

# Saint Nicholas of Tolentino

1245-1305

*In the course of his life, Saint Nicholas experienced the hidden dangers and the attacks of the demon in varied ways. He often appeared to him in horrible guises and beat him.*

One time, while the Saint was immersed in prayer close to the altar, the demon extinguished the sanctuary lamp of the Most Holy Sacrament and threw it on the ground breaking it. One night, Saint Nicholas having found the oratory locked, went to pray and do his devotions in the refectory, where he found a painted crucifix. The evil one, full of rage towards him, pushed him violently to the ground and caused him a trauma. Invoking the crucifix, the Saint struggled to get up, but the demon struck him again. Saint Nicholas praised and thanked God and he continued his fervent prayer.

entrusted to be a prod for your sanctity.” Saint Nicholas invoked God: “The Lord is my help, I do not fear anything that can be done to me.”

Saint Nicholas was born in Sant’Angelo in Pontano in 1245. In 1259 he joined the Hermits of St. Augustine of Sant’Angelo in Pontano as an oblate. Subsequently, he professed his vows and in 1274 in Cingoli he was ordained a priest. In 1275 he was transferred to Tolentino and began to go around traveling to villages and cities proclaiming the Gospel. His life was spent between prayers and penances. His apostolic zeal drives him to spend hours on end in the confessional



Often the devil went on the top of the roof of the oratory where Nicholas usually went to pray. To disturb him, the devil would begin to scream wrenching howls and violently shift the roofing tiles, but the Saint was not frightened, instead, he would redouble his prayer. Another day, while the Saint was praying in his cell, suddenly a demon burst in, and clubbed him with vehemence, so much so that the body of Saint Nicholas remained covered with scars for many days.

The Lord permitted that Saint Nicholas also be tested by way of demons, among whom one was named Belial. Once, the demon stole a piece of the fabric from the habit belonging to the Saint. While continuing to search for it, he said to himself: “Holy God, who could have played this trick on me? Certainly it must be that one who is not worthy of being named.” Sure enough, the demon replied: “You guessed right. It was I who played that trick on you and others I will do to you; but then with these methods I will succeed in nothing, I must change my method.” The Saint, at that point, asked him: “But, who are you?” The demon replied to him: “I am Belial,

to reconcile souls with God. Crowds of devotees run to him from every part of the region and elsewhere. His fame of being a man of God and the miracles attributed to him made it so that at his confessional there was always a long line. He had a great devotion to the Souls of Purgatory, for whom he would offer prayers and sufferings. He dedicated himself to the assistance of the sick and of the poor. He died in Tolentino, the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1305. He was proclaimed a Saint in 1446.

The legend of the construction of the so-called Bridge of the Devil is tied to Saint Nicholas, important point of transit for goods produced on the other side of the Chienti River. The legend says that there was an agreement between the Saint and the devil for the construction of this bridge of crucial importance to Tolentino, in exchange for the consignment of the soul of the first passer-by. It is said that the Saint mocked the devil by throwing a form of cheese across the bridge making sure that the first passer-by was a dog. In front of the square of the basilica of Saint Nicholas, one can take the narrow Sparaciario road which leads to the impressive Gothic church of St. Mary.