



## Venerable Nelson Baker

*“Apostle of Charity”*

### **Prayer for Canonization**

Lord, you gave us Your servant, Nelson Baker, as an example of service to the poor, homeless, and young. By Father Baker’s ardent concern for those in need, inflame our hearts and lives with compassion for the poor, justice for the oppressed, hope for the troubled, and courage to those in doubt. We pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Victory, if it be Your will, that Your servant, Nelson Baker, may one day be canonized.

*Amen. Glory Be (3 times)*

## MSGR. NELSON HENRY BAKER, V.G.

Msgr. Nelson Baker, most commonly known as “Father Baker,” was born on February 16, 1842, in Buffalo, N.Y. While growing up, he assisted in his father’s general store. Nelson enlisted in the Union Army in 1863 for 30 days of active duty during the Civil War. Upon his return, he began a grain and feed business with partner Joseph Meyer. Five years later, Nelson pursued a calling to the priesthood, entering Our Lady of Angels Seminary in Niagara Falls, N.Y. He was ordained a diocesan priest on March 19, 1876.

For five years, Father Baker served as assistant at the Limestone Hill Institutions in Lackawanna, N.Y., which included an orphanage, boys’ protectory and small parish. After serving for one year as curate at St. Mary Parish in Corning, N.Y., he was called back to Lackawanna to take over the charitable organization that would become the Our Lady of Victory (OLV) Institutions. Father Baker grew the existing services and expanded the scope of ministry to include an industrial school, a home for unwed mothers and infants, and a hospital. He was named Vicar General of the Buffalo Diocese in 1903, a Domestic Prelate in 1904, and later raised to the rank of Prothonotary Apostolic. In thanksgiving to his patroness for all her help, Father Baker built OLV National Shrine & Basilica, which was consecrated and named a minor basilica in 1926. He continued his outreach to those in need until his death on July 29, 1936.

In 1987, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints approved the initiation of Father Baker’s cause for canonization. His earthly remains were moved from a nearby cemetery to a tomb within OLV Basilica in March of 1999. Pope Benedict XVI declared Father Baker Venerable on January 14, 2011.

**OLV Charities**

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