



St. Bernadine of Siena

Sr. M. Gerard Vincent, OSF

ST. BERNADINE was born of a noble family of Siena. From his earliest years, he gave signs of sanctity. His pious parents reared him in the faith. While studying, he would sometimes give up his playtime and seriously apply himself to works of piety, prayer and fasting. He had a great tender love for the Blessed Virgin Mary. His devotion for the poor was extraordinary. His unbelievable charity for them was such that when a terrible pestilence raged he took care of the sick with such compassion, laboring for their souls as well as their bodies.

St. Bernadine guarded his chastity as a holy thing, and even though he was of handsome appearance, no one ever dared to say an improper word in his presence.

In his early youth, after a serious illness of about four months, which he bore with the greatest patience, he began to think of embracing the religious life. To prepare himself for this, he went to live in a little hut outside the city and there began to lead a most austere life in every way, assiduously beseeching Almighty God to show him the path he was to follow. Divine inspiration led him to the Franciscans.

In the Franciscan order, he excelled in the virtues of humility and patience. The superior having noticed his great sanctity, imposed upon him the duty of preaching. St. Bernadine most humbly accepted his office, imposed upon him by obedience, though he was quite aware the weakness and hoarseness of his voice unfitted him for it. He, nevertheless, besought God's help and was miraculously freed from these impediments.

During these times in the fourteenth century, Italy abounded in vice and crimes, bloody civil wars and persecutions. These were so widespread that all things were in a state of utter confusion.

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