

Vox Populi

8 July 2026

Saint Bonaventure was one of the great Saints of the 13th century, raising the prominence of the Franciscans in the life of the Church and contributing significantly to the brief reunification of the Eastern and Western Churches following the Second Council of Lyon.

Born Giovanni di Fidanza, he entered the Franciscan Order in 1243, taking the name of Bonaventura (meaning good fortune). He quickly ascended through the order's ranks, helping to defend the Order against the anti-mendicants. He was elected Minister General in 1257.

As head of the Order, he guided the Franciscans on an intellectual and moderate path, which helped it to become one of the most prominent orders in the Church.

After helping to procure the election of Pope Gregory X in 1268, he was given the title of Cardinal Bishop of Albano. In 1274, he was invited to contribute to the Second Council of Lyon. Here, his significant contributions led to a union between the Greek and Latin Churches. However, he died before the Council's conclusion.

Since his death, he has been revered as one of the greatest philosophers of the Middle Ages and was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1588. During his life, he enjoyed a friendship with Saint Thomas Aquinas, who would also become a Doctor of the Church.

Even several centuries later, he would have a profound influence on a young Joseph Ratzinger, (who would later become Pope Benedict XVI), one of the greatest theological minds of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

"I feel a certain nostalgia, for I am thinking back to my research as a young scholar on [St Bonaventure] who was particularly dear to me. My knowledge of him had quite an impact on my formation," he said during an audience in 2010.

“Among the great Christian figures who contributed to the composition of this harmony between faith and culture Bonaventure stands out, a man of action and contemplation, of profound piety and prudent government.”

Saint Bonaventure, pray for us.