

St. Aloysius Gonzaga



As a young boy, St. Aloysius always had a great desire to know and serve God, but his family life was not always supportive of this desire. He was born into a noble Italian family, and his father was a compulsive gambler. He grew up in a castle and was trained from a very young age to be a soldier and courtier, and despite the opposition of his family, he taught catechism to poor boys.

He encountered many holy people in his lifetime; he received his first Communion from St. Charles Borromeo and studied under St. Robert Bellarmine. As a teen, he suffered from a kidney disease which he considered a blessing, as it left him with plenty of time for prayer.

At 18 he signed away his legal claim to his title and his family's lands and entered the Jesuits. He died shortly thereafter of the plague at the age of 23, having devotedly cared for plague victims in Rome in the outbreak of 1591.

He was canonized in 1726 and is the patron saint of youth, AIDS patients and AIDS caregivers.