

Saint Benedict

circa 480-547

In Book II of the *Dialogues* of Saint Gregory the Great we find the life of Saint Benedict the Abbot (circa 480-547) narrated, that besides being the founder of the Benedictine Order he is also the Patron of Europe.

There is a celebrated episode in which the Saint sees some Angels taking the soul of Bishop Germanus of Capua to Heaven right after his death. “One evening, while the brothers were sleeping, Benedict prolonged the vigil waiting for the nocturnal prayer while standing and praying near a window. All of a sudden, focusing his eyes on the deep darkness of the night, a light flooded from on high and escaped the dense obscurity and diffused a clearness so

right away after that to Cassino to the monastery of Teoprobo, because that same night he stayed in Capua to find out more about what had happened to the Bishop Germanus. The order was carried out. The messenger already found the most reverend Bishop Germanus deceased, and in getting information about the circumstances around his death found out that it coincided exactly at the moment in which the man of God had beheld his elevation to Heaven.”



Saint Benedict of Nursia, detail from the affresco of Fra Angelico, Saint Mark, Florence.



Antonio Bazzi, *Saint Benedict Frees a Monk from the Demon* (1505), Abbot of Mont Oliveto.

intense that it was brighter than the light of day. In this vision came a marvelous phenomenon that he himself tells: the entire world, caught under a single ray of the sun was put before his very eyes. While he contemplated with his gaze the splendors of that glittering light, he saw the soul of Germanus, the Bishop of Capua, transported by the Angels held in a fiery globe.

“Wanting therefore to have testimony to this marvelous prodigy, he called out in a great voice, repeatedly, two or three times, to Servandus, the Deacon and Abbot of the Monastery. Struck by the unusual screams of this man, he quickly ran to him, he looked at the sky and he could see with marvel the last of the marvelous light which was getting weaker, while the man of God contemplated the story of what he had seen bringing out in him a profound stupor for the great miracle. He sent a messenger

Ultimately Pope Gregory gave the explanation on how Saint Benedict was able to see the entire world before himself: “The soul of the contemplative, rapt in the light of God, is inwardly in itself enlarged above itself, raised on high, it looks to that which is below it and understands how little the world is from the view on high. The man of God, therefore, that fixates on the fiery globe and the Angels that returned to Heaven could not contemplate these things if not in the light of God. If one sees the whole world in front of himself, it is no marvel because high up in the Heavens in the intellectual light, it is a vision of the Creator.”