

# Learn About the Saints



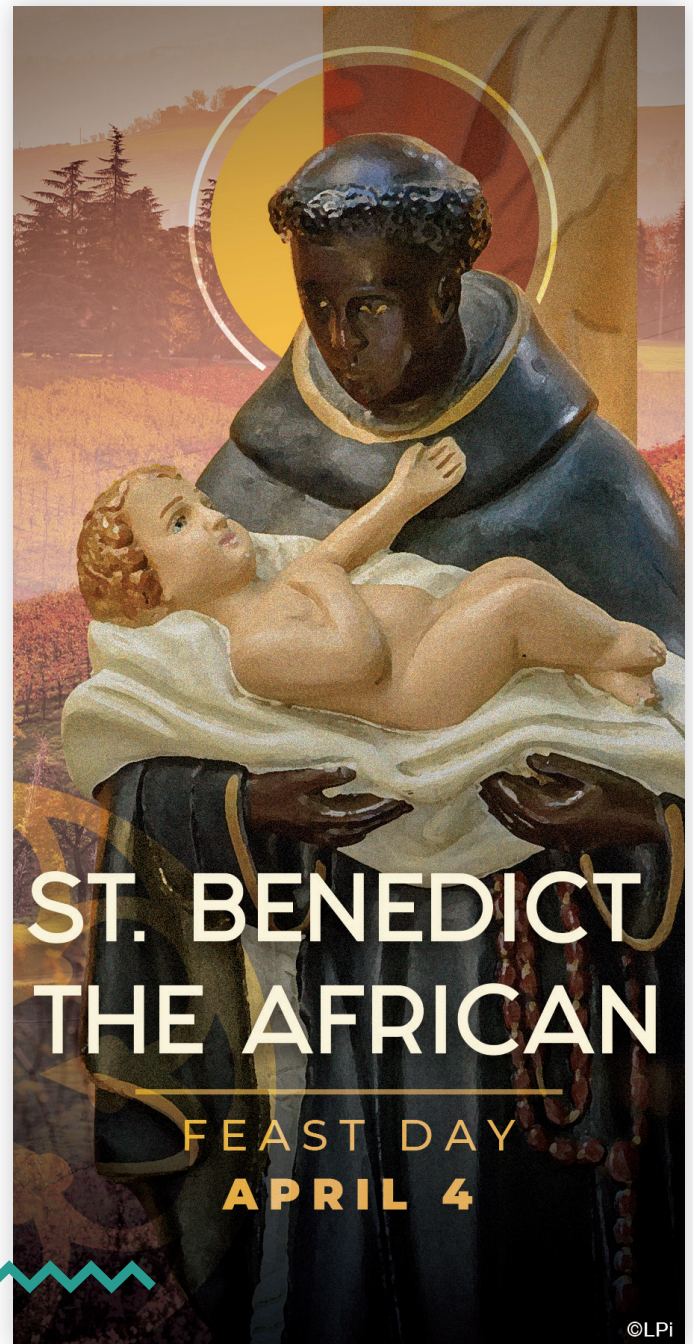
## St. Benedict the African

### Biography

St. Benedict the African (1524–1589) was born in San Fratello, Sicily, to Cristoforo and Diana Manasseri, Africans who had been enslaved. Some accounts state that due to his parents' loyal service, Benedict was granted his freedom at birth; others say his freedom was given when he turned 18. At 21, Benedict joined a community of hermits living under the rule of St. Francis of Assisi. He eventually succeeded his friend, Jerome Lanze, as their leader. When the Pope disbanded the independent hermit society, Benedict joined the Order of Friars Minor and was sent to Palermo, to the Franciscan Friary of St. Mary of Jesus. There, Benedict worked in the kitchens, and despite being illiterate and a lay brother (not a priest), he also served as Master of Novices and as Guardian of the Community.

St. Benedict was known throughout his life as a brilliant cook whose hands seemed to miraculously multiply food, a healer, and a spiritual leader with deep understanding. His humility, kindness, and joy drew people from all walks of life who sought his prayers and advice. Even after his death on April 4, 1589, many miracles were reported at his tomb, leading to his canonization by Pope Pius VII in 1807. St. Benedict's legacy continues to inspire people around the world, and he is recognized as the patron saint of African Americans, representing faith, perseverance, and the dignity of all people in God's eyes.

St. Benedict the African, pray for us!



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