

Saint Nicholas of Tolentino

Part 2

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PURGATORY

The story of the vision of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino regarding the souls of Purgatory continues: “Therefore, upon awakening, the holy man moved by a great compassion for these people immediately began to beseech the Savior of all people on their behalf with much shedding of tears. The next morning, while prostrated in front of the prior with absolute reverence, avoiding every sign of presumption, Nicholas told him about the vision not revealing everything but only some details and begging the prior to grant him the permission to celebrate the Mass for the Dead during that week. The prior, immediately granting his permission for those prayers, managed to substitute him with another friar in his previous task. Therefore Nicholas, celebrating the Mass for the Dead for the whole week, day and night cried tears of love for that multitude that had been shown to him. And then, after the week went by, the same Brother Pellegrino appeared to Nicholas again and thanked him for the mercy he had requested and told him of having been removed from the extremely atrocious punishments together with a large portion of the previously mentioned multitude, through the mercy of God, through the Masses celebrated and through his tearful prayers. And he said that in this way he reached with joy the glory of God. ‘You have liberated us – he said – from what was tormenting us, you scattered and confused those who hated us.’”

In Purgatory the souls began to know since his youth the man whose holiness of life in his old age is seen venerated in the

world: already the ship of his merits sails the sea of Purgatory. Nicholas not only emptied Purgatory with his merits, but he seemed to empty also Hell with the prayers of his compassion. In fact one time, while he was in a friary in the city of Recanati, a sorrowful messenger presented himself to Nicholas arriving from the house of his brother, and as soon as he was in the presence of the holy man, prostrate hugging his knees, crying and shouting in a loud voice he said: “Where were your prayers and your virtues, o most holy Nicholas? Here at your hands is asked an account of the soul and the body of your brother, in fact he was killed in an unexpected ambush by criminals in the castle of Monte Apponi, as if your holiness who loved his body and his soul had not existed.” Upon hearing these things the holy man could not restrain his tears, saying: “O poor man, there is a possibility that you are damned!” After sending back the messenger, Nicholas subjected himself to a harsher abstinence, praying with tears day and night for fifteen days, in order that the Savior Jesus Christ would be willing to show him whether the soul of his brother had been damned or saved. While he was in the church lighting a lamp at the altar, in honor of the Body of the Lord, he heard then a voice shouting and saying: “My brother, my brother, I thank God and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who after regarding your prayers and your tearful supplications with the eye of His compassion freed me, although I was damned.”

