



## St. Maria de Mattias

**Born:** 4 February 1805 at Vallecorsa, Frosinone, Papal States (modern Italy)

**Died:** 20 August 1866 in Rome, Italy of natural causes, buried in the Verano cemetery, Rome, relics venerated in Rome at the Church of the Precious Blood

**Canonized:** 18 May 2003 by Pope John Paul II at Vatican Basilica.

Born to a pious and educated upper class family. Though women of her day were forbidden a formal education, she learned to read and write, and much about her faith at home from her father. Being an upper class girl of the time, she grew up isolated and self-involved, but in her mid-teens she felt the hollowness of her life, and began to search for more meaning. She prayed for enlightenment and received a mystical vision that led her to leave home and wander the roads, explaining the love of God to any who would listen. At age 17 she attended a mission preached by Saint Gaspare de Bufalo, and saw the obvious changes to people who attended. She wanted to have the same effect, and with the aid of Venerable Giovanni Merlini she founded the Congregation of the Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ in Acuto, Italy on 4 March 1834, a woman's congregation for teaching girls. She expanded their work to teaching and catechizing women and boys. Though, due to the social mores of the time she was not allowed to speak to men, they would often gather on their own, sometimes in hiding, to listen to her teaching. Pope Pius IX assigned her to running the San Luigi Hospice in Rome, and from there she worked to expand the Adorers. The congregation experienced occasional opposition from the clergy, but always support from the laity; they ran 70 schools by Mary's death, most in small isolated towns, and over 400 by her beatification.