

# Saint Zita

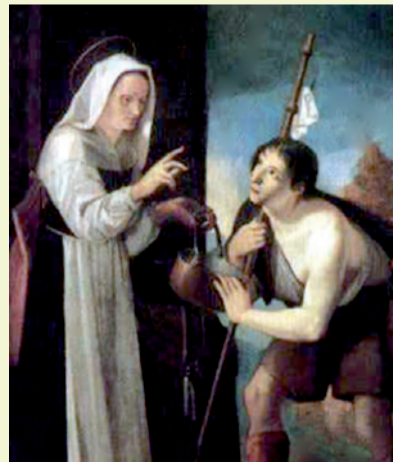
1218-1278

*Daughter* of poor peasants, she was born at Monsagrati, close to Lucca. Because of the great poverty of her family she was sent at only 12 years old, to go to work in the home of the noble family Fatinelli. Because of her great goodness and generosity, she made herself valued by all. She died in that home in 1278.

The poets Fazio of Umberti and Dante memorialized her in their works, linking her name to the city of Lucca, city of which the Saint is patron, in addition to being the patron saint of housekeepers and maids.

Because of her abilities and virtues Zita was given, by her owners, care of the whole family. One morning she went to

it to her, as it was not hers. At the end of the Mass, Zita remained in prayer for a long time. When she left the church it was already past dawn. The poor man was nowhere in sight and he had taken the fur coat with him! Zita did not think much of the reproaches from her owner but felt bad that she had made the poor man wait so long. She made her way home and



Holy Communion in the nearby Church of Saint Frediano and she was so fervent in her thanksgiving that she lost track of time. This was the day she was supposed to bake bread. She ran home worried about recuperating the lost time. She opened the cupboard and found to her astonishment that the flour was already mixed and rising and she had only to cook it in the oven. She searched and questioned anyone who might have done this, but in vain. The Lord then revealed that the Angels had prepared the bread while she was at prayer.

One evening Saint Zita was preparing for the midnight Mass of Christmas. Heavy snow had fallen in Lucca and since Zita had given away all the warm wraps she owned to the poor, her mistress insisted that she wear her fur coat. The Saint before entering the Church of Saint Frediano, saw a poor man seated on the steps who was freezing in the cold. She gave the poor man the fur coat and asked him to return

met with expected blame from her employer. Around dinner-time there was a knock at the door. It was the poor man carrying the fur coat. When he went to take his leave a blinding light filled the room. Everyone was astonished. A joy never felt before pervaded their souls. That poor man was the Guardian Angel of Saint Zita.

An ancient manuscript narrates that one year a famine severely struck the city of Lucca. Grain became very expensive due to profiteering. After Zita had given all the bread in the house to the poor one morning, and not knowing what to do to provide for other poor people that came to her at the house of the Fatinelli's, she gave them the contents of a large case filled with fava beans her patron was supposed to sell. When the owner ordered her to verify the contents of the case and give it to the buyer, Zita, trusting in Providence, opened it up and saw that the case was once again filled to capacity.