

communing with Christ. At first He always addressed her as "*poverella*", and only after some time of probation and purification did He call her "My child". But Margaret, though coming to lead more and more the life of a recluse, was yet active in the service of others. She prevailed upon the city of Cortona to found a hospital for the sick-poor, and to supply nurses for the hospital. She instituted a congregation of Tertiary Sisters, known as *le poverelle*. She also established a confraternity of Our Lady of Mercy; the members of which bound themselves to support the hospital, and to help the needy wherever found, and in particularly the respectable poor. Moreover on several occasions Margaret intervened in public affairs for the sake of putting to end to civic feuds. Twice in obedience to a Divine command, she upbraided Guglielmo Ubertini Pazzi, Bishop of Arezzo, in which diocese Cortona was situated, because he lived more like a secular prince and soldier, than like a pastor of souls. This prelate was killed in the battle at Bibbiena in 1289. The year previous to this, Margaret for the sake of greater quiet had removed her lodging from the hospital she had founded to near the ruined church of St. Basil above the city. This church was now caused to be repaired. It was here that she spent her last years, and in this church she was buried. After her death, it was rebuilt and dedicated in her own name. There her body remains enshrined to this day, incorrupt, in a silver shrine over the high-altar. Although honored as a *beata* from the time of her death, she was not canonized until 16 May, 1728.

The original "Legend of St. Margaret" was written by her director and friend, Fra Giunta Bevegnati. It is entirely taken up with her revelations, and was mainly dictated by Margaret herself, in obedience to her directors.

*(excerpted from: www.newadvent.org)

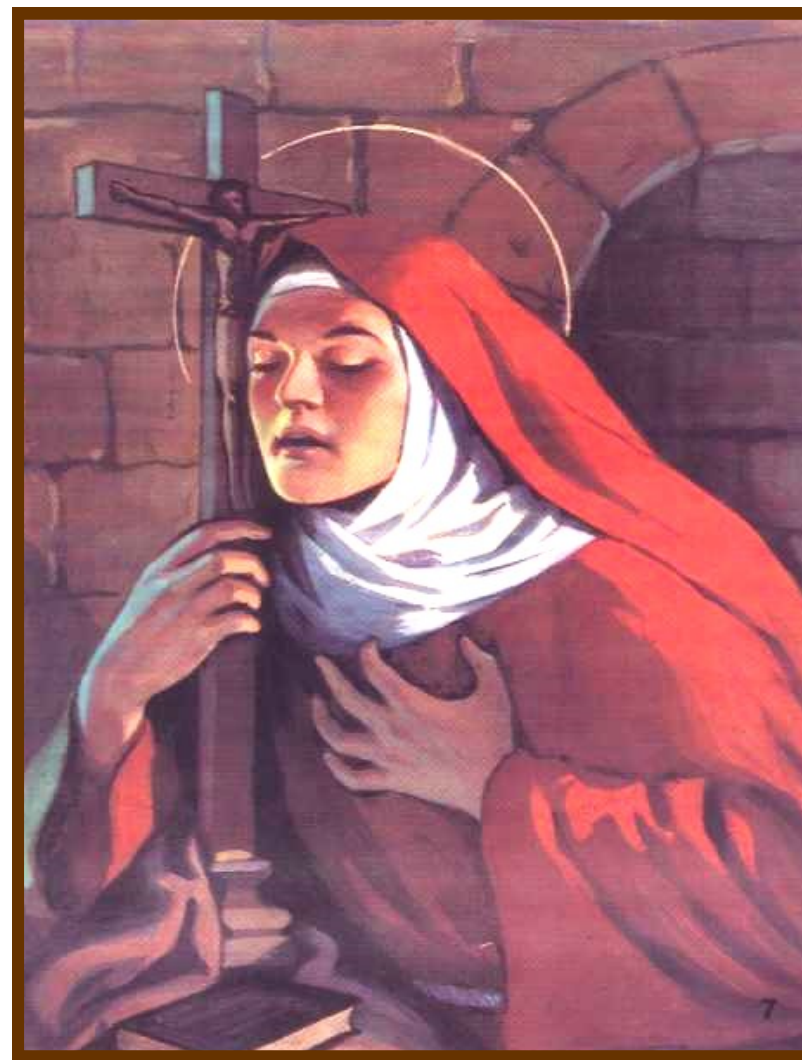
Comment

****Seeking forgiveness is sometimes difficult work. It is made easier by meeting people who, without trivializing our sins, assure us that God rejoices over our repentance. Being forgiven lifts a weight and prompts us to acts of charity.**

***(excerpted from: www.americancatholic.org)*

Saint Margaret of Cortona

Feast Day February 22



...*"I neither seek nor wish for aught but Thee,
my Lord Jesus..."*

Saint Margaret of Cortona

*Saint Margaret was born at Laviano (near Perugia) in the Tuscany region of Italy to farming parents in 1247. She died at Cortona, Italy on 22 February, 1297. She was an Italian penitent of the Third Order of Saint Francis.

She is the patron saint of the falsely accused; hoboos; homeless; insane; orphaned; mentally ill; midwives; penitents; single mothers; reformed prostitutes; third children; tramps.

At the age of seven years Margaret lost her mother and two years later her father married a second time. Between the daughter and her step-mother there seems to have been but little sympathy or affection, and Margaret was one of those natures who crave affection. When about seventeen years of age, she made the acquaintance of a young cavalier, who, some say, was a son of Guglielmo di Pecora, lord of Valiano, with whom she one night fled from her father's house. Margaret in her confessions does not mention her lover's name. For nine years she lived with him in his castle near Montepulciano, and a son was born to them. Frequently she besought her lover to marry her, as he often promised to do so, but never did. In her confessions she expressly says that she consented to her lover's importunities unwillingly. Writers who have described her in these early years as an abandoned woman, either had not rightly read her legend, or had deepened the shadows of her early life to make her conversion seem the more wonderful. Even during this period Margaret was very compassionate towards the poor and relieved their wants; she was accustomed to seek out quiet places where she would dream of a life of virtue and love of God. Once some of her neighbors bade her look to her soul before it was too late. She replied that they have no fear of her, for that she would die a saint and that her critics would come as pilgrims to her shrine.

She was at last set free from her life of sin by the tragic death of her lover, who was murdered while on a journey. Margaret's first

intimation of his death was the return of his favorite hound without its master. The hound led her to his body. it was characteristic of her generosity that she blamed herself for his irregular life, and began to loathe her beauty which had fascinated him. She returned to his relatives all the jewels and property he had given her and left his home; and with her little son set out for her father's house. Her father would have received her, but his wife refused, and Margaret and her son were turned adrift. For a moment she felt tempted to trade upon her beauty; but she prayed earnestly and in her soul she seemed to hear a voice bidding her go to the Franciscan Friars at Cortona and put herself under their spiritual direction. On her arrival at Cortona, two ladies, noticing her loneliness, offered her assistance and took her home with them. They afterwards introduced her to the Franciscan Friars at the church of San Francesco in the city. For three years Margaret had to struggle hard with temptations. Naturally a gay spirit, she felt much more drawn to the world. But temptation only convinced her the more of the necessity of self-discipline and an entire consecration of herself to religion. At times remorse for the past would have led her into intemperate self-mortifications, but for the wise advice of her confessors. As it was, she fasted rigorously, abstaining altogether from flesh-meat, and generally subsisting upon bread and herbs. her great physical vitality made such penance a necessity to her.

After three years of probation, Margaret was admitted to the Third Order of St. Francis, and from this time she lived in strict poverty. Following the example of Saint Francis, she went and begged her bread. But while thus living on alms, she gave her services freely to others; especially to the sick-poor whom she nursed. It was about the time that she became a Franciscan tertiary that the revelations began which form the chief feature in her story. In the year 1277, as she was praying in the church of the Franciscan Friars, that she seemed to hear these words: "What is thy wish, *poverella*?" (little poor one) and she replied: "I neither seek nor wish for aught but Thee, my Lord Jesus." From this time forth she lived in intimate