Saint Aloysius Gonzala

1568 - 1591
Feast Day - June 21

The Lord can make saints anywhere, even at the terribly non religious times of history. Aloysius grew up in royal courts and army camps of renaissance life in Florence, Italy. His father wanted him to be a military hero. At 7 years of age, he had a deep spiritual experience that led him to much prayer. At 9, he went away to be educated. At 11, he was teaching catechism to poor children, fasting three days a week and practicing great sacrifices. At 13, he was expected to live court life, but this has no appeal to him. Finally he renounced his right of succession and was received into the Jesuit novitiate. In 1591, a plague struck Rome. The Jesuits opened a hospital of their own. Aloysius, while caring for the sick caught the disease himself. Even though he was very ill, he kept up his prayer and penitential practices. Three months later he died at the age of 23. Aloysius is the Patron of Youth, he is a great example of someone who grew up in a very permissive society and yet opened himself to the purifying love of God.