

## Lives of Saints

# St Josephine Bakhita

1869 - 1947

Feastday: 8th January



“Be good, love the Lord, pray for those who do not know Him. What a great grace it is to know God.”

**St Josephine Bakhita**

I was born in Sudan in 1869. Bakhita was not the name I received from my parents at birth. It was the name given to me by my Arab kidnappers, and it means “fortunate”. For eight years I was sold and resold as a slave in the markets of El Obeid and of Khartoum.

I was finally bought by an Italian Consul. In his service I experienced peace, warmth and moments of joy, even though I missed my own family. When the political situation forced the Consul to leave for Italy, I asked to go with him and with a friend of his. In Italy I served Angelo Michieli and his wife, babysitting their daughter Mimmina. When Mrs Michieli travelled to Africa, Mimmina and I stayed with the Canossian Sisters of the Institute of the Catechumens in Venice. There I came to know God. After several months in the catechumenate, I received the sacraments of Christian initiation and was given the new name, Josephine.

I also experienced the call to be a religious, and to give myself to the Lord in the Institute of St. Magdalene of Canossa. I was consecrated forever to God, my “Master”, in 1896. I lived in the Schio community for over 45 years, and was engaged in various services: cooking, sewing, embroidery and attending to the door. Everyone called me “the brown mother”. As I grew older I experienced long, painful years of sickness, but I continued to witness to faith, goodness and Christian hope. To those who visited me and asked me how I was, I always said: “As the Master desires.”

**S. I. D. C.**  
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