SAINT OF THE WEEK

CECILIA
THIRD CENTURY
FEAST DAY—NOVEMBER 22

Cecilia has been honored as a martyr since about 545. According to a written legend, *The Passion of St. Cecilia*, she was a Roman Christian of the patrician class betrothed to the pagan Valerian. The Cecilia Passion has her singing to God in her heart on her wedding day. Cecilia tells Valerian she has made a vow of virginity and persuades him to convert to Christianity and enter into a celibate marriage. His brother, Tiburtius, also becomes a Christian. The brothers are later martyred. When Cecilia refuses to perform an idolatrous act, she too is martyred. Cecilia is the patron of musicians.

FACT OF FAITH

ANTONIO VIVALDI

by Larry Rice

Anyone even remotely familiar with the music of the Baroque period can immediately recognize the lilting, intricate music of Antonio Vivaldi. Like most composers of his time, he wrote both sacred and secular music. But what many people may not know about Vivaldi, is that he was also a Catholic priest.

Born in 1678 in the Republic of Venice, Vivaldi was taught the violin at an early age by his father, Giovanni Battista. Despite a childhood complicated by medical problems—likely asthma—Vivaldi participated in the music school at St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice, studying under early Baroque composer Giovanni Legrenzi. At the age of 15, Vivaldi began his studies for the priesthood.

At the age of 25 he was ordained a priest, but within a year was dispensed from his clerical duties because of his continuing ill health. In late 1706, he left the active ministry altogether. But during this time he became the violin teacher at an orphanage called the Pio Ospedale della Pieta (Devout Hospital of Mercy) in Venice. This orphanage and girls’ school took in abandoned and destitute children; the most talented became part of the Ospedale’s famous choir and orchestra. It was for this group that Vivaldi composed much of his music.

Although Vivaldi’s health and career eventually led him away from active priesthood, his classical and theological education, as well as his desire to serve the poor opened a path to use his gift of music. Before his death in 1741, Antonio Vivaldi composed hundreds of pieces of music; a lasting legacy of art formed by faith.

PRAYER

THANKSGIVING DAY
(FOURTH THURSDAY IN NOVEMBER)

Lord, we thank you for the goodness of our people and for the spirit of justice that fills this nation. We thank you for the beauty and fullness of the land and the challenge of the cities.

We thank you for our work and our rest, for one another, and for our homes. We thank you, Lord: accept our thanksgiving on this day. We pray and give thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. R/. Amen.

“History

The pilgrim kids had corn pudding. We have pumpkin pie. I guess parents have always tried to pass vegetables off as dessert.”

Cartoon: CNS.