

Introducing **NICHOLAS** of **TOLENTINO**

When: 1245 - 1305

The Tolentine Memorial Place, within the grounds of our Parish, and named in his honour, provides us with a special space for remembering our own deceased family and friends.

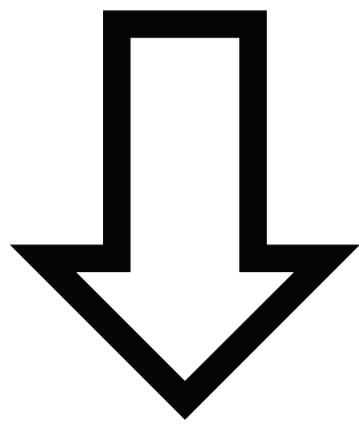
Nicholas Gurrutti was born to a middle-aged childless couple, at Sant' Angelo near Ancona in the Marche region of Italy. According to legend, his parents had made a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Nicolas of Bari to ask for a son, promising to dedicate him to God's service. So he was considered the fruit of prayers and was baptized Nicholas. He soon showed signs of saintliness, hiding away in a nearby cave and praying there like the hermits he had observed in the mountains.

At an early age Nicholas was moved by the preaching of the Augustinian, Fr. Reginaldo do Monterubbiano, Prior of the monastery of Sant' Angelo, on a text despising the pleasures of the world.

Nicholas requested admission to this community. His parents gave joyful consent.

His religious formation was influenced by the spirituality of the hermits of Brettino, who were known for their strict mortification of the body and their practical poverty.

Nicholas excelled in his studies. He was held to be a model of generous striving after perfection and was sent to different Augustinian monasteries.



During the last years of his life Nicholas was bedridden and suffered grievously. Yet he possessed an angelic meekness, a guileless simplicity, and a tender love of virginity, guarding it by prayer and extraordinary mortifications. He died in 1305, surrounded by his Augustinian community. People began immediately to petition for his canonization and the process was begun only twenty years after his death.

During the canonization process he was credited with at least 300 miracles. He was finally canonized by Eugene IV in 1446 after years of delay caused by the Avignon Papacy and the Great Western Schism. Nicholas is known as the patron saint of the Holy Souls or those recently deceased.

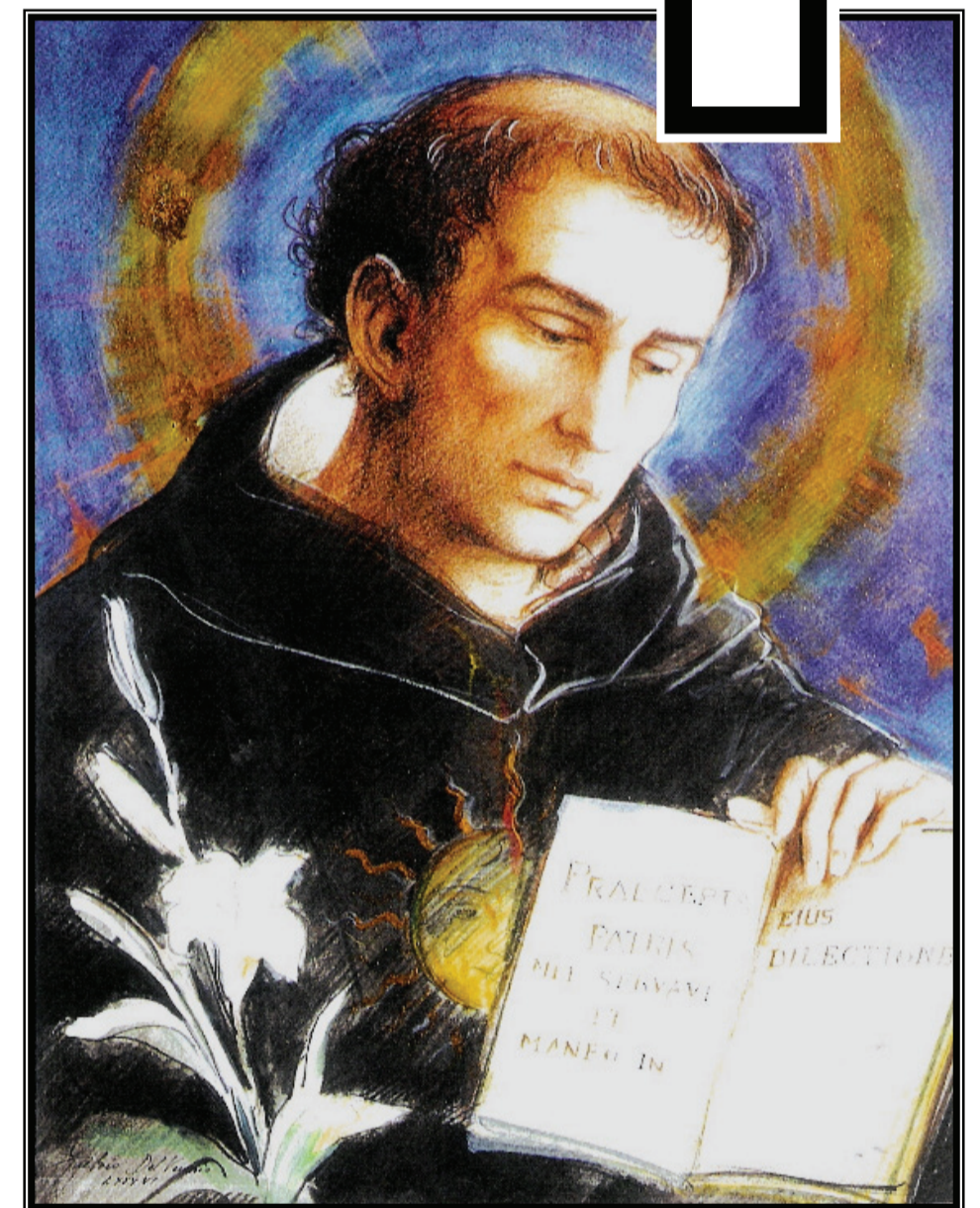
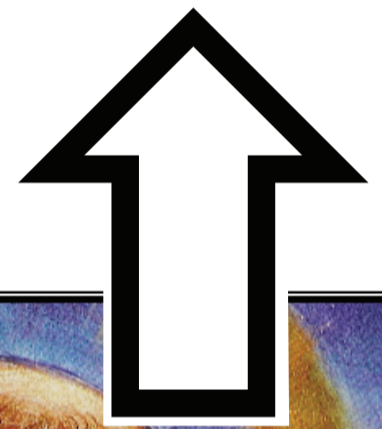
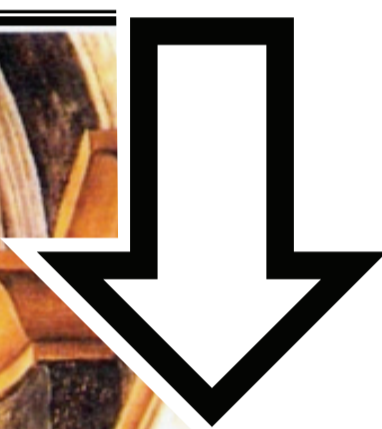
From the early years of his ministry he prayed and celebrated Masses for those believed to be suffering the pains of Purgatory. Nicholas interceded for them so they could enjoy the happiness of Heaven.

His tomb is held in veneration by the faithful.

His feast day is celebrated each year on September 10.

PREACHER AND CONFESSOR

MODEL OF GENEROUS STRIVING AFTER PERFECTION



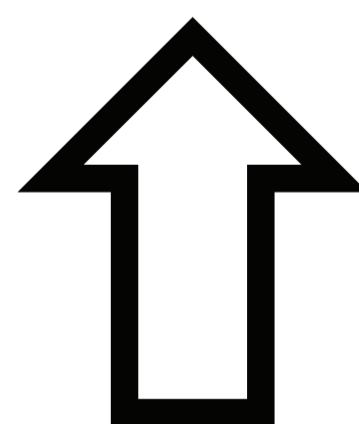
'Say nothing of this, give thanks to God, not to me, I am only a vessel of clay, a poor sinner'

Where: TOLENTINO, ITALY

On account of his kind and gentle manner his superiors entrusted him with the daily feeding of the poor at the monastery gates. But sometimes he was so free with the Friar's provisions that the Procurator begged the Superior to check his generosity. Nicholas made his profession before he was nineteen and was ordained priest in about 1271. He said his first Mass with exceptional fervour and from then when he celebrated the Mystery he seemed aglow with the fire of His love. After his ordination he preached with wonderful success and gained a reputation as a preacher and confessor. One day while praying in Church he seemed to hear a voice saying, 'To Tolentino! To Tolentino! Stay there!'

In about 1274 Nicholas was assigned to the town of Tolentino, near his birthplace. He was to spend the remaining thirty years of his life there. This town suffered from civil strife between the Guelphs, who supported the Pope, and the Ghibellines, who supported the Emperor, in their struggle for control of Italy.

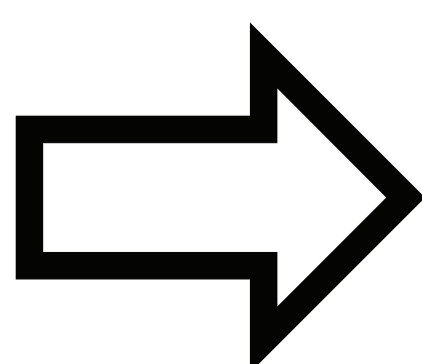
Nicholas saw only one remedy to the violence: Street preaching! The success of this apostolic work was astounding. 'He spoke of the things of Heaven,' says his biographer.



Nicholas ministered to the poor, brought the Sacraments to the sick and dying. He took care of the needs of children and visited prisoners. His daily preaching, instructions and work in the Confessional brought about numerous conversions and his many miracles were responsible for more. Yet he was careful not to take any credit. He would insist, 'Say nothing of this, give thanks to God, not to me, I am only a vessel of clay, a poor sinner.'

At times Nicholas devoted himself to prayer and works of penance with such intensity that it was necessary for his superiors to impose limitations on him.

At one point he was so weakened through fasting that he was encouraged, in a vision of Mary and the child Jesus, to eat a piece of bread signed with a Cross. It became known as St. Nicholas Bread and the custom of blessing and delivering the Bread was continued by Augustinians in many places around the world.



PRAYERFUL MAN

PATRON OF THE HOLY SOULS

PASTOR TO HIS FLOCK