



St. Rita of Cascia

Born: 1386 at Roccaparena, Umbria, Italy

Died: 22 May 1457 at the Augustinian convent at Cascia, Italy of tuberculosis

Canonized: 24 May 1900 by Pope Leo XIII

Patronage: abuse victims; spouse abuse victims, against infertility or sterility; infertile people, against loneliness, against sickness or bodily ills; sick people, against wounds; wounded people, desperate, forgotten, lost or impossible causes, difficult marriages, parenthood, widows, Cascia, Italy, Dalayap, Philippines, Igaras, Iloilo, Philippines

Feast: May 22

Daughter of Antonio and Amata Lotti, a couple known as the Peacemakers of Jesus; they had Rita late in life. From her early youth, Rita visited the Augustinian nuns at Cascia, Italy, and showed interest in a religious life. However, when she was twelve, her parents betrothed her to Paolo Mancini, an ill-tempered, abusive individual who worked as town watchman, and who was dragged into the political disputes of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. Disappointed but obedient, Rita married him when she was 18, and was the mother of twin sons. She put up with Paolo's abuses for eighteen years before he was ambushed and stabbed to death. Her sons swore vengeance on the killers of their father, but through the prayers and interventions of Rita, they forgave the offenders.

Upon the deaths of her sons, Rita again felt the call to religious life. However, some of the sisters at the Augustinian monastery were relatives of her husband's murderers, and she was denied entry for fear of causing dissension. Asking for the intervention of Saint John the Baptist, Saint Augustine of Hippo, and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, she managed to bring the warring factions together, not completely, but sufficiently that there was peace, and she was admitted to the monastery of Saint Mary Magdalen at age 36.

Rita lived 40 years in the convent, spending her time in prayer and charity, and working for peace in the region. She was devoted to the Passion, and in response to a prayer to suffer as Christ, she received a chronic head wound that appeared to have been caused

by a crown of thorns, and which bled for 15 years. Confined to her bed the last four years of her life, eating little more than the Eucharist, teaching and directing the younger sisters. Near the end she had a visitor from her home town who asked if she'd like anything; Rita's only request was a rose from her family's estate. The visitor went to the home, but it being January, knew there was no hope of finding a flower; there, sprouted on an otherwise bare bush, was a single rose blossom. Among the other areas, Rita is well-known as a patron of desperate, seemingly impossible causes and situations. This is because she has been involved in so many stages of life - wife, mother, widow, and nun, she buried her family, helped bring peace to her city, saw her dreams denied and fulfilled - and never lost her faith in God, or her desire to be with Him.