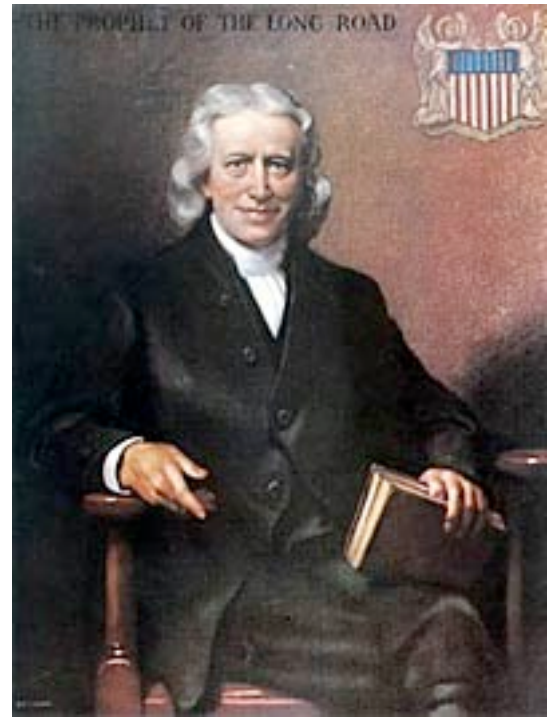


## Saints of the Week for November 14

George Whitefield (1714-1770) and Francis Asbury (1745-1816)

*Observed 15 November*



These two men were renowned preachers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whose influence was profound upon the growth of the British colonies into the American nation and upon the development of Christianity in this new culture.

George Whitefield was born in 1714 in England. He was very poor, and was able to study at Oxford only by working as a servant to other students. There he joined the Holy Club with fellow students John and Charles Wesley. Like the Wesleys, he was ordained to the Anglican priesthood but departed from traditional practice by preaching in all manner of non-traditional, often open-air places, the better to reach working class people. His passionate, dramatic preaching met with extraordinary success in England and eventually he followed the Wesleys to Georgia. In the American colonies, he was instrumental in inaugurating the Great Awakening of 1740, an extraordinary religious revival. Whitefield has been described as the most famous preacher in 18<sup>th</sup> century America, and the first American celebrity. He preached throughout the colonies and was known everywhere. His influence was extraordinary and his friendships included people of all philosophical and religious persuasions, including Benjamin Franklin. He is credited with converting thousands of colonists to Christianity. Although he died before the Revolution, he helped greatly in the development of the ideals enshrined in it.

Francis Asbury was born in 1745 in England into a family who were members of the Wesley's Methodist movement. He was ordained very young and went to the American colonies to help with the work there, shortly before the Revolutionary War. Another dynamic preacher who preached to huge crowds in all sorts of places, he was appointed by John Wesley in 1780 to oversee the Methodist work in America. His appointment is considered the beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He remained their bishop and leader until his death in 1816. He was a beloved and inspiring preacher, said by many to speak with the very voice of God. Under his leadership the Methodist church grew at an extraordinary rate, spreading particularly in the frontier areas as the young nation expanded westward.

Whitefield and Asbury are honored for using their great God-given gifts for the benefit of all people on this continent as new ideas and a new country were being born. They brought Christ into the midst of the thought and passions of the common people and the leadership, having an impact that continues today.

*Lessons* Numbers 11:24-30; Psalm 97:8-12; I Thessalonians 5:13b-24; John 17:5-13

*Collect* Holy God, you so inspired Francis Asbury and George Whitefield with evangelical zeal that their faithful proclamation of the Gospel caused a great awakening among those who heard them: Inspire us, we pray, by your Holy Spirit, that, like them, we may be eager to share your Good News and lead many to Jesus Christ, in whom is eternal life and peace; and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.