

“A Great Cloud of Witnesses”

A Historical Series of the Murals on the Walls of Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Church

Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini

13th Century United States of America



St. Frances Cabrini was born in 1850 about twenty miles from Milan, Italy, one of 13 children. Her father often read to St. Frances from a book of missionary stories, which fired her imagination. When she went on a visit to her uncle, a priest who lived beside a swift canal, she made little boats of paper, dropped violets in them, called the flowers missionaries, and launched them to sail off to India and China.

Her early schooling earned her a teacher's certificate, but when she turned 18, she wanted to become a nun. However, poor health prevented her, so she stayed on her family's farm working to help her parents and then, after their death, her brothers and sisters.

One day her local priest asked her to go to a disorganized and badly run orphanage and “put things right.” This was quite a task for the 24-year-old St. Frances, but she accepted and in six years had succeeded. Her bishop asked her to found a missionary religious order to care for poor children in schools and hospitals. So, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart were born.

Then at the urging of Pope Leo XIII she came to the United States with six nuns in 1889 to work among the Italian immigrants. Over the course of the next 30 or so years, St. Frances founded hospitals, schools and houses for orphans, Italian immigrants and others in need in New York City, New Orleans, Nicaragua, Argentina, Brazil, and many cities across the United States including Seattle, Denver, Los Angeles, and Chicago. She became a U.S. citizen in 1909, and died in 1917 from malaria. She was the first U.S. citizen to be canonized, and is the patron saint of immigrants. **Her Feast day is November 13.**

Each month, this series will feature the murals painted on the walls of Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Church along with history and commentary. You can also find this series on our website at www.hcscchurch.org.
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