

ANNE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW (Anne Garcia, 1549-1626)
Blessed (D)

Anne was born at Almendral (Avila) on Oct. 10, 1549, and died at Anvers in Belgium on June 7, 1626. In her youth she was a shepherdess, but already graced by deep mystical experiences. In 1570 she joined the Discalced Carmelite nuns of the first monastery of St. Joseph in Avila as the first lay sister of the reform. Anne was very dear to St. Teresa, who admitted her to profession on Aug. 15, 1572. She soon became the assistant and travel-companion of the reformer, who ordered Anne to learn to write, which she did almost miraculously. The saint also wished to die in the arms of Anne, at Alba de Tordesillas on Oct. 4, 1582. Anne was a member of the communities of Avila, Madrid (1591) and Ocaña (1595); in 1604 she went into France with Anne of Jesus and four other nuns to initiate the reform there.

Shortly after her arrival in Paris, she was obliged to accept, under obedience, the black veil of a choir nun; she was then elected prioress of Pontoise (1605) and of Tours (1608). Having returned to Paris (1611), she obtained permission to transfer to Flanders, despite the opposition of Bérulle, in order to place herself under the direction of the Discalced Carmelites. After a year spent at Mons, in Belgium, on Oct. 12, 1612, she left to found a monastery at Anvers, where she spent the last fourteen years of her life. Here she was surrounded by the esteem of the archdukes and all the people of Anvers. Twice, through her prayers, she freed the city from almost certain occupation by the heretics. She died on the feast of the Trinity in 1626, and God blessed her memory with graces and miracles.

Pope Clement XII approved her heroic virtues on June 29, 1735, and Pope Benedict XV beatified her on May 6, 1917. In 1937 and 1938 the process of examination of asserted miracles was reopened. Her feast is celebrated in the Order on June 7. Her body is preserved in the monastery of Anvers.

The spiritual life of the Blessed Anne was wholly centered on the will of God, sought, loved, and fulfilled with generous fidelity. In frequent communion with the sacred humanity of Our Lord, Anne relived His mysteries of joy and of martyrdom, and reached the highest peaks of union with the Most Holy Trinity in the transformation of love. Anne herself has left us the echo of such graces in her *Autobiography*, written under obedience (two authentic versions, at Anvers and at Bologna) and utilized by all her biographers. It was published for the first time in the original Spanish edition (with some minimal omissions) in 1969 by Father Fortunato Antolin (Madrid), but previously in a Flemish version by Father Verbruggen at Averbode in 1937 (*Eigenhandige Levensschrijving van de G. A. van St. B.*). The French version of Bouix (Paris, 1869, 1872) is not faithful. Better is the old work of a hermit of Marlangne (*Vie et instructions de la M. A. de St. B.* t 1646, 1708, 1895); Ital. version, Venice, 1725). The blessed has also left some small spiritual-formative works for her novices (Ital. vers., Rome, 1696) and some spiritual exercises. Recently Father Serouet has published: *Lettres et écrits spirituels*, Paris-Bruges, 1969. Richly documented, these refer especially to the relations

of Anne with France, in the section of correspondence. Many other letters are scattered throughout all of Europe.

Her liturgical celebration for the Discalced Carmelites is fixed for June 7 and has the grade of *memorial*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: C. Henriquez, *Vida... de la v. m. Ana de S. Bartholomé*, Bruxelles 1632; Florencio del N. J., *La b. Ana de S. Bartolomé*, Burgos 1917 (Ital. vers., Milan 1917); *Silverio Historia VIII*, c .17, PP. 518-60; *Anne de S. Barthélemy*, fasc. 8 of *Spiritualité Carmélitaine*, Chevremont 1949; Emond, I, p. 197.

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