

■ BY MOTHER MARTHA

According to its mission statement, “Sophia Institute is a non-profit institution that seeks to nurture the spiritual, moral, and cultural life of souls and to spread the Gospel of Christ in conformity with the authentic teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. It fulfills this mission by offering translations, reprints, and new publications that afford readers a rich source of the enduring wisdom of mankind.”

Thus, last fall, when **Sarah Lemieux**, the Associate Director of Publicity at Sophia Institute Press, sent me a review copy of the *Vatican Christmas Cookbook*, she included in the package also a copy of *Cooking with the Saints* (2019, Hardcover: \$21.24). Its authors are **Alexandra “Sandy” Greeley**, a professional chef and author of 35 cookbooks, and **Fernando Flores**, “a tireless world traveler and an advocate of all things relating to food and faith.”

In the Foreword, the Very Reverend **Edward C. Hathaway**, former pastor of St. Veronica Catholic Church in Chantilly, Virginia, a Washington D.C. suburb, now the Rector of the Basilica of St. Mary in Alexandria, Virginia, explains: “I was fortunate to play a small role in the launching and growth of *Cooking with Our (not The) Saints*, a vibrant parish-based apostolate. Since its inception in 2010, *Cooking with Our Saints* has continued to grow in popularity and has nourished the bodies, souls, and minds of many people of all ages.”

Cooking with Our Saints began as cooking lessons based on the lives of Catholic saints in the Parish of St. Veronica. Since people from every part of the world live in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, St. Veronica’s parishioners were very international. At first the classes were open to parishioners only, but eventually opened to anyone who had an interest. For a minimal fee the students learned how to cook dishes from different cultures and then sat down with their classmates to eat them. At the end of each class the students took home a packet of recipes, a short biography of the saint of that day, and a prayer written by that saint.

Although the Catholic Church has more than 10,000 recognized saints, this 311-page volume opens with a list of some 70 saints chosen by the authors. They come from all over the world; some, like St. Veronica, St.

COOKING WITH THE SAINTS



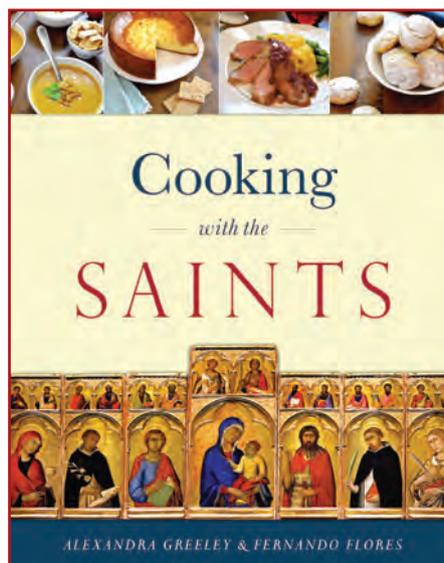
Francis of Assisi, St. Patrick, and St. Ignatius Loyola are well known universally, others only locally. Only two saints: St. John Neumann (January 5) and St. Katherine Drexel (March 3) are American. Italy has the largest number with nine: St. Thomas Aquinas (January 28), St. Apollonius (April 18), St. Anselm of Canterbury (April 21), St. Catherine of Siena (April 29), St. Aloysius Gonzaga (June 21), St. Padre Pio (September 23), St. Francis of Assisi (October 4), St. Charles Borromeo (November 4) and St. Ambrose (December 7).

The first chapter is “Sacred Days.” It explains the Six Holy Days of Obligation for American Catholics: The Solemnity of Mary on January 1, Ascension Thursday (40 days after Easter), the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 15, All Saints Day on November 1, The Immaculate Conception on December 8, and Christmas, and then the “Other Holy Days”: Epiphany, Christ’s Baptism, Candlemas (also known as the Feast of the Presentation), Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday, Pentecost, Most Holy Trinity, Corpus Christi, and All Souls’ Day.

The next 12 chapters are organized by month, from January through December, each with an opening page listing the month’s highlighted saints, each with his or her dish, plus an additional full menu, called “The Saintly Meal” dedicated to that month’s most important saint. Each entry opens with a short biography of the saint followed by a

recipe. “The Saintly “Meals” include a shopping list of all the recipes’ necessary ingredients, and ends with a quotation from the saint. Every dish is beautifully photographed. For example, January’s saints are Basil, John Neumann, Francis of Sales, and Thomas Aquinas. The “Saintly Meal” is dedicated to St. Anthony the Abbot.

The final chapter, “The History of Celebratory Cookies,” contains recipes for 16 sweets enjoyed on Feast Days. The best known are boat-shaped *navettes* to honor Our Lady’s arrival (February 2) in Marseilles and *Madeleines* for St. Mary Magdalene (July 22), who is said to have accompanied Our Lady to France. The *madeleine*, French for Magdalene, is the unofficial national cookie of France. ○



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