

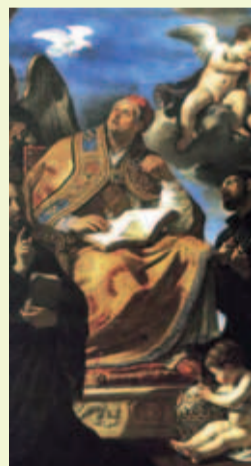
# Pope Saint Gregory the Great

540-604

*Born in Rome* in 540 from the ancient patriarchal family of the Anicia.

After having completed his studies and having initiated his political career, according to the customs of the sons of the ancient Roman people, Gregory decided to abandon the world and to withdraw himself to a monastic life: he divided, therefore, his riches amongst the poor and transformed the family palace on the Celian Hill into a monastery, adopting the Benedictine Rule. Having returned to Rome, he was nominated an advisor of the Pope (Pelagius II) and, upon his death, in 590, he himself was elected Pope with a large consensus. Pope Gregory was noted for his great generosity. Every day his secretary would select 12 poor people to dine at the table of the Pontiff while he

other times to be that of a venerable elder. The dinner ended, and after having dismissed the other invitees Saint Gregory asked the strange guest who he was. He replied: "I am an Angel of the Lord, who is charged with the duty of assisting you during your pontificate in order that through my mediation you are able to obtain all of the graces you necessitate. It is above all because of your charity to the poor that God has chosen you to become his Vicar on earth." Upon hearing these words, the Saint was overcome with a strong acknowledgment of gratitude and he thanked and blessed the Lord for his goodness.



would serve them personally with much humility. One day the Pope noticed that at his table there were 13 seated instead of the usual 12 but his secretary assured him that he had chosen only 12 and that he knew nothing of the other one. Suddenly his attention was attracted by one of the guests seated at the end of the table, his face miraculously changed in appearance, seeming at times to be that of a gracious child, and