



St. Gaspare Bufalo

Born: 6 January 1786 at Rome, Italy

Died: 28 December 1837 of cholera, buried at Santa Maria in Trivio, Italy

Canonized: 12 June 1954 by Pope Pius XII

Also known as Apostle of Rom, Caspar Bufalo, Caspar del Bufalo, Gaspare del Bufalo, Hammer of Italian Freemasonry, Kasper del Bufalo, Martello dei Carbonari

Son of Antonio del Bufalo, a chef to Prince Altieri, and Annunziata Quartironi. As an infant he suffered from an eye condition that threatened to blind him; he was cured in 1788 following prayers for the intervention of Saint Francis Xavier. Studied at the Collegium Romanum from age twelve, and considered becoming a Jesuit. President of the newly instituted catechetical school of Santa Maria del Pianto at age 19. Ordained on 31 July 1808. On 23 October 1808 he, with his friends Father Bonanni, Father Santelli and Father Gonnelli, founded the nocturnal Oratory of Saint Mary in Vinci, Italy. On 8 December 1808 he helped Father Albertini found the Confraternity of the Precious Blood in San Nicola Arcella, Italy.

Following Rome's fall to the French in 1809, the Papal States were suppressed on 17 May, Pope Pius VII was deported on 6 July, and priests were ordered to take an oath of loyalty to Napoleon. Gaspare refused, and on 13 June 1810 was exiled for five years with many other priests first to Piacenza, Italy, and then Bologna, Italy. On 13 September 1811 he refused a second time to take the oath; he was lodged in San Giovanni prison, then the prison of Imola, Italy and then the fortress in Imola. A third refusal led to his transfer to the fortress in Lugo, Italy on 16 May 1813. Following a fourth refusal, on 10 December 1813, he was sentenced to exile in Corsica. While waiting for transport in Florence, Italy he received an invitation to join the Evangelical Workers, a group of priests who preach home missions. Though it was questionable at the time that he could help them, Gaspare enthusiastically joined.

Less than a month later, Murat restored liberty to all priests who had been arrested or exiled for refusing to take the oath. In February 1814, Gaspare returned to Rome, Italy after four years of captivity, and in December he began preaching missions.

In July of 1815, Gaspare renounced his position as canon of Saint Mark's in order to concentrate on missions. He helped formally start the Missioners of the Precious Blood (C.P.P.S.) in 1815 at Giano dell'Umbria, Italy, a congregation devoted to preaching and to bring the sacraments back to war-torn Italy; it was under the patronage of Francis Xavier. Many houses were established in the next few years, and on 27 December 1817 Gaspare was elected First Promotor and Missionary of the Missioners. Many opposed his good work, and spoke against him to Pope Leo XII and Pope Pius VIII, but after they spoke to him personally, both approved of his work.

In 1821 Pope Pius VII assigned Gaspare to clean up provinces overrun with highway bandits, and to open six mission houses in the area; Gaspare spent the next five years in the pulpit, call for reform. In February 1826 he was chosen papal nuncio to Brazil. Gaspare begged to be released from the assignment so he could continue to preach, but was forced to spend eight months in the position. He then returned to his Congregation's motherhouse of San Felice in October 1826, and resumed preaching and tending to the Missionaries's houses for his last ten years.