

# St. Isidore the Farmer

**Feast Day:** May 15

**Born:** 1070 :: **Died:** 1130

Isidore was born at Madrid, in Spain. His parents were deeply religious and named their son after the great St. Isidore, archbishop of Seville, Spain, whose feast we celebrate on April 4.

Isidore's parents wanted to offer their son a good education, but they could not afford it. They were tenant farmers and like them, their son would be a farmer too.

When he grew up, Isidore went to work for a rich land owner, John de Vargas, in Madrid and worked there all his life. He married a good girl, Mary de la Cabeza, from a family as poor as his own. Isidore and Mary loved each other very much. They had a son, but he died when he was just a baby. Isidore and his wife offered to Jesus their sadness over the child's death, knowing that their son was happy with God forever.

St. Isidore went to Mass every morning before going to work. He worked hard even if he didn't feel like it. He plowed and planted and prayed. He called on Mary, the saints and his guardian angel and they helped turn his ordinary days into special, joyful times.

The world of faith became very real to St. Isidore. When he had a day off, Isidore spent extra time praying and adoring Jesus in church. Sometimes, on holidays, Isidore and his wife would visit a few neighboring parishes on a one day pilgrimage of prayer.

Once the parish had a dinner. Isidore arrived early and went into the church to pray. Then he arrived in the parish hall late and he didn't come in alone. He brought a group of beggars, too! The parishioners were upset. What if there wasn't enough food for all those beggars? But the more they filled up their plates, the more there was for everybody else. St. Isidore said kindly, "There is always enough for the poor of Jesus."

Stories of miracles began to spread about this farm worker saint. It is said that one day, Isidore was late back from Church, Mr. Vargas was looking for him and found angels plowing the fields in place of Isidore.

Isidore was an unselfish, loving and compassionate human being. He is one of Spain's most popular saints. Isidore died on May 15, 1130. In March, 1622, Pope Gregory XV proclaimed five great saints together. They were St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Philip Neri and St. Isidore the Farmer.

**Reflection:** *Isidore was special because he cared for the gifts that surround him. He let his faith in Jesus and the Church light up his whole life. Today we can make an effort to share the gifts we have especially with the poor.*