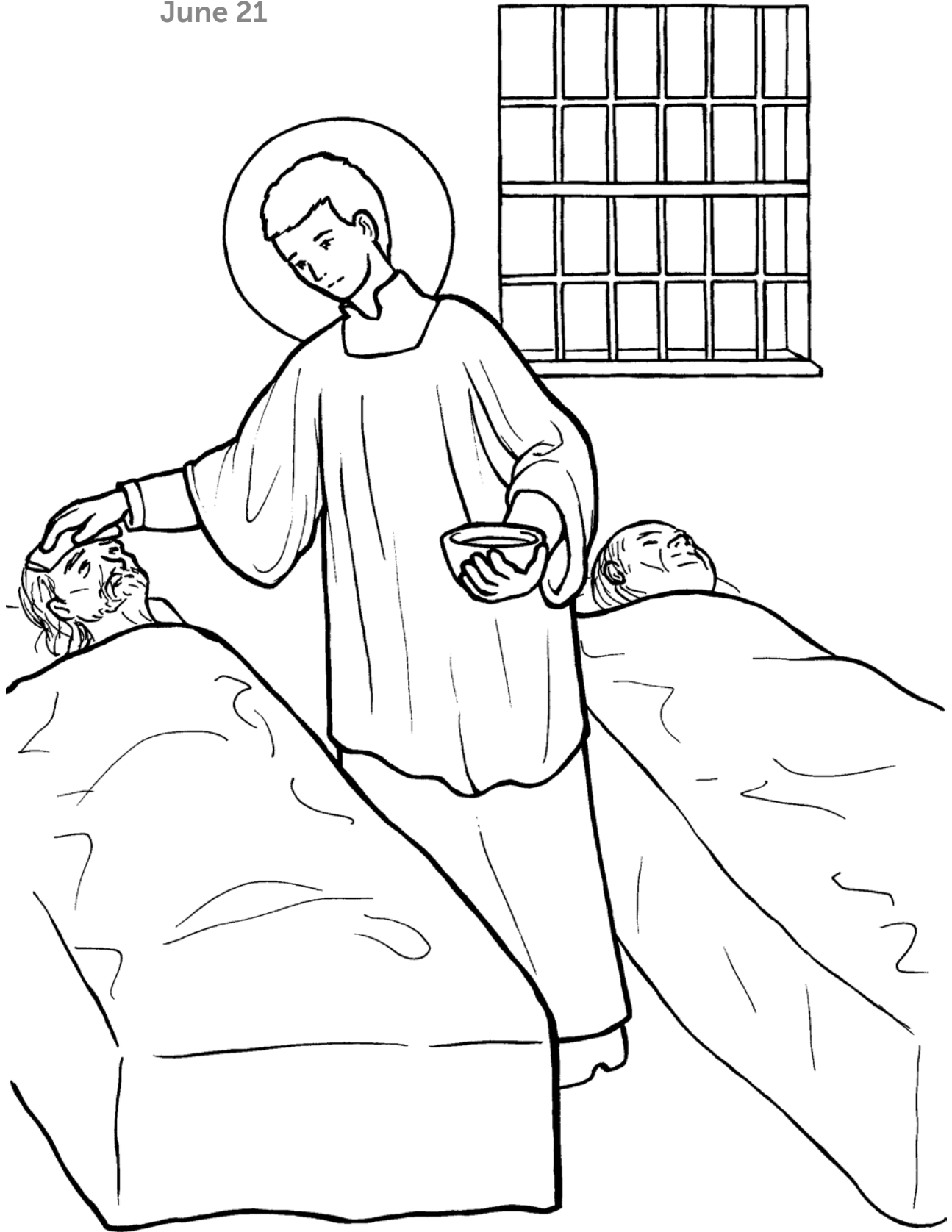


# St. Aloysius de Gonzaga

June 21



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1568–1591 • Italy

Aloysius was the oldest son and heir of the noble house of Gonzaga, and his father was training him in the art of war. At the age of eight, he was sent to the grand duke's court to continue his training. There, he fell sick. To pass the time, he read about the lives of the saints, especially the brave Jesuit missionaries in India. The more Aloysius read, the more he realized that he did not want to live the life of war his father had chosen for him. He wanted to save souls, not destroy them. When he turned nine, Aloysius made a vow never to marry, because he wanted to give his entire life to God.

Aloysius told his parents that God was calling him to be a Jesuit priest. His mother was happy at the news, but his father was furious because Aloysius was supposed to be his heir. He was so angry that he did not give his permission, and Aloysius had to wait until he was eighteen to give up his inheritance and enter the seminary in Rome. He still dreamed of becoming a missionary, but ever since he had fallen sick as a boy, he had struggled with weak health. He was not strong enough to travel to India. This made Aloysius sad because he wanted to be brave and save souls. But he knew that God would show him what He wanted him to do.

When Aloysius was twenty-two, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him in a vision. In the vision, the angel told him he would die within a year's time. Aloysius knew he must make ready for his death and do his best to become a saint. The next summer, a terrible plague broke out in Rome. The Jesuits opened a hospital for the victims. Aloysius knew that this was his chance to be brave for God just as he had hoped he could be. He searched for the sick in the streets, carried them to the hospital, and tended to their wounds. He knew that when he served the sick, he served Jesus.

Then came the day when Aloysius caught the plague. Aloysius knew that the angel's prophecy was coming true and he would die soon. In another vision, he learned the exact day of his death: June 21, eight days after the Feast of Corpus Christi, which is the glorious feast day celebrating the Body of Christ. On the day he had predicted his death, Aloysius became terribly weak, and he received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Right before midnight, he gazed at the crucifix in his hands and breathed the name of Jesus as he died. St. Aloysius, help me to save souls for God!