

Maria De Mattias died at Rome on 20 August 1866 and was buried in Rome's Verano Cemetery, according to the desire of Pope Pius IX, who chose a tomb for her and commissioned a bas-relief on it depicting the vision of Ezechiel: "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord".

Her reputation for holiness remained alive after her death. The process for her beatification began thirty years later, culminating in that blessed event 1 October 1950, when Pius XII pronounced her "Blessed." During the Consistory of 7 March 2003, Pope John Paul II set 18 May 2003 as the date for her canonization.

*(Excerpted from: www.vatican.va)



Saint Maria Maltida de Mattias Incorrupt Body

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Saint Maria Maltida de Mattias, A.S.C.

Feast Day: August 20



Attribute: Foundress

Major Accomplishment: Chapel of the Precious Blood

Saint Maria Maltida De Mattias, A.S.C. **(1805-1866)**

*Maria De Mattias was born on 4 February 1805 at Vallecorsa, the southernmost town of the Papal States, in the geographical province of Frosinone,. Her family was not without wealth and learning—even if women were forbidden to study—nor did it lack a deep Christian faith.

Through dialog with her father, Maria learned and internalized not only the truths of the faith, but also, and especially, episodes and persons of the Sacred Scriptures. Her father read the Scriptures to her when she was still very young, and she developed a great love for Jesus, the Lamb sacrificed for the salvation of humanity. All of this happened while Vallecorsa and surrounding areas were experiencing the tragic period of banditry, 1810-1825. In Maria's soul, in fact, there was a comparison being made between the human blood poured out in hatred and revenge and the blood of Christ poured out for love, a Blood which saves.

Without formal education and without outside contacts, because of her social class, Maria spent her childhood and early adolescence withdrawn and focused on her beauty. But when she reached the age of sixteen or seventeen, she began to search for the meaning of her life; she felt a need for a boundless love. Again, it was through dialog with her father, to whom she revealed her interior darkness and through her having asked Our Lady to “give her light”, that God let her experience the beauty of his love in a “mystical” way. It was manifested in its fullness in the Crucified Christ, in Christ who gives all his Blood.

This experience was the source, the force, and the motivation that brought her to the roads of Italy “to make known to everyone the tender love of the Heavenly Father”, as she said, or “the Crucified Love Jesus”. She was convinced that the reformation of society begins in the heart of the person, and that a person becomes transformed when she/he comes to understand how precious each one is in God's eyes, how much each person is loved...Jesus gave all his Blood to save the human race.

This had been Maria's experience; therefore she tried to lead all people, young and adult, to discover what had been revealed to her and changed her. She had also experienced that this transformation is possible for everyone when, in 1822, when she was seventeen, Gaspar DelBufalo (now “Saint”) went to preach a mission at Vallecorsa. She saw how the townspeople changed. It was that occasion that generated the dream in her heart to do what Fr. Gaspar was doing.

Under the guidance of one of St. Gaspar's companions, (now Venerable) Fr. Giovanni Merlini, she founded the Congregation of the Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ in Acuto (Frosinone) on 4 March 1834, at the age of twenty-nine. She had been called by the Administrator of Anagni, Bishop Giuseppe Maria Lais, to teach the young girls—she had learned to read and write on her own.

Maria, however, who nurtured a dream to reform society and the world, did not limit her activity to the school. She also gathered mothers and young boys to catechize them, to encourage them to love Jesus and to teach them to live Christian lives, according to their state. The men, to whom she could not speak according to the customs of the time, went spontaneously to listen to her, even in hiding. The shepherds, abandoned to their own resources, asked to be instructed by her, even after sundown. People flocked to the religious functions to listen to the teacher.

Thus, Maria, from the timid and introverted girl that she was, had become a preacher who attracted little girls, adults, the simple and the learned, lay persons and priests. It was because, when she spoke about Jesus and the mysteries of the faith, it was as though she had seen these realities, personally. Her consuming desire was that “not even one drop of the Divine Blood would be lost”; that it would reach all sinners to purify them and so that, washed in that river of mercy, they would rediscover the right way to peace and union among people.

This zeal was caught by many young women and, through them, Maria De Mattias was able to open about seventy communities during her lifetime, three of which were in Germany and England. Almost all were in small isolated towns of Central Italy, except for Rome, to which she was called by Pius IX for the San Luigi Hospice and for the school of Civitavecchia.

Maria De Mattias life was one lived with the one desire of “giving pleasure to Jesus” who had stolen her heart in her youth, and in a joyful commitment to save “the dear neighbor” from ignorance regarding the mystery of God's love for humanity. All of this led her not to spare her energies; she did not give up when faced with disappointments or difficulties; she always worked in deep communion with the local and universal Church, and for love of Her.