day is celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> May.