

February 19

BLESSED ELIZABETH PICENARDI

Memorial

Elizabeth was born around 1428, probably in Cremona, Italy. From her childhood, however, she lived near the Servite Church of St. Barnabas in Mantua and there became associated with the friars of our Order. She received the Servite habit and was distinguished for her chastity as well as her love for the Eucharist and the Mother of God. She died in 1468 and Pius VII approved devotion to her in 1804.

From the common of saints and blessed of our Order, or from the common of virgins.

Office of Readings

SECOND READING

Choose one of the following readings.

From the Spiritual Exercises by Saint Gertrude, virgin
(Exercitium VI and II: SC 127, pp. 228-232 passim, and p. 82)

You have provided me with an advocate and patron through whom I may find favour with you

When you are pouring out your mind and heart in praise of God, and can find no words worthy of his majesty, ask Jesus our Lord, the beloved, to glorify himself on your behalf, with the great and boundless praise which he deserves, as may best please him, and as he delights to be praised, saying with devout heart and voice:

"O my God, my delight, may the glory of your own divinity praise you; you filled the inviolate womb of the Virgin Mary with this glory during the nine months you dwelt within her. May the height of your divine strength give you glory" stooping down to this virgin's valley of lowliness. May your marvellous creative skill give you glory, O God most high, infusing into that virgin Rose such virtue, grace and beauty that you yourself yearned to possess it.

"May your adorable wisdom give you glory, endowing Mary with grace so effective that her whole life, bodily and spiritual, became the fit abode of your dignity. Glory to you for the love, so strong, wise, and tender, that made you, Flower and Spouse of virginity, become also the Son of a virgin. Glory to you for the renunciation of your majesty which made me an heir to everlasting riches. "Praise to you for assuming our humanity, thus giving me a share in your divinity. May your thirty-three years of exile bless you, endured for me to bring back my perishing soul to the fountain of eternal life. Thanks to you for the toil, tears, and anguish of your human life, sanctifying my littleness, cares and weariness. Thanks to you for this experience of my misery, which has made you the Father of mercies for me, a God of infinite pity. May your unspeakable love give praise to you, which made you become my redemption beyond all price. Glory to you for the agony of your precious death, to which you were driven by that mighty passion for me."

Thus, clinging close to God as your lover, ask our Lord to offer himself as a holocaust of praise, together with his virgin Mother and all the host of heaven, playing upon the organ of his divinity and the harp of his humanity, saying with heart and voice:

"O God of my life, may you have praise in my name from your serene godhead, three in persons, one in essence, distinct relations in one loving family of ineffable and delightful intimacy. May the depth of your incomprehensible majesty praise you, your immutable eternity, your ever untouched purity, holiness at its very source, perfect and radiant happiness. May the purity of your human flesh glorify you, through which you have purified me, becoming bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. "May the most worthy heart and soul of the most glorious Virgin Mary, your mother, praise you for me, for you have given her to me as mother of my salvation, and the arms of her

motherly pity are always open to me. Praise to you for your most faithful care of me, giving me such a patron and advocate through whom I may most readily find favour with you. Through her I confidently hope to obtain your mercy for all eternity. Praise to you, then, for this incomparable shrine of your glory, the one worthy dwelling place we were able to offer you, where you yourself elicit on my behalf the honour and glory which I owe you. "Here ask the virgin Mother to intercede for you: O purest of lilies, highest hope after God, O Mary most tender, plead for me with your son, let your word be effectual on my behalf. In faith, conduct my cause, ask and obtain my petition, in you I trust, sole hope after Christ. Then prove yourself to be the kindest of mothers. May the Lord receive me into the cloister of love into the school of those who listen to the Spirit of love; obtain this for me from your beloved son. O faithful Mother, so provide for your daughter that I may become the fruit of ever living love, watered with heavenly dew, remaining steadfast and growing in true sanctity.

RESPONSORY See Psalm 103:22; Luke 1:46-47

V. Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

R. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

V. My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.

R. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Alternative.

From the Life of Blessed Elizabeth Picenardi

(In Moniales OSM, 1, [1963]pp. 29-32)

Faithful messenger of the blessed Mother of God

Elizabeth was born in 1428 and from early childhood was brought up in Mantua. Her father was Leonard of Cremona. She was so devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she observed chastity perpetually in the virginal habit of the Servants, even though her father, then a steward of the Marquis Gonzaga, tried often to force her to marry into the nobility. While observing virginity her entire life, she went about from the first flower of her youth until she died clothed with a hairshirt next to her flesh, fastened with an iron belt four fingers in width. Daily she would recite the divine office following the rite of the Roman Curia and often she was nourished by holy communion from the hands of Fra Barnabas of Mantua who would daily hear her confession. She would be, as it were, dissolved in tears while receiving these sacraments. Her body was afflicted with many infirmities especially after the death of her father, when she went to live with her sister Orsina, also known as Orsolina, the wife of the nobleman Bartholomew of Gorno. She lived there until the end of her life in her own small room not far from the church of Saint Barnabas of the Order of Servants in the quarter of the city called Cigno. Those living in the area would run to her for advice almost as to an oracle, for they regarded her in some way as a most successful intercessor with the blessed Mother of God. She was endowed with the gift of prophecy and she predicted the day and hour of her own death. When her death approached, although grievously afflicted with colic, for nine days she gave thanks unceasingly to God and the Blessed Virgin because she would die with the flower of virginity unharmed and because she had never sought anything from the Mother of grace without her prayers being answered. At the moment of her death, however, she seemed to be listening intently, as if she heard a divine melody. Nor could even her pain hinder her from rejoicing with happy countenance and serene face; she seemed, in fact, to be watching intently, as if she saw Jesus Christ our Lord and his holy Mother standing beside her. She died on Friday, 19 February 1468. As she had steadfastly borne her pain with the crucified Christ, so it was on Friday together with him that she died.

RESPONSORY See 1 Corinthians 7:34; Matthew 25:7-10

V. Elizabeth was a wise virgin, holy both in body and soul.

R. When the Lord came, she entered the wedding feast with him V. She meditated on the things of the Lord and trimmed her lamp.

R. When the Lord ...

Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.

Morning Prayer

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH

Ant. Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you Will find, knock and the door will be opened to you.

PRAYER

Lord God, while on earth Elizabeth was highly favoured by Mary, Mother of your Son, Jesus. Now, in heaven, may she help us to be faithful in your service and secure in your love. 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.

Evening Prayer

CANTICLE OF MARY

Ant. She was humble in all things and received God's favour: she was shown many things beyond human understanding.

Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.