

Umile of Bisignano

1582-1637

Umile of Bisignano was born on August 26, 1582, at Bisignano. Since childhood, he attended Holy Mass every day. He would pray and meditate on the Passion of the Lord even during his work in the fields.

After many difficulties, he entered the novitiate of the Franciscans Minor in Mesoraca at the age of 27. Having overcome many difficulties through the intercession of Our Lady, he made his religious profession on September 4, 1610. He carried out his tasks with simplicity and diligence, such as begging, serving at the community table, caring for the garden and doing every other manual task the Superiors gave him. Ever since his novitiate, he distinguished himself for his spiritual maturity and his fervor in the observance of the Rule. He had numerous charismatic gifts, which he exercised for the glory of God. Because of continuing ecstasies he was called the *ecstatic friar*. He was also blessed with the exceptional gifts of the discernment of hearts, of prophesy, of miracles and, above all, of infused knowledge. Though illiterate, he could give answers on matters of Holy Scripture and on any point of Catholic doctrine, to the utter amazement of outstanding theologians. Brother Umile of Bisignano died on November 26, 1637, at Bisignano.

Because of these mystical gifts, he underwent many persecutions. Once his Father Provincial called him to Catanzaro to give an account of his ecstasies, which were often accompanied by luminous phenomena. On receiving the summons, Bro. Umile set out on foot without worrying about bringing along some food, despite the objections of the two friars who were accompanying him. "Divine Providence watches over us!" he

said. Arriving on the Sila mountains from Cosenza, they were hungry and thirsty. Convinced that his ecstasies were diabolical, his companions challenged him to find something to eat and drink. They had hardly finished speaking when they saw an Angel approaching them, under the guise of an adolescent, who gave them two loaves of bread, some figs, other fruit and some wine. Right after serving them, the Angel disappeared.

