



St. Ignatius of Laconi

Born: 17 December 1701 at Laconi, Nuoro, Italy as Vincenzo Peis

Died: 11 May 1781 in Cagliari, Italy of natural causes

Venerated: in Roman Catholic Church

Beatified: 16 June 1940, Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City by Pope Pius XII

Canonized: 21 October 1951, Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City by Pope Pius XII

Feast: 11 May

Patronage: Oristano, Students, Beggars

Ignazio da Laconi (10 December 1701 - 11 May 1781) - born Vincenzo Peis - was a Roman Catholic professed religious born in Sardinia, from the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin. His conquering a serious illness prompted him to consecrate his life to God and therefore entered the religious life though not as an ordained priest. Peis was better known in Sardinia for his humble demeanor coupled with his concern for those who were poor. He mingled with all people he met and was generous towards those who were ill. But he became known as a wonder worker and it was claimed that he had performed 121 miracles during his life.

Peis' grave soon became a place in which miracles flourished and this was one dimension towards the opening of his cause for canonization. He was beatified on 16 June 1940 and was canonized later in 1951. His body in Cagliari is still incorrupt.

Life

Vincenzo Peis was born on 10 December 1701 in Sardinia as one of seven children to the poor peasants Mattia Peis Cadello and Anna Maria Sanna Casu. He was baptized as "Francesco Ignazio Vincenzo" since he was born out of a difficult pregnancy in which her mother invoked the intercession of Francis of Assisi.

Peis worked on the fields to support his parents. He suffered a serious illness circa 1719 (aged seventeen) that made him vow that he would consecrate himself to God and join the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin if he managed to recover from it. He did so recover but put off the fulfilment of his vow after his father convinced him to wait; his father was anxious about it because he depended on Peis for support in the fields. But there seems to be some indication that his parents objected to his entering the order. In 1721 he was in danger once more when the horse he was riding panicked. He could have been thrown off but he called upon the assistance of Francis of Assisi and renewed the vow he had made during his illness. This time his parents did not raise objections to his becoming a friar and granted him their blessing. In his childhood he often called the local church his "home" and took Lawrence of Brindisi as his personal role model.

He asked for admission at the convent in Cagliari but the superiors there hesitated because of his delicate health. He then called upon an influential friend who interceded for him and he was allowed to be received into the novitiate on 10 November 1721. Peis made his profession on 10 November 1722. Despite his infirmities his ardor allowed him to attend the spiritual exercises of the order and to excel in perfection of his observance of the order's Rule. From 1722 until 1737 he worked at the house's weaving shed and from 1737 onwards was an alms beggar.

Peis spent his time in a number of different occupations and was later appointed as the quester of alms due to his humble and modest conduct. He had good relations with the people in Cagliari who realized that although he was begging alms he was also giving back to them in a spiritual manner. His modest demeanor was seen as a quiet sermon for all who saw him going about, which made him a noted figure. He seldom spoke; when required he spoke with exceptional kindness and great affection. He would also instruct the children and the uneducated that he came across, and went out to comfort the sick and urge sinners to be converted and to perform penance.

There is a legend that he was known for his strict and total obedience to his superiors even when it required the denial of his own will. He was accustomed to go to the house of an usurer because he feared that in accepting an alms from him he would share the guilt of this man's injustices. But when the man complained and the superior commanded him, he accepted alms from the man. It was when he returned that he opened the sack that the usurer offered and blood started to flow out. To those around him the Peis said: "This is the blood of the poor squeezed from them by usury". Peis' sister had often written to him asking him to visit her so that she could get his advice in certain matters. Peis had no mind to heed her request but when his superior ordered him to do so he at once undertook the visit. But he left again as soon as he had given the required advice. Peis' brother was sent to prison and it was hoped that - in view of reputation of Peis - the latter could obtain his brother's release. His superior sent him to speak to the governor but he asked that his brother be dealt with according to justice.

Despite his poor health and other infirmities, he continued in his work no matter how arduous it seemed. Even after he became blind in 1779, he continued to work on for the benefit of those around him. Peis died on 11 May 1781 at 3:00pm in Cagliari, where his remains were interred.

Canonization

The cause for canonization opened after his death in 1844 (local level) and there were numerous reports of miracles attributed to him occurring at his tomb. The cause com-

menced and investigated the life and works of the late friar (a Positio was sent to the Congregation for Rites in 1868) while the confirmation of his heroic virtue enabled Pope Pius IX - on 26 May 1869 - to title Peis as Venerable. The confirmation of two miracles attributed to him (occurring after death) enabled Pope Pius XII to preside over his beatification on 16 June 1940. The ratification of an additional two miracles (occurring after beatification) allowed for Pius XII to canonize the friar on 21 October 1951 in Saint Peter's Basilica.

The Positio dossier compiled during the cause noted that there were 121 miracles attributed to Peis during his life with an additional 86 reported after his death.