

JOAN OF TOULOUSE (XIV cent-) Blessed

According to the most reliable biography, that of the Carmelite John Bale, who visited Toulouse in 1527, Joan was of a noble family of the kingdom of Navarre. Because of her devotion to Our Lady, she wished to live as a recluse near the Carmelite convent of Toulouse, where she led a life of great austerity. She loved to speak about heavenly things with the young friars and prayed much for them, which was to their great spiritual benefit. It does not appear that she lived much before the XV century, because she does not appear on the lists of Carmelite saints of the second half of the XIV century nor on the list of the saints of the Order by John Grossi (d. 1437), a member of the Carmelite province of Toulouse. Joan is often called a tertiary or even a nun; however, it is not impossible that she professed the Carmelite rule, as did other «converted» ladies of that time. (See above, under Anne and Joan.)

After her death,, many miracles were attributed to her by the faithful. Bernard du Rosier, archbishop of Toulouse from 1452 until 1474, had Joan's body exhumed and placed in an urn, in a worthy place in a chapel of the Carmelite church of the city; and on that occasion he granted an indulgence of forty days to ail who would visit the remains. Gailhard de Ruppe, provincial of Toulouse, gave the panegyric. An antiphon, with verse and oration, in honor of the blessed is also known. According to Bale, the general chapter of the Carmelites, held at Naples in 1510, treated of the canonization of Joan. Examinations of the remains were held in 1616, 1656 and 1688. In 1656 it was noted that an arm and the right hand were wanting; they had been carried into Spain by the prior general, Henry Silvio, during a visit to the convent. And in 1688 the left hand and some teeth were also missing. After the French revolution, during the demolition of the Carmelite church at Toulouse in 1805, the remains of the blessed were found in a wall, together with the document of the examination of 1688 and some prayers that the blessed reputedly recited on a regular basis. The body was carried into the metropolitan church of St. Stephen and buried in the chapel of St. Vincent de Paul; then, in 1893, for the occasion of her beatification, it was again exhumed and placed in an ogival reliquary. Joan was beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1895; her feast was celebrated on March 31 before the latest liturgical reform.

In a fresco of the late XV cent. (1472) in the Carmelite church of St. Felix del Benaco (Brescia), the blessed appears in the white veil of a Carmelite tertiary. An engraving made about 1620, at the order of Gaspard Rinkens, prior of the Anvers Carmel, represents her as a Carmelite nun gazing at the crucifix which she holds in her hands; and this is how she is generally represented today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: G. Bale, *Collectanea*, British Museum, ms. Harley 1819, f. 127 (Bale makes mention of a now unknown Life by G. di Bertrando de Salinis, who in 1492 was designated for the General Study of the Order at Toulouse for the fifth year; Archive of the S. Cong, of Rites (in the Vat. Archive) *Processus* 4124, *Ord. super cultu immemorabili*, Tolosa 1892-94; *Positio super cultu immemorabili*, Roma 1894; T. Baurens de Molinier, *Histoire de la vie et du culte de Ste. Jeanne de Toulouse*, Toulouse

1895; Italian translation by A. Picciolo, Roma 1896; B. Zimmermann, De B. Johanna Tolosana, in Mhc. pp. 369-73; I. Daniele, s.v. Anna of Toulouse in BSS I, col. 1309; C. Catena, *Le Carmelitane*, Roma 1969, pp. 1-3, e tav. XI; Emond, I, p. 196.

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