

# Saint Frances of Rome

1384-1440

*Saint Frances of Rome*, during her entire life experienced the presence of her Guardian Angel who guided and protected her. It was this Guardian Angel who preserved her from danger as once, for example, he rescued her from drowning; it is this same Guardian Angel who guides and spiritually advises her.

The Angel is constantly at her side to lead her in her encounters with Christ, discerning and fulfilling God's will. The devil seeks to distract and lure the Saint away from her seeking perfection and quite often appears in the form of a horrible beast. The presence of this Guardian Angel as a small child at the side of Frances is sufficient to force the devil to flee. The Guardian Angel does not limit his activity to protect her from the devil, who clearly wishes

to kill her, but to encourage and scold her. Soon, the provisions are depleted and in desperation, her father-in-law takes back the keys. But miraculously the warehouse is full once again. Sorrow and misfortune visit her household: in 1409, Lorenzo, her husband, is paralyzed as a result of a war injury and in the following year her house was sacked and robbed. She has three children, but only one reaches adulthood.



to kill her, but to encourage and scold her. Once, when the Saint had not mortified herself of certain thoughts and small talk, the Angel soundly slapped her face...

Frances of Rome was born in Rome in 1384 of a wealthy and distinguished family. From her earliest years she felt a call from God to the religious life, but her parents had promised her in marriage to the nobleman, Lawrence de Ponziani. She was only thirteen years old when she began living in the Palazzo of the noble Ponziani family in Trastevere. Unable, unfortunately, to fulfill her wish for religious life, she grew increasingly ill. On July 16, 1398, Saint Alexis appeared to her in a dream. He tells her: "You must live...the Lord wishes you to live so as to glorify His name." From that moment she recovers her health and becomes an exemplary spouse. With her sister-in-law, Vannoza, she dedicates herself to works of charity and assistance to the poor. When her father-in-law gives her the keys to the granary warehouse and

And yet, a group of women, dedicated to works of charity and prayer, gather around her. On August 15, 1425 in the Church of Santa Maria Nova, eleven women organize themselves as an association of "Olivetian Oblates of Maria" following the spirituality of the Olivetan Benedictines. In March of 1433, these Oblates took up residence in a house at Tor de' Specchi and on July 21 of the same year, Pope Eugene IV gave his approval to the congregation which was called: "Oblates of Saint Frances of Rome." Frances cared for her infirm husband until he died. On March 21, 1436 she began living at Tor de' Specchi where she was chosen its Superior. She died on March 9, 1440, acclaimed by all as a Saint. She was canonized on May 29, 1608 by Pope Paul V. Pope Urban VIII wished that in the church dedicated to her, a small shrine with four columns be built to house a gilded bronze statue of the Saint together with the Guardian Angel that had been with her throughout her life.