



DOMENICAN PRIEST

Roman martyrology: In the convent of Morbegno near the Italian Alps, Blessed Andrew Grego of Peschiera, a priest of the Order of Preachers, who visited frequently, where he lived austere with the poor and tried to reconcile everyone fraternally (1485).

Beatification date: September 26, 1820 by Pius VII.

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Born early 15th Century in Peschiera, Italy. As a child, Andrew Grego lived on the southern shore of Lake Garda, in northern Italy. His training for a life of heroic sanctity began early, with voluntary penances and unquestioning obedience to his father. Andrew's first desire was to be a hermit, an ambition that was met with ridicule from his brothers. Failing to realize this hope, he made for himself a severe schedule of prayer and penance, and, in his own house, lived the life of one wholly given to God.

After the death of his father, it became increasingly difficult to carry out his plan, so he resolved to enter the cloister. Although his brothers had persecuted him without mercy, he knelt and humbly begged their prayers and forgiveness for having annoyed them. Then he gave them the only possession he had, a walking stick. This stick, thrown carelessly in a corner by the brothers, was forgotten until; long afterwards, it bloomed like the legendary rod of Saint Joseph in token of Andrew's holiness.

The 15-year old received the Dominican habit at Brescia and then were sent to San Marco in Florence. This convent was then at its peak of glory, stamped with the saintly personalities of Saint Antoninus and the Blessed of Lawrence of Riprafratta, Constantius, and Antony della Chiesa. Andrew's soul caught the fire of their apostolic zeal, and set forth on his mission in the mountains of northern Italy.

Heresy and poverty had combined to draw almost this entire region from the Church. It was a country of great physical difficulties, and, in his travels in the Alps, he risked death from snowstorms and avalanches as often as from the daggers of the heretics. Nevertheless, he travelled tirelessly, preaching, teaching, and

building--for his entire lifetime (45 years).

Churches, hospitals, schools, and orphanages were built under Andrew's direction. He would retire from time to time to these convents for periods of prayer and spiritual refreshment, so that he could return with renewed courage and zeal to the difficult apostolate. He was known as "the Apostle of the Valtelline," because of the district he evangelized.

Blessed Andrew performed many miracles. Probably his greatest miracle was his preaching, which produced such fruits in the face of great obstacles. At one time, when he was preaching to the people, the heretics presented him with a book in which they had written down their beliefs. He told them to open the book and see for themselves what their teachings amounted to. They did so, and a large viper emerged from the book.

Blessed Andrew closed a holy life by an equally holy death in Valtellina District (near Swiss border), Italy, 1485 and was buried in Morbegno. He had labored so long among the poor and the neglected that his place in their hearts was secured. Because of the miracles worked at his tomb, and the persistent devotion of the people, his relics were twice transferred to more suitable tombs.