

MAY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Which saint is the patron of pharmacists and of the dying?

A. St James the Less (1st c.) St. James the Lesser (1st c.), also called St. James the Just, was one of the Twelve Apostles and the cousin of Jesus. Both James and his brother, St. Jude, began to follow Jesus in the second year of his ministry. After Jesus' ascension into heaven, James was given charge as bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, making him an important leader of the early Church. He was well-known for his prayer life and holiness. He died in the year 62 A.D. during the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero. St. James the Less is the patron saint of pharmacists and the dying. His feast day is May 3.

2. Which saint is the patron of drowning victims?

D. St Florian. St. Florian (C. 250-304 A.D.) was a commander in the Roman army in what is now Austria. He served during the reign of Emperor Diocletian, who violently persecuted Christians. Among Florian's military duties was the organization of firefighting brigades. St. Florian was secretly a Christian and was known for miraculously saving a town from being destroyed by fire; after praying to God for help, he extinguished a raging fire with a single bucket of water. Refusing to recant, St. Florian was then flayed alive, scourged, and martyred by being dumped in the river with a millstone attached to his body. St. Florian is the patron saint of firefighters, brewers, drowning victims, Austria, Poland, and against floods, fires, and battles. St. Florian's feast day is May 4.

3. Which saint was deemed 'Apostle to the Lepers' and contracted the disease while ministering to lepers?

E. St. Damien de Veuster (1840–1889), also known as St. Damien of Molokai. He was a priest from Belgium belonging to the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. He desired to be a missionary. His desire was fulfilled when he was sent to minister in Hawaii. The island was suffering from an influx of unknown diseases brought by foreigners, among them Hansen's disease (leprosy).

The island of Molokai became quarantined as a leper colony, and all lepers were forcibly exiled there. The local bishop believed that the people living on the island, numbering over 800 at the time, needed a priest. Yet, the bishop knew that ministering to a people of this contagious and deadly disease would be a death sentence for the priest who went. The bishop asked for priests to volunteer to serve in Molokai. After serving in Hawaii for nine years, Fr. Damien was the first to volunteer. He began his ministry to the lepers in 1873. He built a church on the island and did much to improve the morale and joy among the people. St. Damien lived and ministered at the Kalaupapa leper colony for 15 years, fully knowing that this decision would eventually cause him to contract and die of the horribly mutilating disease. St. Damien died of leprosy in 1889 at the age of 49. His feast day is May 10.

4. Which saint is the patron to reformed alcoholics?

C. St Matthias the Apostle (1st c.). St. Matthias the Apostle (1st c.) followed Jesus during his entire earthly ministry and was one of his 72 disciples. Matthias was chosen by the 11 Apostles to replace Judas Iscariot after his betrayal of Christ and subsequent suicide. St. Matthias devoted himself to preaching Christianity among the pagans, some of them barbarians and cannibals, all over Judea, Cappadocia, and Ethiopia for over 30 years.

St. Matthias preached the need for mortification of the flesh as an aid to growth in holiness. He was martyred for the cause of Christ, though there are conflicting traditions as to exactly where and how. St. Matthias is the patron saint of carpenters, tailors, and reformed alcoholics. His feast day is May 14. Why reformed alcoholics? I don't know but one story related to him is that he was forced to drink poison and survived the experience.

5. Which saint is the patron of those suffering mental or neurological disorders and illnesses and also of mental health professionals?

B. St Dymphna (7th c.). St. Dymphna was the daughter of a pagan Irish chieftain and a beautiful Christian noblewoman. Dymphna was raised as a Christian, and she consecrated her virginity to Christ at a young age. Dymphna's father loved his wife deeply. When her mother died, Dymphna's father was so overcome with grief that he became mentally unstable. Unable to find another suitable wife of equal character and beauty to his first wife, he attempted to marry Dymphna due to her close resemblance to her mother. Dymphna fled to Belgium but her father pursued her and killed her. The church where she is buried in Antwerp is credited with being the site of many miracles for those suffering epilepsy and mental illnesses. Her feast day is May 15.