

Canonization

Gabriel was buried the day of his death. His companion in the novitiate, Bernard Mary of Jesus exclaimed:

Tears come to my eyes and I am filled with shame for having been so far from the virtues that he attained in such a short time.

Immediately thereafter Father Norbert wrote a biography of his life. In 1866, four years after the death of Gabriel, the Passionists were forced to abandon the monastery of Gran Sasso, and the church where Gabriel lay buried went deserted for 30 years. Since his death, the fame of Gabriel's sanctity had spread through the local area, as well as amongst the Passionists. In 1891 the Congregation decided to formally open proceedings for Gabriel's canonization and, a year later, a committee visited his grave to examine his remains. Upon the arrival of the committee at Gran Sasso, the townspeople surrounded the church, determined not to have the body of Gabriel taken from their midst. Two years later the Passionist returned to resume their life at Gran Sasso.

The two miracles presented for the beatification of Gabriel were the inexplicable healings of Maria Mazzarella from pulmonary tuberculosis and periostitis, and the instantaneous cure of Dominic Tiber from an inoperable hernia. Gabriel was beatified by Pope Pius X on May 31, 1908. Present at the ceremony were his brother Michael, his companion Brother Sylvester, and his director, Father Norbert. The outbreak of the First World War delayed Gabriel's canonization for a while, but on May 13, 1920, he was raised to the altars by Pope Benedict XV.

Patronage

At the canonization of Saint Gabriel, Pope Benedict XV declared him a patron saint of Catholic youth, of students, and of those studying for the priesthood. In 1959, Pope John XXIII named him the patron of the Abruzzi region, where he spent the last two years of his life.

Many miracles have been attributed to the saint's intercession; Saint Gemma Galgani held that it was St. Gabriel who had cured her of a dangerous illness and led her to a Passionist vocation.

*(excerpted from://en.wikipedia.org)



Our Lady of Sorrows

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinpire.com

Saint Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows Feast Days: Feb. 27th/28th in leap year.



*Dear Saint Gabriel,
your very name recalls your particular devotion to
Christ the Man of Sorrows and to Mary the Afflicted Mother.
You died young as a Passionist religious but left to us all
an example of a life of Christlike sacrifice.
Intercede for our seminarians and young religious
who are in desperate need of your patronage amid today's
sensual and selfish world.
Amen.*

Gabriel

Early Life

**Francesco Possenti* was born on March 1, 1838, the eleventh of thirteen children born to his mother, Agnes, and his father, Sante. The family were then resident in the town of Assisi where Sante worked for the local government. Francesco was baptized on the day of his birth in the same font in which Saint Francis of Assisi had been baptized. Shortly after Francis' birth Sante Possenti was transferred to a post at Montalta and thence to Spoleto where, in 1841, he was appointed legal assessor. In Spoleto the family was struck with a number of bereavements: the deaths of a baby girl, Rosa, in December 1841; of seven-year-old Adele in January 1842; and of Francis' mother, Agnes, in 1842.

As a child and young man, Francis Possenti was well liked by his peers and had a reputation for great charity and piety. He was also known for the great care he took with regard to his appearance and would spend hours in preparing himself for parties. Francis could be a difficult child and was liable to bouts of anger. Francis was deeply involved with the social scene of Spoleto and soon earned for himself the nickname of "the dancer". He had several romantic involvements and on the night he left for the monastery there were still hopes that he might become engaged to a local girl. He was educated first by the Christian Brothers and then by the Jesuits in the town's college and there excelled, particularly in Latin. In 1851 Francis became desperately ill and promised to enter religious life if he recovered. Once he had recovered, his promise was soon forgotten. The same thing happened when he narrowly escaped a stray bullet during a hunting expedition with friends. His brother Paul had died in 1848 and his brother Lawrence committed suicide in 1853 after becoming involved with a Masonic organization. In 1853 Francis again fell ill, this time afflicted with a throat abscess. He attributed his healing to the recently beatified Andrew Bobola, SJ. Once more he had promised to enter religious life upon his recovery and this time actually set the process in motion. He applied to join the Jesuits, but for some unknown reason never proceeded. Tragedy struck again when his sister, Mary Louisa, who had cared for Francis after their mother's death, died of cholera.

Vocation

After the cholera epidemic that killed Francesco's sister ended, Spoleto clergy and civic authorities organized a procession of the ancient icon of the Virgin Mary in Spoleto's cathedral. Francis attended the procession and as the image passed by him, he felt an interior voice asking why he remained in the world. This event was the galvanizing force behind the first serious steps in

Francis' religious vocation. After the procession he sought the advice of a priest and resolved to enter the Passionist Congregation. As there was no Passionist house near Spoleto, it is most likely that Francis' choice was based on a personal devotion to the Passion of Christ. His father refused to give him permission to leave for the Passionists and enlisted several relatives to dissuade Francis from this course. Their attempts were unsuccessful and soon father was convinced that Francis' intentions were sincere and not capricious.

Passionist

Accompanied by his brother Aloysius, a Dominican friar, Francis set out for the novitiate of the Passionists at Morrovalle. During their journey they visited several relatives who had been enlisted by Sante to encourage Francis to return to Spoleto, but this was to no avail. He arrived at the novitiate on September 19, 1856.

Two days later he received the habit of the Passionists and the name "Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows". The following year Gabriel pronounced his vows. During this time, and indeed until his death, Gabriel's spiritual life was under the care of his director, Father Norbert of Holy Mary.

In June 1858 Gabriel and the other students moved to Pietvetorina to continue their studies. Local disturbances meant they would stay only a year and, in July 1859, the group moved to the monastery of Isola Gran Sasso.

Gabriel proved an excellent student and his excellence in academic life was only outdone by the great progress he was making in his spiritual life. At the same time Gabriel began to display the first symptoms of tuberculosis. The news did not worry Gabriel, who was, in fact, joyful; he had prayed for a slow death so as to be able to prepare himself spiritually. Throughout his illness he remained cheerful and kept up all his usual practices. He was a source of great edification and inspiration to his fellow students, who sought to spend time with him at his deathbed. Gabriel had proved himself an exemplary religious and a perfect follower of the Passionist Rule, being especially devoted to the Virgin Mary.

On his deathbed he ordered his spiritual writings to be burnt for he feared they would tempt him to pride. Only his letters survive, alongside his 'Resolutions' which map the spiritual progress he made in his few years as a Passionist.

Before he could be ordained a priest, Gabriel died in the retreat at Gran Sasso, on February 27, 1862, holding close to him an image of Our Lady of Sorrows and smiling peacefully. Those who were with him reported that at the moment of death he reached out to an otherwise unseen figure that was entering the room. It was the opinion of Fr. Norbert that Saint Gabriel had seen the Virgin Mary at the very moment of his death.