Dominico Savio

Born: 1842
Died: 1857
Feast Day 6 May

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DERRY DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL CENTRE

Dominico was born to Carlo and Brigitta Savio in the village of Riva, in Piedmont, northern Italy. He was given the name Domenico at Baptism. Dominico means '*of the Lord*'. His last name Savio means '*wise.*' He had 10 siblings. His parents were poor, hardworking and pious. His father was a blacksmith and his mother a seamstress.

His parents took great care to give Dominico a Christian upbringing. By the age of 4, he was able to pray by himself. From a young age Dominico helped around the house, welcomed his father home, and prayed daily. At 5 he learned to serve Mass and he made his First Communion early at the age of 7. (the usual age at this time was 12)

In his biography of Dominico Savio, John Bosco devotes a chapter to tell of Dominico's First Communion. He says that several years later, whenever Domenico talked of the day of his First Communion, he said with joy: *"That was the happiest and most wonderful day of my life.*" On the day of his First Communion, Dominico made some promises which he wrote in a "little book", His resolutions were (i) to go to Confession often, and as frequently to Holy Communion as my confessor allows. (ii) to keep Sundays holy; (iii) to have Jesus and Mary as his friends; (iv) to prefer death to sin.

At the age of 10 Dominico went to secondary school. He was a student of Saint John Bosco. He was studying to be a priest when he became ill and died at the age of 14, possibly from pleurisy. His teacher, John Bosco, wrote a biography of his young student, “The Life of Dominico Savio”.

This volume, along with other accounts of him, were critical factors in his cause for sainthood. Despite the fact that many people considered him to have died at too young an age - fourteen - to be considered for sainthood, he was considered eligible for such singular honour on the basis of his having displayed *"heroic virtue"* in his everyday life.

In February of 1857 very strong coughing that forced him to bed for weeks. On Sunday March 1 he was sent back to the house of his parents, in Mondonio. A doctor diagnosed him as suffering from some type of inflammation in the lungs and decided to bleed him, as was customary at that time.

The first days of March 1857, Dominico received the last sacraments. On the evening of 9 March 1857, after being visited by his parish priest, he asked his father to read him the prayers for the Exercise of a Happy Death from his book of devotions.

Then he slept a while, and shortly awakened and said in a clear voice, *"Goodbye, Dad, goodbye . . . goodbye mama. . . what was it the parish priest suggested to me . . . I don't seem to remember . . . Oh, what wonderful things I see . . . "* With these words, Dominic died, .

He was declared a saint in 1954. Pope Pius XI described him as "s*mall in size, but a towering giant in spirit.*"

Dominico is patron saint of choirboys, falsely accused people and juvenile delinquents.