

ST PIUS X WEEKLY REFLECTION

Saints and Place Names (3 of 6)

Saint Aubin

This week will consider another Jersey town named after a saint.

I have chosen St Aubin as a couple of friends recently became grandparents for the first time. Their grandson was named Aubin. It is a name with which I wasn't familiar. His mother was originally from Jersey where there is a St Aubin's Bay. As I knew nothing about St Aubin, I thought it would be interesting to find out who he was..

Saint Albinus of Angers, also known as Saint Aubin of Angers, was born in 469 in Vannes, Brittany, France, into a noble family. From an early age, Albinus displayed great piety and was recognized as a devout child.

In his mid-20s, he decided to follow a religious path and became a monk at the monastery of Timcillac, which was later renamed Saint Aubin's in his honour. Albinus embraced the monastic life wholeheartedly, dedicating himself to prayer, meditation, and acts of charity. He spent the next several decades as a monk, living a life of simplicity and humility. His example of personal holiness and dedication to the poor, widows, and orphans made a lasting impact on those around him.

In 504, Albinus was chosen as the abbot of Timcillac, a position he held for 25 years. As an abbot, he continued to emphasize charity and worked tirelessly to support those in need. His reputation for helping the poor and ransoming slaves from their owners grew, as did the stories of the miracles he performed.

In 529, Albinus was appointed as the bishop of the Diocese of Angers, France. As Bishop, he carried forward his mission of charity and became known for his commitment to social justice. One of his significant contributions was his staunch opposition to consanguineous marriage (marriage between individuals related by blood), a practice permitted by the customs of the time. Despite facing intense opposition from powerful families who practiced consanguinity, Albinus called two councils in Orleans, in 538 and 541, at which these morally offensive practices were condemned.

Throughout his period as Bishop, Albinus showed great care and concern for the welfare of his flock. He was deeply moved by the suffering of imprisoned individuals and worked tirelessly to alleviate their pain. Legend recounts an incident where he visited a woman named Etheria, who had been imprisoned by King Childebert for debts. Moved by her plight, Albinus pleaded for her release, and when a guard attempted to strike her, Albinus miraculously caused the man to fall dead with a breath. Etheria was soon set free.

On another occasion it is said that Albinus passed a prison tower in Angers, where he heard the cries and moans of mistreated prisoners. He approached the local magistrate, pleading for their release, but his request was denied. Undeterred, Albinus returned to the tower and spent hours praying in front of it. As a result of his fervent prayers, a landslide caused part of the tower to collapse, allowing the prisoners to escape. Moved by this miraculous intervention, the prisoners followed Albinus to the church of Saint Maurichies, where they reformed their ways, becoming model citizens and devoted Christians.

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The impact of Saint Albinus' life and ministry was profound. His legacy of charity, social justice, and concern for the marginalized continued long after his passing. In his memory, the abbey of Saint Aubin was erected in Angers, serving as a testament to his enduring influence. Saint Albinus of Angers is venerated as the patron saint of sick children, protecting against blindness, whooping cough, and pirate attacks. His feast day is celebrated on March 1st.

After his death on March 1, 549, Saint Albinus' relics were laid to rest in the Cathedral of Saint Germanus in Paris, France. Although he was recognized as a saint before the formal establishment of canonization processes, his status as a saint is associated with the Pre-Congregation era. His profound impact on the lives of many and his exemplary Christian virtues continue to inspire believers today.

The Jersey bay which was named after St. Aubin may be derived from the name of a chapel that no longer exists.

Bernard Kellet

