

Saint John Bosco

- Feastday: January 31
- Patron Saint of: apprentices, editors and publishers, schoolchildren, magicians, and juvenile delinquents
- Birth: August 16, 1815
- Death: January 31, 1888
- Canonized: on April 1, 1934 by Pope Pius XI



*"Whatever you do,
think of the Glory of
God as your main
goal."*

*"The principle trap
that the devil sets for
young people is
idleness."*

John Bosco was born in Becchi, Italy. At nine years old, he saw a traveling troupe of circus performers. He realized if he learned their tricks, he could use them to attract his friends' attention. One day, John staged a show for the kids he played with, and ended by reciting the homily he heard earlier in the day. He continued these shows, discerning a call to the priesthood. John was ordained a priest in 1841 in the city of Turin. The city had slums and widespread poverty, and it was in these poor neighborhoods that Fr. Bosco went to work with the children of the poor. While visiting the prisons, he noticed a large number of boys, between the ages of 12 and 18, inside. The conditions were deplorable, and he felt moved to do more to help other boys from ending up there.

He went into the streets and started to meet young men and boys where they worked and played. He used his talents as a performer, doing tricks to capture attention, and then sharing with the children his message for the day. When he was not preaching, Fr. Bosco worked tirelessly seeking work for boys who needed it, and searching for lodgings for others. His mother began to help him, and she became known as "Mamma Margherita." By the 1860s, Fr. Bosco and his mother were responsible for lodging 800 boys. Fr. Bosco also identified boys he thought would make

good priests and encouraged them to consider a vocation to the priesthood. Then, he helped to prepare those who responded favorably in their path to ordination. In 1859, Fr. Bosco established the Society of St. Francis de Sales. He organized 15 seminarians and one teenage boy into the group. Their purpose was to carry on his charitable work, helping boys with their faith formation and to stay out of trouble. The organization still exists today and continues to help people, especially children around the world.