St. Peter

St. Peter was called Simon when he was born and he was a fisherman. He met Jesus near the Sea of Galilee. He decided to give up everything so that he could follow Jesus and listen to him talk about God.

Simon became one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Jesus changed his name to Peter which means "rock". Jesus said that one day he would give Peter a very special job.

Peter promised to always be there for Jesus. But when soldiers came to capture Jesus, he was scared. He told the soldiers three times that he did not know him. He was very upset that he had not been brave.

Then an amazing thing happened. Jesus rose from the dead and visited Peter. Jesus told Peter to tell everyone about God. Peter became the leader of the followers of Jesus.

Peter spent his life teaching people about Jesus and performing miracles until he was killed in Rome. He died on a cross like Jesus. His feast day is on June 29.

St. Patrick

St. Patrick was first known as Patricius and was born in Britain. As a teenager he was captured by pirates and taken to Ireland. He was sold as a slave to an Irish Chief. Patrick escaped from slavery and hopped on a boat to France

After many adventures Patrick returned home to Britain and decided to become a priest. In 435 Patrick was made bishop of Ireland. He went to Ireland and worked as a missionary. He told the Irish about Jesus and many of them became followers. Patrick set up monasteries and churches. He died in 461.

In Ireland, St. Patrick used a clover to teach about the Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three persons but all one God. His feast day is March 17.

St. Therese of Lisieux (The Little Flower)

Therese Martin was born in France in 1873. Her mother died when she was just four, so she was raised by her older sisters. Her sisters taught her all about God.
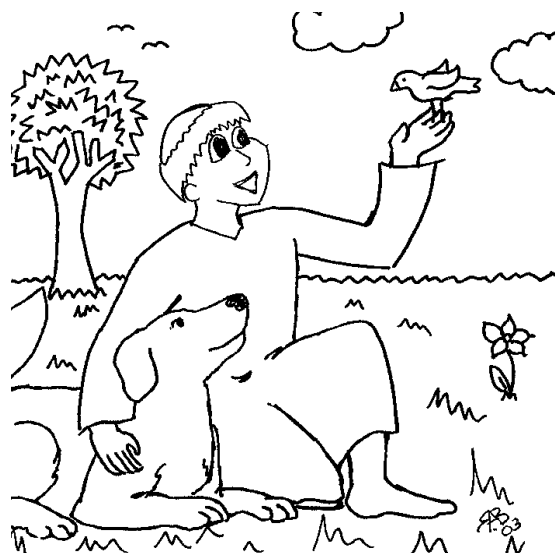
When Therese was still a young girl her sisters entered the Carmelite convent and Therese wanted to join too. When the convent refused to take Therese, the shy little girl went all the way to Rome to get permission from the Pope to enter the convent.

Therese was sure that anyone could become holy if they loved God and did each small thing well. Sometimes this would mean being nice to other nuns who were mean to her, or doing things without complaining. She called this her "little way to holiness". Therese was put in charge of novice nuns and she taught them her "little way" as well.

Therese became ill and died when she was only 24 years old. She is known as the "Little Flower" because she called herself a flower doing little things in God's wonderful garden. She also promised to send roses from heaven. Her feast day is October 1.

St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis gave up a life of wealth and comfort to help and care for the poor. He is a popular saint and is remembered for his love of animals.

Francis lived in Assisi, Italy and was the son of a wealthy merchant. Frances always wanted to help the poor and one day he gave some of his father's money to them. His father was so angry that he turned his back on him.

Francis lived a life of poverty, travelling, preaching and caring for the sick. He lived on what people gave him. He started an order of monks called the Franciscans.

His feast day is October 4. St. Francis was so holy, even the animals knew how much he loved Jesus.

St. Mary MacKillop (St. Mary of the Cross)

Mary MacKillop was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1842. Mary was the oldest of eight children so she had to spend a lot of time looking after her younger brothers and sisters. When Mary was fifteen she decided she was going to be a nun and devote her life to the poor.

In 1861, she went to a town called Penola where she met a Catholic priest, Father Julian Woods. Together they opened Australia's first free Catholic school. Children could come to school even if their parents could not pay the school any money. Mary and Father Woods also started their own religious order called 'The Sisters of St. Joseph'.

Before long Mary was looking after lots of schools but she made some church leaders angry and they threw her out of the church. Mary was very upset but she kept her faith in God. The next year the Bishop changed his mind and Mary was welcomed back into the church.

By the time Mary died, in 1909, there were St. Joseph's Schools all over Australia. Mary became the first Australian Saint on October 17 2010 because of all of her good deeds and hard work for Australia's poor. She is also known as St Mary of the Cross and her feast day is August 8.