Saint Vincent Ferrer was a Valencian Dominican friar and preacher, who gained acclaim as a missionary and a logician. The difficulties and separation that the Church is dealing with today is nothing in comparison to the great divides that plagued our Church during the lifetime of this Saint. **If any Saint is a Patron of Reconciliation and bringing opposing sides together, it is Saint Vincent Ferrer.**

Despite opposition from his parents, he entered the Dominican order at the age of 19. A very bright student, Saint Vincent, was ordained a priest by Cardinal Peter De Luna, who would play a very important role in his life. With great passion and enthusiasm, Saint Vincent practiced his Dominican responsibilities, which included many hours of study, prayer and preaching. Because of his accomplishments, he was chosen prior of the Dominican House shortly after his ordination.

The Western Schism, or Papal Schism, was a split within the Roman Catholic Church that lasted from 1378 to 1417. During that time, three men simultaneously claimed to be the true Pope. Driven by politics, rather than any theological disagreement, the schism was ended by the Council of Constance. But during this time, Saint Vincent who was in service to Cardinal De Luna, worked to persuade the Spanish people to follow Clement, one of the three Popes who was serving in France. When Clement died, Cardinal De Luna was elected and became Benedict XIII.

Saint Vincent continued to work for Benedict XIII, even though he was stubborn and not favored among the people, or the King. Vincent became disillusioned and very ill, but finally took up the work of simply “going through the world preaching Christ,” though he felt that any renewal in the Church depended on healing the schism. An eloquent and fiery preacher, he spent the last 20 years of his life spreading the “Good News” in Spain, France, Switzerland, the Low Countries and Lombardy, stressing the need of repentance and the fear of coming judgment. He became known as the “Angel of the Judgment.”

Vincent tried unsuccessfully, in 1408 and 1415, to persuade his former friend, Benedict XIII, to resign. He finally concluded that Benedict XIII was not the true Pope. Though very ill, he mounted the pulpit before an assembly over which Benedict XIII himself was presiding, and thundered his denunciation of the man who had ordained him a priest. Benedict XIII fled for his life, abandoned by those who had formerly supported him. Strangely, Vincent had no part in the Council of Constance, which ended the schism.

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**Birth:** January 23, 1350  
**Death:** April 5, 1419  
**Feast Day:** April 5th  
**Canonized:** June 3, 1455  
**Patronage:** Builders, Construction, Plumbers, Spanish Orphanages, Fishermen and Reconciliation

The flame placed above St. Vincent’s head in many pictures and statues represents his fervent preaching.