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# THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

"Let the children come to me, do not hinder them," (Mk 10:14)

## A Season of Saints!

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Roussel Davids Byles was born to a Protestant minister and his wife in Leeds, England in 1870. While a student at Oxford, studying math, history and theology, he decided to become Catholic. He entered the seminary and in 1902 was ordained a priest. He changed his name to Thomas after his favorite Saint, Thomas Aquinas. Ten years later his younger brother William, who had also converted to Catholicism and then moved to America, fell in love with Katherine Russell of Brooklyn, New York. When they planned to marry, William asked his brother to officiate at the ceremony. This meant that Father Byles had to travel from England to the United States on a ship. He was scheduled to travel on another White Star liner but switched at the last minute to the R.M.S. Titanic. His second class ticket cost £13 (\$50). On the morning of Sunday, April 14, 1912, Father Byles offered two Masses on the Titanic. He delivered a sermon in English and in French stating: "Our prayers and the Sacraments of the Church are spiritual lifeboats taking us back to God." Shortly before midnight, Father was out on the deck praying his breviary when the great ship struck an iceberg. After the collision—by many accounts—Father was a hero by helping the third class passengers up the stairs, into the lifeboats, giving general absolution, keeping the people calm and preparing their souls for death. There were not enough lifeboats to save all of the passengers. A witness stated, "Father Byles could have been saved, but he would not leave. After I got in the boat, which was the last one to leave, and we were slowly going further away from the ship, I could hear distinctly the voice of the priest and the responses to his prayers. Then they became fainter and fainter, until I could only hear the strains of *Nearer, My God, To Thee*."

Mrs. Prather

CatholicKids101.com

"We are kids telling kids about Jesus!"



## Father Thomas Byles

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William and Katherine did not reschedule their wedding. The bride and groom went home from the ceremony, changed into mourning clothes and returned to the Church for Father Byles' memorial Mass. Later that year, William and Katherine traveled to Europe. When in London, they stopped to visit someone William knew in the Houses of Parliament. Katherine had to wait outside in a parlor because at that time women could not enter. A young man came to her and said, "Hello, Mrs. Byles. I am here to give you a tour. My name is Winston Churchill." From London they traveled on to Rome where they had a private audience with the Pope. During that visit, Pope Saint Pius X acknowledged Father Byles' heroism and said he was "a martyr for the Church."