

Vincent was often called upon to aid his country in temporal affairs, as the counselor of kings and at one time the arbiter of the destiny of Spain. In 1409 he was commissioned by Benedict XIII to announce to Martin of Aragon the death of his only son and heir. After Martin's death, the representatives of the Kingdoms of Aragon, Valencia, and Catalonia appointed Vincent one of the judges to determine the succession to the Crown. At the judgment, known as the Compromise of Caspe, he helped to elect Ferdinand of Castile as the new ruler.

All this was happening while the Popes were exiled to Avignon. Three ecclesiastics simultaneously claimed the Papacy. It was not until the Council of Constance that the matter was resolved. Vincent did not attend the Council; he continued his apostolic journey through France, and spent the last two years of his life in Brittany, where consciences without number were reformed and instructed in a Christian way of life.

Vincent felt that he was a messenger of penance sent to prepare men for judgment. For twenty years he traversed Western Europe preaching penance and awaking the dormant conscience of sinners by his wondrous eloquence. His austere life was the living expression of his doctrine. He slept on the floor, fasted, he arose at two in the morning to chant the Office, celebrated mass daily, afterwards preaching for up to three hours, and was frequently working miracles. He would tend sick children in the afternoon, and prepared his sermon for the next day at night. He was poorly clad and travelled on foot. He was canonized by Calixtus III at the Dominican Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, Rome, on 3 June, 1455.

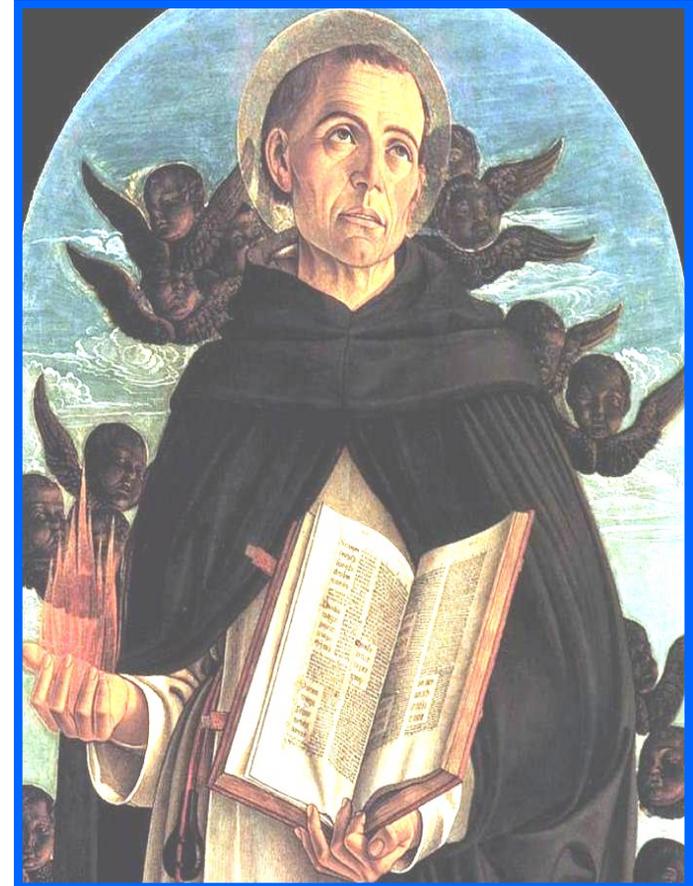
* (excerpted from: en.wikisource.org/wiki/catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913).

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Saint Vincent Ferrer

"The Angel of the Judgment"

Feast Day April 5



***"Once humility is acquired, charity will come to life—
a burning flame devouring the corruption of vice
and filling the heart so full that there is no place for vanity."
from A Treatise on a Spiritual Life by St. Vincent Ferrer***

Saint Vincent Ferrer

"Angel of the Judgment"

*Saint Vincent Ferrer was born at Valencia, Spain, on January 23, 1350. He died at Vannes, Brittany, on April 5, 1419. He was descended from the younger of two brothers who were knighted for their valor in the conquest of Valencia. In 1340, Vincent's father, William Ferrer, married Constantia Miguel. Vincent was their fourth child. Vincent was educated at Valencia, and completed his philosophy at the age fourteen. In 1367 he entered the Dominican Order, and was sent to the house of studies at Barcelona the following year. In 1370 he taught philosophy at Lerida; one of his pupils there was Pierre Fouloup, later Grand Inquisitor of Aragon. In 1373 Vincent returned to the Dominican "Studium arabicum et hebraicum" at Barcelona. During his stay there famine was prevalent; filled with compassion for the sufferers; Vincent foretold, while preaching one day, the near approach of ships bearing wheat. His prediction was fulfilled. In 1377 he was sent to continue his studies at Toulouse, where, in his own words, "study followed prayer, and prayer succeeded study". In 1379 Vincent was retained by Cardinal Pedro de Luna, legate of the Court of Aragon, who was endeavoring to win King Peter IV to the obedience of Avignon. The saint, thoroughly convinced of the legitimacy of the claims of the Avignon pontiffs, was one of their strongest champions. From 1385 to 1390 he taught theology in the Cathedral at Valencia.

After this, Vincent carried on his apostolic work while in Pedro de Luna's suite. At Valladolid he converted a rabbi, later well known as Bishop Paul of Burgos. At Salamanca, Queen Yolanda of Aragon chose him for her confessor (1391-1395). About the same time he was cited before the Inquisition for preaching publicly "that Judas had done penance", but Pedro de Luna, recently raised to the papal chair as Benedict XIII, cited the case before his tribunal and burned the papers.

Benedict XIII then called him to Avignon and appointed him confessor and Apostolic penitentiary. He refused the honor of being made a cardinal, instead laboring zealously among the people. In 1398, France withdrew from the obedience of Avignon, Vincent became seriously ill and was dying, when Jesus accompanied by SS. Dominic and Francis appeared to him. He was miraculously cured and sent to preach penance, and to prepare for the judgment. It was not until Nov., 1399, that Benedict allowed Vincent to begin his apostolate, furnished with full powers of a legate *a latere Christi*. For twenty years he traversed Western Europe, preaching penance for sin and preparation for judgment. While preaching at Alexandria, he singled out from the youth, someone who was destined to evangelize Italy, Bernadine of Sienna. Another chosen soul with whom Vincent came in contact with in Italy was Margaret of Savoy. During the years 1403-4, he was in Switzerland, Savoy, Lyons, Genoa, Flanders, and Northern France. Since he could only speak Limousin, the language of Valencia, it is difficult to understand how the great crowds, sometime numbering 10,000, could understand him in their native tongue. An opinion by Nicholas Clemangis, a doctor of the University of Paris, who heard him preach, suggests that Vincent had the gift of tongues.

While the 100 Year War, and the Schism of the Church was afflicting the Church in 1408, Vincent continued his work south of the Pyrenees until 1416. He attempted to convert the Jews by his preaching. It is estimated that he converted 25,000 Jews; baptism or spoliation being the alternatives offered to them. In the Kingdom of Granada, he converted thousands of Moors.