

St. Paschal Baylon



Franciscan lay brother and mystic. Born to a peasant family at Torre Hermosa, in Aragon, on Whitsunday, he was christened Pascua in honor of the feast. According to accounts of his early life, Paschal labored as a shepherd for his father, performed miracles, and was distinguished for his austerity. He also taught himself to read. Receiving a vision which told him to enter a nearby Franciscan community, he became a Franciscan lay brother of the Alcantrine reform in 1564, and spent most of his life as a humble doorkeeper. He practiced rigorous asceticism and displayed a deep love for the Blessed Sacrament, so much so that while on a mission to France, he defended the doctrine of the Real Presence against a Calvinist preacher and in the face of threats from other irate Calvinists. Paschal died at a friary in Villareal, and was canonized in 1690. In 1897 Pope Leo XIII declared him patron of all eucharistic confraternities and congresses. Since 1969, his veneration has been limited to local calendars.