



St. Josephine Bakhita (1869-1947)

Feast Day - February 8

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BIOGRAPHY:

Born in Sudan, Josephine was kidnapped at the age of seven, sold into slavery and given the name *Bakhita* which means “*fortunate one*.” She was re-sold many times, experiencing the humiliations and sufferings of slavery, both physical and moral. She ended up being owned by Augusto Michieli and was babysitter for his daughter Mimmina who was being instructed by the Canossian Sisters in Venice’s Institute of the Catechumens.

It was there that Josephine felt drawn to the Catholic Church. She was baptized and confirmed in 1890 taking the name Josephine. By this time the young African, who had come of age, enjoyed the freedom of choice which Italian law ensured. And so she

entered the Institute of St. Magdalene of Canossa in 1893 and on December 8, 1896 Josephine Bakhita was consecrated forever to God who she called with sweet expression “the Master!” For another 50 years, this humble Daughter of Charity, a true witness of the love of God, assisted her religious community through cooking, sewing, embroidery and welcoming visitors at the door.

Her humility, her simplicity and her constant smile won the hearts of all. As she grew older she experienced long painful years of sickness. She continued to witness to faith, goodness and Christian hope. To those who visited her and asked how she was, she would respond with a smile: “As the Master desires.”

It was Mary Most Holy who freed her from all pain. Her last words were: “Our Lady! Our Lady!”, and her final smile testified to her encounter with the Mother of our Lord.

ASSORTED QUOTES BY SAINT JOSEPHINE BAKHITA

Seeing the sun, the moon and the stars, I said to myself, “Who could be the master of these beautiful things?” I felt a great desire to see him, to know him and to pay him homage.

If I were to meet the slave -traders who kidnapped me and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands, for if that did not happen, I would not be a Christian and Religious today...

The Lord has loved me so much: we must love everyone...we must be compassionate!

PRAYER: for the virtues of Saint Josephine

O Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we thank you for the gifts of humility and charity which you bestowed on Saint Josephine Bakhita. Deign to glorify her for her singular virtues and grant the prayers of those who invoke her. Amen.

SUGGESTED THINGS TO DO TO HONOR ST. JOSEPHINE BAKHITA

- * Send a Thank-You note to anyone who has helped you on your Christian Journey.
- * Read in the Catechism of the Catholic Church about the **Virtues**. CCC 1803-1845
- * Reflect on Scripture - Phil 4:8 and Wisdom 8:7 on **Virtue**.
- * What’s one thing that you can do today to become a more **virtuous** person?

VIRTUE: An habitual and firm disposition to do the good. The moral virtues are acquired through human effort aided by God’s grace; the theological virtues are gifts of God. (ccc1803)