

Saint Nicholas of Tolentino

Part 1

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PURGATORY

Saint Nicholas of Tolentino is famous for his great devotion to the Souls of Purgatory, arisen thanks also to the mystical experiences that he had between 1270 and 1275 in the hermitage of Valmanente (Pesaro). Boniface IX in his two Bulls: *Splendor Paternae Gloriam* of January 1, 1390 and *Licet quis de cuius* of March 1, 1400, and Leo XIII in his Brief of June 10, 1884, in which he established canonically *The Pious Union under the Patronage of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino in assistance to the poor souls of Purgatory*, characterize Saint Nicholas as Patron of the Poor Souls.

In the *Life of Saint Nicholas* written by Pietro Da Monterubbiano we find narrated certain episodes which have as protagonists some deceased souls: "One time, when he was entrusted with the weekly calendar for the conventual Mass, during the night immediately preceding the Sunday he fell asleep briefly in his modest bed and suddenly a soul with a loud voice calls him shouting: 'Brother Nicholas - the soul tells him - man of God: turn to me! (Ps 24:16)'. Nicholas turns towards the soul, trying in every way to recognize him, but after looking at him he could not understand who that soul was when alive, then Nicholas perturbed asked him to make himself known.

This time the soul answered: 'I am the soul of Brother Pellegrino of Osimo, whom you knew when alive: at that time I was your servant, now I am tormented in this blaze. Upon receiving my contrition, God did not destine me to eternal punishment, which I deserved due to my weakness, but to purgatorial punishment, in virtue of

His mercy. Now I humbly beg you to be so kind to celebrate a Mass for the Dead, in order that I may be finally removed from these flames.' Nicholas answered: 'May my Savior be gracious to you, oh brother, by Whose Blood you have been redeemed; I am only entrusted with the conventual Mass, which must be celebrated solemnly, and because it is not right to modify my responsibility - let alone on the day of Sunday which is upcoming - I cannot recite the Mass for the Dead.' To this the soul replied to him: 'Come, o venerable father, come and see for yourself whether it is truly worthy of you to refuse without mercy the request coming from such a miserable multitude.' Leading him to another part of the hermitage, the soul then showed him the small plain that is near Pesaro, on which in fact there was a multitude of people, of both genders, of various ages and conditions and also belonging to a variety of religious orders. 'Have mercy, o father, have mercy on such a miserable multitude, that awaits for your beneficial assistance; actually if you will be willing to celebrate Mass for us, the majority of these people will be removed from these extremely atrocious torments.' "

A large number of faithful went to visit him at the friary in order to go to confession to him, leaving reconciled again with God and relieved from their inner torments. The miracles attributed to his intercession are very numerous. He died on September 10, 1305. He was canonized in 1446.

