

August 31

## Blessed Andrew of Borgo San Sepolcro



Andrew was inspired by a sermon of St. Philip Benizi and so asked to receive the habit of the Servants of St. Mary in 1278 in the house of the Order in the city of Borgo Sansepolcro. He withdrew immediately to a hermitage near Borgo to live a life of penance and solitude. Both by his counsel and his works, he drew many others hermits to the Order of Servants.

### *He went out into a desert place*

From documents of the Order we learn that Blessed Andrew, known as Brother Andrew of the Hermitage, lived for some time in the community of Borgo Sansepolcro early in the fourteenth century. Regarding his entrance into the Order, Fra Michele Poccianti tells us that in the year 1278 when a general chapter of the Order was being held in Borgo Sansepolcro, our holy father Philip delivered a homily on the gospel text where the Lord said, *None of you can be my disciple unless he give up all his possessions.* Andrew, a handsome and wealthy young man who was present at the homily, was so deeply moved by the words of the man of God, that immediately, led by the Spirit, he left his parents and all his earthly goods in the name of the Lord and shortly after, asked for the habit of the Servants. This young man was called Andrew like that other Andrew who left his nets and his boat and followed Christ.

In the community at Borgo, Andrew proved himself to be an exceptional servant of the Virgin and a perfect disciple of Saint Philip. He always showed a spiritual sensitivity toward the things of this world which he loved in God and through God. Although poor and harsh on himself, he showed himself to be rich and compassionate toward all. Meek and humble and peace-loving, it was evident that he had conquered his anger and subdued hatred. He never indulged in idleness or foolish talk.

In his desire for penance and solitude, he frequently went into the privacy of a cell at Cella Vallucola near Borgo, especially since this hermitage was attached to the community of the Servants at Borgo by the bishop of Città di Castello in the year 1295. Andrew was appointed vicar of the hermitage and soon won over the solitaries living there and became their father and leader. We read this in Fra Michele Poccianti's account and he was almost certainly using older sources.

Blessed Andrew, by his holiness of life and fiery eloquence gained many disciples, among whom was Blessed Bartholomew of Borgo. Among the many gifts of his apostolate, prudence and spiritual counseling shone forth in such a way that through him communities in the cities of Alessandria and Asti joined with the Order of Servants.

He was informed of the time of his death by a divine inspiration and thus returned his soul to God while at prayer in his cell in the year 1315. All mourned him as children for their father, pupils for their teacher, as sick deprived of their doctor.

His body was carried to the Church of the Servants in Borgo Sansepolcro amid weeping people and a large crowd of the faithful. The devotion which had been shown him from time immemorial was approved by Pope Pius VII in the year 1806.

Blessed Andrew was their moderator. He died in 1315 while he was at prayer. Pope Pius VII in 1806 confirmed the veneration which had been paid to him.

**Prayer**

O God, through Andrew you called many hermits to the community of Servants, making them one in their service of Mary and love for each other. Grant that, as humble servants of Mary, we may be one in heart and action. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**For the Eucharistic and LH see Liturgical Books**