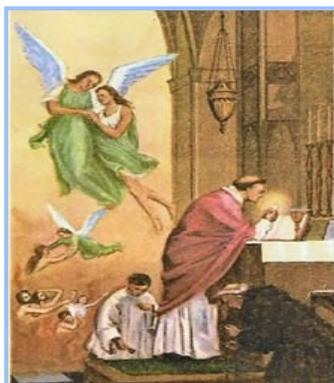


Thereafter, he himself, followed this practice in ministering to the sick. In his honor the custom of blessing and distributing the "Bread of Saint Nicholas" is continued by the Augustinians in many places today.

Nicholas was ordained to the priesthood in 1271. He lived in several different monasteries of the Augustinian Order, engaged principally in the ministry of preaching. In 1275 he was sent to Tolentino and remained there for the rest of his life. Nicholas worked to counteract the decline of morality and religion which came with the development of city life in the late thirteenth century. He ministered to the sick and the poor, and actively sought out those who had become estranged from the Church. A fellow religious describes Nicholas' ministry in these words: "He was a joy to those who were sad, a consolation to the suffering, peace to those at variance, refreshment to those who toiled, support for the poor, and a healing balm for prisoners." Nicholas' reputation as a saintly man and a worker of miracles led many people to the monastery of Tolentino.

When in 1884 Nicholas was proclaimed "Patron Saint of the Souls in Purgatory" by Pope Leo XIII, confirmation was given to a long-standing aspect of devotion toward this friar which is traced to an event in his own life. On a certain Saturday night as he lay in bed, Nicholas heard Fra Pellegrino of Osimo, a deceased friar who Nicholas had known. Fra Pellegrino revealed that he was in purgatory and he begged Nicholas to offer Mass for him and for the other suffering souls so that they might be set free. For the next seven days, Nicholas did so and was rewarded with a second vision in which the deceased confrere expressed his gratitude and assurance that a great number of people were now enjoying the presence of God through Nicholas' prayers. As this event became known, many people approached Nicholas, asking his intercession on behalf of their own deceased relatives and friends.



St. Nicholas saying Mass for (the kneeling) Fra Pellegrino who was in Purgatory.

Nicholas died in Tolentino on September 10th, 1305. He was declared a saint in 1446 - the first member of the Augustinian Order to be canonized. Saint Nicholas' body is venerated in the basilica in Tolentino which bears his name. His feast is celebrated by the Augustinian family on this day each September.

*(excerpted from: <http://www.salemcatholic.org>)

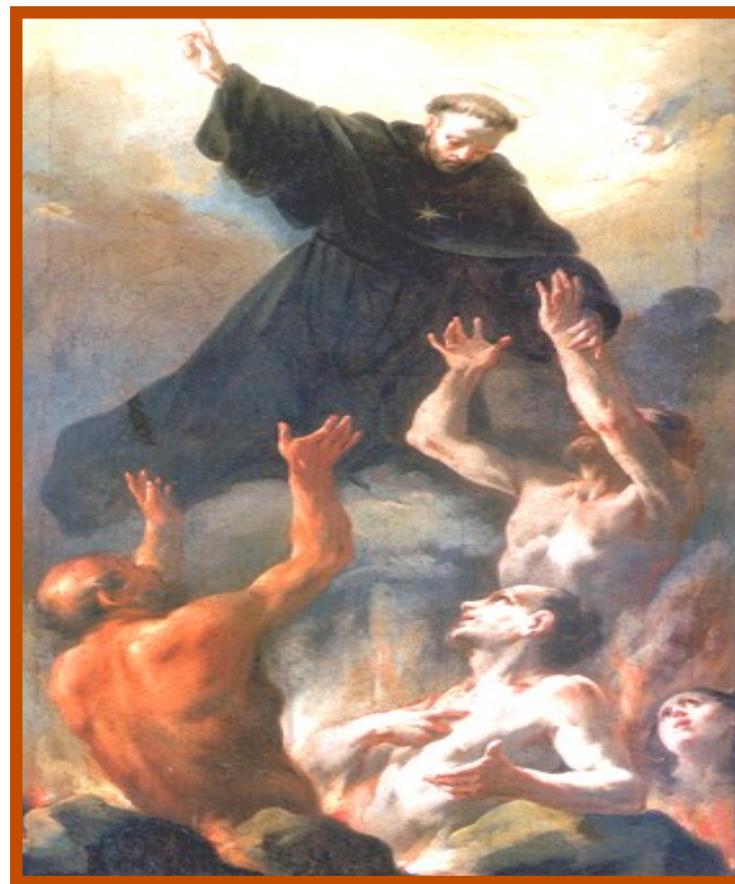
At his death, his tomb immediately became a shrine of veneration. Forty years after his death, a tomb was erected where the faithful could come to venerate the Saint. One day, a disturbed fanatic, desiring to have part of the Saint to bring back to his country decided to cut off his arms. When he performed this sacrilegious operation on the Saint's body, the Saint's arms began to bleed profusely, *forty years after his death*. The rest of the body has decomposed, but from that time on, the miraculous arms have been incorrupt and are venerated in their own special chapel.

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Saint Nicholas of Tolentino

Patron of the Souls in Purgatory

Feast Day: September 10



O Glorious Saint Nicholas,

we beseech you to pray for us

and for all the suffering souls in purgatory. Amen.

**SAINT NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINO
(1245-1305)**

PATRON OF THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

SAINT NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINO

(THE PRAYERS BELOW ARE FROM THE AUGUSTINIAN PRESS, VILLANOVA, PA)

PRAYER TO SAINT NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINO

O God, source of strength and courage,
you gave your beloved preacher,
Saint Nicholas of Tolentino,
the conviction of faith to the very end.

Grace us with the ability to translate your teaching into action,
remain patient amid hardship,
serve the poor and those who suffer,
and live as your true and faithful servants.
Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, pray for us.

PRAYER FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Lord, God of holiness and light,
you do not allow any shadow of darkness or evil in your sight,
and so in your mercy you grant to those
who have left this world burdened with sin,
a time of purification,
applying to them the spiritual treasures of your holy Church.
Hear my prayer and through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints, and all your faithful people
bring to an end this time of waiting for our beloved dead,
especially (mention name of person).
In your providence you have chosen Saint Nicholas of Tolentino
as a special intercessor on behalf of the departed.
Hear also his fervent prayer for those
whom I recommend to you through his intercession.
Amen.

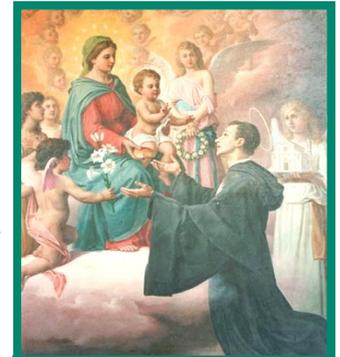
*Nicholas Gurrutti was born in the village of Saint' Angelo in Pontano, Italy in 1245. His parents, middle-aged and childless, made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Nicholas of Myra, at Bari, Italy their special patron, to ask his intercession on their behalf. Shortly thereafter, a son was born to them whom they named Nicholas out of gratitude.

At an early age Nicholas was greatly moved by the preaching of the Augustinian, Father Reginaldo di Monterubbiano, prior of the monastery of Saint' Angelo, and requested admission to the community.

He was accepted by the friars and made his novitiate in 1261. Nicholas directed his efforts to being a good religious and priest, and soon became renowned for his charity toward his confreres and all God's people.

His religious formation was greatly influenced by the spirituality of the hermits of Brettino, one of the congregations which came to form part of the "Grand Union" of Augustinians in 1256, whose communities were located in the region of the Marche where Nicholas was born and raised.

Characteristic of these early hermits of Brettino was a great emphasis on poverty, rigorous practices of fasting and abstinence and long periods of the day devoted to communal and private prayer. As Nicholas entered the Order at its inception he learned to combine the ascetical practices of the Brettini with the apostolic thrust which the Church now invited the Augustinians to practice. At times, Nicholas devoted himself to prayer and works of penance with such intensity that it was necessary for his superiors to impose limitations on him. At one point he was so weakened through fasting that he was encouraged in a vision of Mary and the child Jesus to eat a piece of bread signed with the cross and soaked in water to regain his strength.



Vision that St. Nicholas had of the Blessed Mother handing him a bit of bread; the Infant Jesus was holding a chalice filled with water; upon consuming the bread and water he was healed.