

I have been praying the prayer to St Rocco and I thought it went hand in hand with Sunday's Gospel and our current situation.

The prayer is from the prayer card, the information is taken from the *St. Rocco Society of Potenza* Website:

Dcn Andy

Prayer to Saint Rocco

O Great St. Rocco, deliver us, we beseech thee, from the scourges of God; through thy intercessions, preserve our bodies from contagious diseases, and our souls from the contagion of sin. Obtain for us salubrious air; but above all, purity of heart. Assist us to make good use of health, to bear sufferings with patience, to live in the practice of penance and charity, that we may one day enjoy the happiness which thou has merited by thy virtues. Amen. St. Rocco, pray for us - Three times

About Saint Rocco

St. Rocco was born of noble parentage about 1340 A.D. in Montpellier, France. At birth it was noted that he had a red cross-shaped birthmark on the left side of his chest. As a young child, St. Rocco showed great devotion to God and the Blessed mother. At an early age, his parents died leaving him an orphan under the care of his uncle, the Duke of Montpellier. Soon after, St. Rocco distributed his wealth among the poor and took a vow of poverty.



St. Rocco dressed in the clothes of a pilgrim and departed for Rome. Along the way, he stopped at Aquapendente, which was stricken by the plague, and devoted himself to the plague victims, curing them with prayer and the sign of the cross. He next

visited Cesena and other neighboring cities, and then finally Rome. Legend has it that everywhere he visited, the terrible scourge disappeared before his miraculous power. He visited Mantua, Modena, Parma, and other cities, all with the same results.

During his travels, he too contracted the plague which was evident by an open sore on his leg. Rocco was banished from the city and took refuge in a cave. There he slept on leaves and drank water from a small stream. Miraculously a dog that refused to eat, faithfully brought him bread as a means of sustenance. The dog used to leave a nearby castle and the lord of this castle having a curious nature followed this dog into the woods and discovered Rocco. The nobleman had pity on Rocco and brought him to his castle where Rocco was cured.

St. Rocco traveled through northern Italy for two or three more years before returning to his birthplace in France. So weak and sick from suffering, the townspeople did not recognize him and he was thrown into jail as a spy without any proof. He was kept in prison for five years. On August 16, 1378, a guard entered his cell and found St. Rocco near death. The dungeon was illuminated with a blue light radiating from his body. Upon hearing this, the Governor demanded to know St. Rocco's identity. St. Rocco faintly replied, I am your nephew Rocco. Only one thing could prove that, so he had him disrobed and the red cross-like mark was visible on the left side of his chest. The Governor and the townspeople present in the cell then believed. A voice from paradise was heard announcing that St. Rocco's soul had merited immortal glory in Heaven. Even after his death, St. Rocco performed many miracles.

Saint Rocco is venerated in the Roman Catholic Church as the protector against the plague and all contagious diseases. The statue of Saint Rocco is considered unique among theologians because of his pose. It is most unusual because it depicts him with his left hand pointing to an open sore on his left leg. Few images of saints expose any afflictions or handicaps. His body is enclosed in a glass tomb in the church of St. Rocco in Venice, Italy. St. Rocco is remembered on August 16th of each year.

St. Rocco is greatly venerated in Southern Italy and Sicily. In fact, no other country in the world honors St. Rocco as extensively as Italy, most particularly in the South. Numerous cholera epidemics ravaged Southern Italy from shortly after St. Rocco's death and the Southern Italian people turned to St. Rocco for his protection against this plague, other sickness and for his help in all circumstances of life.

At the turn of the Century, millions of Southern Italian immigrants brought their devotion to the Blessed Mother and the Saints, including St. Rocco to the United States.