

Saint Marcellinus of Ancona

SAINT OF THE DAY

09_01_2021



In his *Dialogues*, St. Gregory the Great (540-604) called him a "man of venerable virtue" and recalled the miracle when he extinguished a fire that was devastating Ancona. The biographers of Saint Marcellinus († 9 January 577) report that he was born of the noble Boccamaiori family and that he became Bishop of the city of Conero in 551, during the pontificate of Vigilius I. Instead of being proud of the high office that had been entrusted to him, Marcellinus mortified himself with fasting and continual penance, which he offered to God together with vigils, prayers and works of charity.

In the *Istoria d'Ancona*, written in the first half of the 19th century by abbot Antonio Leoni, who drew on a number of ancient sources, we read what happened when the fire "untreated at first" was fuelled by the wind. The city's inhabitants implored the help of their bishop who, after raising his eyes to heaven, was carried on a chair (he had difficulty moving due to a severe form of gout) to the point where the fire was most threatening. There he held and read an Evangeliary (or Gospel book) containing the passages of the synoptic Gospels, with notes relating to the liturgical use of Ancona. The Evangeliary was partly scorched by a sudden upsurge of the flames which, however, went out the instant the Saint suddenly shut the book, to everyone's gratitude.

The Evangeliary of Saint Marcellinus, written in uncials and illuminated (on the eve of the saint's feast, it used to be carried in procession through the city's streets), is still kept in the Diocesan Museum of Ancona, after being restored in the 20th century.