

Name: Saint Josephine Bakhita

Born: 1869

Died: 1947



Biography

Early life

Josephine was born in Sudan in Africa. Her family belonged to a tribe called Daju and her uncle was a tribal chief. She had a very happy childhood until, at the age of eight, Josephine was kidnapped by Arab slave traders.

Slavery

For the next 12 years she was bought, sold and given away many times. She spent so much time as a slave that she forgot her own name.

As a slave Josephine was treated very badly by her owners. She was often beaten and led a very unhappy life. One day she was bought by an Italian family who were kinder than her previous owners. They travelled to Italy and Josephine worked as a nanny. After some time the family travelled back to Sudan and placed her in the care of the Canossian Sisters of Venice.

Becoming a nun

Whilst staying with the sisters she found out more about the Christian faith and strongly felt her calling was to God. When her Italian owners returned from Sudan they tried to take her away again, but the nuns fought her case and she was given her freedom. For the first time Josephine was free to do what she wanted with her life. She chose to become a nun and stay with the Canossian Sisters of Venice. Josephine served as a cook and used her knowledge to help other nuns prepare for their visits to Africa.

Talents

Sister Josephine suffered much physical pain and had to use a wheelchair but she always remained cheerful. Her greatest talent was her kindness towards others. She was so kind, she forgave those who had mistreated her in the past including her kidnappers. When speaking of them, she said she was grateful that they kidnapped her and made her a slave as this helped her to know Jesus Christ and enter His Church.

Death and canonization

Josephine died in 1947 and was canonized (made a Saint) in 2000. She is the patron saint of Sudan and her feast day is celebrated on February 8.

Name: Lionel Messi

Born: 1987



Biography

Early life

Messi was born in Rosario, Argentina. When Messi was five years old he started playing football for local clubs and it was clear from an early age that he was very talented. However, at the age of 11 he thought his dream of becoming a professional footballer was over when he was diagnosed with a growth hormone deficiency.

Overcoming illness

Messi's family did not have enough money to pay for his treatment, which cost over £500 per month. They approached Argentinian football clubs to ask if they would sign Messi and pay for his treatment, but no clubs would sign him.

Luckily, Barcelona Football Club in Spain had heard of Messi's talent. Barcelona signed him after watching him play, offering to pay for the medical bills if he was willing to move to start a new life in Spain. His dad moved with the young player to Europe but Messi's mum stayed in Argentina with his brothers and little sister. Messi was homesick and missed them terribly.

Football career

At the age of 16 he played his first game for the first team, impressing his team mates with his skills and style. Messi kept improving and soon became Barcelona's star player. He also plays for Argentina's national side. In 2012 he set a record for the most goals scored in a calendar year and Messi has won several awards.

Talents

Messi is 5 feet, 7 inches tall. Professional footballers are usually much taller, but Messi has not let this hold him back. He has worked to build up his talents of strength and speed to become one of the best footballers of his generation and one of the best in the history of the sport.

Helping charities

Messi has used his earnings and popularity to help different charities. He works with UNICEF and has set up his own charity. Having suffered from medical issues as a child, Messi supports projects helping vulnerable children, especially those who have disabilities. He gives money to health care, education and sport projects for children in Spain, Argentina and other places in the world. He says that he wants to use his wealth to help as many children as possible.

Name: Malala Yousafzai

Born: 1997



Biography:

Life in Pakistan

Malala was born in a village in Pakistan. Her father was a teacher who ran a girls' school. Malala loved school.

Everything changed when the Taliban (a violent group who follow extreme religious leaders) took control of her town. The extremists banned many things like owning a television and playing music and harshly punished those who broke their rules. They said girls could no longer go to school.

Speaking out

But Malala continued to go to school. She used her talents of bravery and public speaking to stand up and say that girls everywhere had a right to education. This made Malala a target. In October 2012 a masked gunman boarded Malala's school bus and asked, "Who is Malala?" He shot her on the left side of her head.

Malala woke up 10 days later in a hospital in Birmingham, England. The doctors and nurses told her about the attack and that people around the world were praying for her recovery.

After months of surgeries and rehabilitation, Malala joined her family in her new home in the UK. It was too dangerous for Malala and her family to return to their home in Pakistan. Malala knew she had a choice: she could live a quiet life or she could be brave and use her talents to help other girls.

Helping girls around the world

Malala decided to continue her fight for every girl to be able to go to school. She started a charity that works to give every girl an opportunity to achieve a future she chooses. In 2014 Malala became the youngest person ever to win a Nobel Prize.

Now she is studying at the University of Oxford whilst also speaking out for women's rights and campaigning for all girls around the world to have free, safe, quality education.

Name: Marie Curie

Born: 1867

Died: 1943



Biography

Early life

Marie was born Maria Salomea Skłodowska in Poland. She was the youngest of five children. Poland was ruled by Russia at this time, and Russia banned children from learning in Polish. Marie's parents thought this was wrong so they sent her to a secret school where she showed her talent for science.

After school Marie went to Paris to study Physics and Mathematics at University. Very few women went to university and even fewer studied science. As a student she had little money and would often faint from hunger. Despite these challenges Marie was determined to finish her studies.

Working as a scientist

In Paris she met and married Pierre Curie, a Professor of Physics. Marie and Pierre loved science and experimenting. The couple discovered two new chemical elements, polonium (named after her home country Poland) and radium. In 1903, Pierre and Marie Curie won a Nobel Prize.

Sadly Pierre died in 1906. Marie was devastated but continued with her research. She was offered a job at the University of Paris, a first for a woman. Through her research, Marie discovered that you could use radium as a cancer treatment and in 1911 she won a second Nobel Prize. Because of Marie's discovery and work on radiotherapy millions of people around the world have been cured of cancer.

World War I

During World War I (1914-18), Curie was the first to use mobile X-ray vehicles to treat wounded soldiers. These vehicles became known as petites Curies ('little Curies') and helped 1 million soldiers.

Death

Curie worked with radioactive materials throughout her career, at a time when the damaging effects of radiation were not known. In 1934 she died from a condition caused by her use of radioactive substances. All the books she used, including a cookery book have to be kept in a special metal box as they are still radioactive.

Name: Jamie Oliver

Born: 1975



Biography

Early life

Jamie Oliver was born in Essex in 1975. As a child Jamie loved cooking. His parents owned a pub restaurant and he would often help out in the kitchen. Jamie is dyslexic and he found school a challenge. At 16, he left school to go to Westminster Catering College.

Working as a chef

After college Jamie went to France to learn more about cooking. He then began working as a chef in London restaurants. Jamie was working in a London restaurant kitchen when he was spotted by a BBC documentary team. They saw that Jamie was talented in front of the camera and he was offered his own TV show. Since then, Jamie has appeared on many TV shows, written recipe books and opened restaurants all around the world.

Helping disadvantaged young people

Jamie wanted to help other young people who had struggled in school. In 2002 he opened the Fifteen Foundation, a restaurant which trains unemployed young people in how to cook and work in a restaurant. The Fifteen Foundation was so successful that he opened more restaurants around the world.

Healthy Eating

Obesity is a growing problem in the UK, causing serious health problems and shortening lives. Jamie wanted to use his fame to help people as early as possible, so tried to encourage children to eat healthier foods.

To do this, Jamie began a campaign to ban unhealthy food in British schools and to get children eating nutritious food instead. In the TV series Jamie's School Dinners, Jamie told schools that they should not be serving children junk food and used his cooking talents to show schools how they can serve healthy cheap and tasty meals.

The government saw his campaign and changed the types of food served in schools. He then took his campaign to the US, encouraging people to change their diet and eat healthy food.

Name: Nelson Mandela

Born: 1918

Died: 2013



Biography

Racism in South Africa

Mandela grew up in a racist and divided South Africa. This became worse in 1948 when the racist Nationalist Party of South Africa introduced new laws of apartheid or separateness. This meant that white and black people had to live, learn and spend their leisure time separately. Only white people could vote in elections and they held most of the power and wealth of the country.

Fighting for change

Mandela believed that black and white people should be treated the same. He spoke out against racism and worked as a lawyer to fight for people's rights. Mandela also joined the African National Congress, a group who aimed to bring together all African people to bring change and equal rights.

To challenge apartheid the African National Congress started campaigns encouraging people to disobey the government and peacefully protest.

Trial and imprisonment

In 1962 Mandela was arrested for disobeying the government and was put on trial. During his trial he used his talent for public speaking to give a speech which became famous. He said he was willing to die for equal rights in South Africa. Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment and served 27 years as a prisoner, 18 of them on Robben Island.

Release

Over time Mandela became a famous prisoner and there were calls all around the world to 'Free Nelson Mandela!'. On his release, Mandela showed that he had a talent for forgiveness, as he said that he did not feel angry about being imprisoned for so long. He just wanted to think about the future and make South Africa equal for all.

Achievements

He worked with the South African President FW de Klerk to end apartheid and the two won a Nobel Prize for their work in 1993. In 1994 the first elections where all the people could vote were held in South Africa and Mandela became the first black president of South Africa.

Mandela retired in 1999 but became a symbol of peace and freedom. He died in 2013 at the age of 95.