

BARTOLOMEW FANTI (d.1495)

Blessed, priest

Born at Mantua in an unknown year, Bartholomew was already a priest on Feb. 28, 1452, in the Mantuan Congregation of the Carmelites (approved by the Pope ten years before). He began to take part in the confraternity of Our Lady, existing in the Carmelite church; on Jan. 1, 1480, he became the confraternity's spiritual Father and rector and also wrote its rule and constitutions. It is certain that he dedicated himself completely to this ministry until his death, which occurred on Dec. 5, 1495.

He is represented with a small group of novices, to whom he is speaking fervently of the Most Blessed Sacrament. In fact, this was his particular devotion, as set in relief by his biographers – together with his very tender devotion towards the Virgin. Some would make Bl. Baptist a novice of Bl. Bartholomew, but it seems that the latter never exercised the office of novice-master. On the other hand, Bl. Baptist did his year of probation at Ferrara, and not at Mantua, in 1463-84. The rule written by Bl. Bartholomew, in twelve brief chapters, is very simple and concise, and in its style resembles that of the first Order of Carmelites. Bartholomew also composed the statutes of the Company of Carmel and a register of notable events. (These writings have been published, with an exhaustive introductory examination, by Gratian of St. Teresa, in *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, VIII /1957/, pp. 94-186, 407-38).

In 1516 the body of Bl. Bartholomew was transferred from its tomb in the church to the chapel of Our Lady, and in 1598 it was placed under the altar. After the suppression of the convent, which occurred in 1783, it was transferred to St. Mark's and from here, about ten years later, to the cathedral, where it reposes still today, incorrupt, in the chapel of the Crowned Madonna.

The decree of confirmation of cult was ratified by St. Pius X on March 18, 1909; the memorial is celebrated on Dec. 5.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: L. Saggi, *La Congregazione Mantovana dei Carmelitani*, Rome 1954, pp. 157-62; Graziano di S. Teresa, *Il beato F. B.*, in *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, VIII (1957) pp. 94-185.

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