

St. Dominic Savio



So many holy persons seem to die young. Among them was Dominic Savio, the patron of choirboys.

Born into a peasant family at Riva, Italy, young Dominic joined Saint John Bosco as a student at the Oratory in Turin at the age of 12. He impressed Don Bosco with his desire to be a priest and to help him in his work with neglected boys. A peacemaker and an organizer, young Dominic founded a group he called the Company of the Immaculate Conception which, besides being devotional, aided John Bosco with the boys and with manual work. All the members save one, Dominic, would, in 1859, join Don Bosco in the beginnings of his Salesian congregation. By that time, Dominic had been called home to heaven.

As a youth, Dominic spent hours rapt in prayer. His raptures he called "my distractions." Even in play, he said that at times, "It seems heaven is opening just above me. I am afraid I may say or do something that will make the other boys laugh." Dominic would say, "I can't do big things. But I want all I do, even the smallest thing, to be for the greater glory of God."

Dominic's health, always frail, led to lung problems and he was sent home to recuperate. As was the custom of the day, he was bled in the thought that this would help, but it only worsened his condition. He died on March 9, 1857, after receiving the Last Sacraments. Saint John Bosco himself wrote the account of his life.

Some thought that Dominic was too young to be considered a saint. Saint Pius X declared that just the opposite was true, and went ahead with his cause. Dominic was canonized in 1954.