

Saint Nicholas of Tolentino

SAINT OF THE DAY

10_09_2023



He is famous for his gifts as a thaumaturge and particularly invoked for the liberation of souls in Purgatory. Saint Nicholas of Tolentino (1245-1305) was born in Sant'Angelo in Pontano, a small town in the Marche region, from two devout Christians. According to tradition, his parents chose his name in gratitude to St Nicholas of Bari, to whom they had prayed because they could not have children. He decided to embrace religious life after listening to the sermon of an Augustinian monk, centred on a teaching from the First Letter of John: *"Nolite diligere mundum, nec ea quae sunt in mundo, quia mundus transit et concupiscentia ejus"*

” (cf. 1 Jn 2).

He professed his solemn vows among the Hermits of Saint Augustine before he was nineteen. At 24 he was ordained a priest by St Benvenuto Scotivoli. He was sent from one convent to another, until in 1275 he was transferred permanently to Tolentino (about twenty kilometres from his native town), where he lived preaching almost every day until his earthly death, thirty years later. He was called “the angel of the confessional” because of the time he dedicated to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and because, in order to help the faithful to come closer to God, he often took upon himself the burden of penance. He fasted four days a week on bread and water and kept vigil in prayer until late at night, sleeping a few hours on a straw mattress. On Fridays, in union with the Passion of Christ, he would flagellate himself with a scourge that he had made himself.

He had an unparalleled solicitude towards the poor. He continually urged the prior to be generous in his donations, he brought bread to the needy in person and he went knocking on the doors of the rich to collect alms for them. He was also very well known as an exorcist and there are traces of this charism of his even after he went to Heaven, as testified by the various *ex-voto* that indicate him as a liberator of the possessed. He had a filial love for Our Lady. In the midst of the sufferings and renunciations offered to God, he was gratified with extraordinary mystical experiences. The most famous is the vision he had the night between 9 and 10 December 1294 when he observed the angels in the act of relocating for the first time the **Holy House of Nazareth** to the Marche region, then part of the Papal States.

On his deathbed, to a brother who asked him what the reason for his contemplating gaze was, he replied: “I see the Lord my God, beside his most holy Mother and my father St Augustine”. His mortal remains are kept in the crypt of the basilica dedicated to him in Tolentino, with the Holy Arms in a separate chapel.