



Saints adoring Jesus Resurrected", by Fra Angelico – Detail of the Fiesole Panel, San Marco Museum, Florence (Italy)

Our Lady of Mercy (Ransom)

1218

September 24

September 24th marks the feast day of Our Lady of Mercy or Our Lady of Ransom.

This Feast commemorates the foundation of the Mercedarian Order and the apparition of Our Lady of Ransom. In this appearance, she carried two bags of coins for use in ransoming Christians imprisoned by Moors.

On 10 August 1218, the Mercedarian Order was legally constituted in Barcelona, Spain by King James of Aragon, and was approved by Pope Gregory IX on 17 January 1235. The Order of Mercy, also known as the Mercedarians, chief tasks included gathering alms for ransom, guarding the coasts against captors, and even giving themselves up in exchange for the release of others or dying for a Catholic in danger of losing his faith. Indeed, their Fourth vow in their Constitution – after poverty, chastity, and obedience – stated that Mercedarians were “to visit and to free Christians who are in captivity and in the power of the Saracens or of other enemies of our Law... By this work of mercy... all the brothers of this Order, as sons of true obedience, must always be gladly disposed to give up their lives, if it is necessary, as Jesus Christ gave up His for us”

The Mercedarians celebrated their institution on the Sunday nearest to 1 August because it was on 1 August 1218 that the Blessed Virgin showed Saint Peter Nolasco the white habit of the Order.

This custom was approved by the Congregation of Rites on 4 April 1615. On 22 February 1696, it was extended to the entire Latin Church, and the date changed to 24 September.

The fruits of sanctity from these acts of charity can be seen in the numerous documented martyrs from the Order of Mercy. Additionally, the Order can claim six Saints and one Blessed among its canon.

We can beseech Our Lady of Ransom today to aid the suffering of those still in captivity in other lands, as well as interceding for the end of slavery in the world in all forms – including the slavery of sin.

O God, who by means of the most glorious Mother of Thy Son was pleased to give new children to Thy Church for the deliverance of Christ's faithful from the power of the heathen; grant, we beseech Thee, that we who love and honor her as the foundress of so great a work may by her merits and intercession, be ourselves delivered from all sin and from the bondage of the evil one. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The scapular is white, and the front has a picture of Our Lady of Mercy. The back has a symbol representing the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The indulgences for the confraternity were approved by the Congregation for Indulgences in 1868. After the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the indulgences attached to the scapular were renewed by the Apostolic Penitentiary in 1967 [5] and include a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions (i.e. the person must exclude all attachment to the sin of any kind, even venial sin, must perform the work or say the prayer for which the indulgence is granted, and must also fulfill the three conditions of sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion and praying for the intentions of the Pope on the day of enrollment and the following Mercedarian feasts: St. Peter Armengol (April 27), St. Peter Nolasco (May 6), St. Raymond Nonnatus (August 31), St. Mary de Cervellione (September 19), Our Lady of Mercy (September 24), St. Serapion (November 14), and St. Peter Pascual (December 6).