

ITALY, 1227

Eucharistic Miracle of Rimini



In the city of Rimini, it is still possible today to visit the church built in honor of the Eucharistic Miracle worked by St. Anthony of Padua in 1227. This episode is cited as well in the *Begninitas*, a work considered to be among the most ancient sources for the life of St. Anthony. “This holy man was conversing with a Cathar heretic who was against the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and the Saint was on the point of leading him to the Catholic Faith. But this heretic, after the many and varied arguments, declared: ‘If you, Anthony, succeed with a miracle in proving to me that the Body of Christ is truly present in

Holy Communion, then I, after totally renouncing heresy, will immediately convert to the Catholic Faith. Why don’t we issue a challenge? I will close up one of my animals for three days in a cage, and will make it feel the torment of hunger. After three days, I will lead it out in public and will show it some prepared food. You will stand out in front with a monstrance containing the Body of Christ. If the animal, passing up the fodder, hastens to adore his God, I will embrace the faith of your Church.” St. Anthony, enlightened and inspired from on high, accepted the challenge. The appointment was set in the Piazza Grande or Grand Plaza, (now the Piazza Tre Martiri or “Plaza of the Three Martyrs”), attracting an immense crowd of curious observers. On the day appointed, at the hour agreed upon, the subjects of this unusual challenge made their appearance at the Piazza Grande, followed by their supporters – Saint Anthony by the Catholic faithful, Bonovillo (this was the Cathar heretic’s name) by his disbelieving allies. The Saint stepped forward, holding in his hands the consecrated Host enclosed in a monstrance, the heretic holding the starving mule by his hand. The Saint, after asking for and obtaining silence, turned to the mule with these words: “By virtue of and in the name of your Creator, Whom I, however unworthy I may be, hold in my hands, I tell you and command you: come forward at once and render homage to the Lord with due respect, so that evildoers and heretics may understand that all creatures should bow before their Creator, Whom the priests hold in their hands on the altar.” And at once the animal, disregarding his master’s food, obediently approached the saint: it bent its front paws before the Host and remained there in humble adoration. Anthony had not been deceived in respecting the sense of fairness on the part of his opponent, who fell to his feet and publicly renounced his errors, becoming from that day forward one of the most zealous cooperators of the wonder-working Saint.



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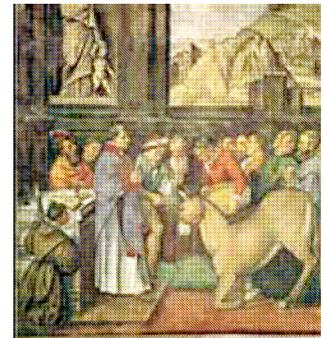
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(1) The Shrine of the Holy Eucharist, Rimini

(2) The Church of St. Anthony in Tonara

(3) *The Miracle of St. Anthony*. Museum Collection of the Diocese of Milan

(4) Altar constructed on the shaft of the pillar from which St. Anthony worked the miracle

(5) *Eucharistic Miracle of St. Anthony*, by Salvaterra de Magos, the Matriz Church, Portugal

(6) Fresco of Girolamo Tessari (1511), Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua