

hands on his head. The disfigured face of a young girl was restored to normal appearance when it was covered with the cloak of the saint. A devout woman became very ill whenever she received communion. Raymond investigated her baptismal record. It was discovered that she had been baptized invalidly once when in danger of death. After a valid baptism she experienced sweetness and comfort on receiving the Bread of Angels. Such was the power of the saintly friar's prayers.

#### PRAYER

Dear St. Raymond, your long life was marked by compassion for sinners and endless labors for holy Church. Obtain for me from Jesus, your friend, the favor I now ask. . . . Help me to do God's will in all things and to live with you forever in heaven. Amen.



Saint Raymond of Pennafort returns to Barcelona using his cloak as a sail to miraculously cross the sea.

## ST. RAYMOND PENNAFORT



Patron of Canon Lawyers

The crowd on shore burst into applause. Incredible! A miracle! A man standing on a cloak had just crossed the sea from the island of Majorca to Barcelona, Spain, a distance of 120 miles in six hours. The mysterious man stepped ashore, wrapped his bone-dry cloak around his body and disappeared into a nearby Dominican convent. He was the chaplain of King James of Aragon. The adulterous monarch had refused to dismiss his paramour at the saint's insistence. "Your Majesty, you are causing scandal. Since you forbid my departure from your presence, I shall ask God to help me back to Barcelona." That's the story of the miracle in a nutshell. The witnesses of the prodigy erected a chapel on the historic spot where the saint landed.

St. Raymond of Pennafort was born in the family castle near Barcelona, Spain, in 1175. Endowed with a keen intellect, he early occupied the chair of civil and canon law in the prestigious university of Bologna. While teaching there he was captivated by the fiery preaching and holy lives of the founders of the Order of Preachers, St. Dominic, Blessed Reginald and Blessed Jordan of Saxony. He was destined to rival them in sanctity and service to the Church. After lecturing in Bologna for three years, he spent the next three as canon lawyer for the bishop of Barcelona at the bidding of Pope Honorius III. His soul was not at peace. He yearned for a closer union with Christ in the silence and seclusion of the cloister.

On Good Friday in 1222, at the age of 47, Raymond entered the Dominican Order which was then in the springtime of its youth. St. Dominic had just died and Blessed Jordan was elected second Master General. The peace and quiet sought by the new friar was short-lived. He was summoned to the Vatican in 1229 as confessor and penitentiary of Pope Gregory IX. The Holy Father imposed upon him the task of collecting and editing the countless papal decrees of preceding centuries. The scholarly friar ac-

complished the arduous assignment in three years but it resulted in weakened health. He was again haunted by nostalgia for his friar's cell and obtained permission to return to Barcelona. As he left the papal court on foot, someone remarked: "This humble friar goes away just as he came, just as poor and just as modest as he arrived."

When Blessed Jordan drowned in a shipwreck off the coast of the Holy Land in 1238, Raymond was elected the third Master General only to resign two years later due to poor health. He had revised the constitutions of the young Order of Preachers and continued to pour out a luminous stream of treatises on civil and canon law. Scripture and related subjects now edited under the general title of the *SUMMA OF ST. RAYMOND*. He is justly hailed as the patron saint of canon lawyers. To reward the saint's great service to the Church, Gregory IX appointed him archbishop of Tarragona but the humble friar declined with tears in his eyes. Toward his Dominican brothers, Raymond was affable, warm-hearted, observant of the Rule and always ready to oblige. His consolation was to keep watch with Jesus in the eucharist. He was the perfect friar, totally dedicated to prayer, study, preaching and writing. Every night his guardian angel would awaken him and accompany him to choir for midnight Matins. He prayed with sighs and tears for the conversion of Islam.

It was the age of the Crusades. The Moors were devastating the Christian Church with fire and sword, scouring land and sea in the name of Allah. Islam was on the march, Christendom was in crisis. Inspired by Our Lord and Our Lady, Raymond founded a new religious Order in collaboration with Peter Nolasco and King James. The Order of Our Lady of Ransom for the Redemption of Christians was approved by Gregory IX in 1235. Raymond organized its constitutions and guided its first General, St. Peter Nolasco. King James provided the first

monastery and religious habits. At Raymond's suggestion, the sovereigns of Castile and Aragon founded Dominican monastery-schools for the study of Hebrew and Arabic in Spain and in Africa. To these schools young friars were sent to train for evangelization among the Moors. At Raymond's request, St. Thomas Aquinas composed the famous work *SUMMA CONTRA GENTES*, a synthesis of Catholic doctrine in defense of the faith. The saint himself undertook a personal crusade of preaching, hearing confessions, and reconciling lapsed and apostate Catholics. He won thousands of souls to Jesus Christ. He was to be followed in the next century by a greater convert-maker than himself, his Dominican brother, St. Vincent Ferrer, the "Angel of the Apocalypse."

St. Raymond was esteemed the greatest canonist of his age. The royalty and hierarchy of Spain consulted him on matters of Church and State. Six popes honored him with titles and dignities, even bidding him select new bishops. At his peaceful death on January 6, 1275, at the remarkable age of 100, all Spain joined in the obsequies. His remains lie in a magnificent tomb in the church of St. Catherine the Martyr in Barcelona. He was canonized by Clement VIII in 1601. In art he is depicted with key in hand to symbolize his office as papal penitentiary, and also as a simple friar sailing on his cloak away from the lustful monarch.

Miraculous cures were reported during and after the life of our saintly canon lawyer. Dust from his tomb is used to restore health to the sick. A poor peasant laboring in a field was fatally stricken as Raymond passed by. Moved with pity the saint called out to the dead man: "My son, do you wish to make your confession?" The peasant opened his eyes and exclaimed: "Yes, padre, please!" Raymond absolved the penitent who closed his eyes and surrendered his immortal soul to his Creator. A man who suffered migraine headaches for years was completely and permanently cured when Raymond laid