

After twelve years as vicar general, Bernardine felt that preaching was his real calling. In 1442, he petitioned the Pope that he might leave his position and resume his travels. Besides his promotion of the cult of the Holy Name of Jesus, Bernardine also promoted Mary as being the dispenser of the graces merited by her divine Son. He also promoted Saint Joseph. His last sermons--on *Inspirations*-- show him to have been a profound psychologist on the mystical way and a liberal-minded teacher of the theory of contemplative prayer.

In 1444, he gave a marathon homily, speaking for fifty hours in his birthplace. He became ill, but set out for the Kingdom of Naples. On 20 May, 1444, he died at Aquila in the Abruzzi, and was buried there. The miracles at his tomb induced Nicholas V to canonize Bernardine only six years after his death in 1450.

In the Roman rite both mass and office on his feast day are taken from the Common of Confessors, but the Franciscans have a proper mass and office, including the hymn *Sidus Etruscis* and a homily on apostolic poverty from one of his own sermons. The preaching of Saint Bernardine, especially the verbatim version of his popular sermons in Italian, still deserve attention in an age no longer much addicted to pulpit oratory. Modern readers will at least admire the rugged forthrightness, often earthiness, of his style. They will applaud his social awareness and the eminently practical method he adopted to drive his lessons home and make them permanent.

He is the patron saint of advertisers; advertising; against hoarseness; compulsive or uncontrolled gambling; gambling addicts; chest, respiratory or lung problems and Aquila, Italy.

\*(excerpted from: [www.stbernardine.org](http://www.stbernardine.org); [www.cin.org](http://www.cin.org); [//catholicfire.blogspot.com](http://catholicfire.blogspot.com))

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## *Saint Bernardine of Sienna*

Feast Day: May 20



Prayer:

St. Bernardine of Siena, words were very important to you. You spent most of your life speaking the golden words of Jesus' mercy and His Holy Name. And you abhorred words that were shameful. Pray for us that we may always choose to speak Jesus' name with reverence and choose words of love over words of shame. Amen.

## Saint Bernardine of Siena

\*Saint Bernardine was born at Massa Marittima, Italy on 8 September, 1380 of the noble Sienese family of the Albizeschi. His father was the governor of the region. His parents died when Bernardine was six years old. Left as an orphan, he was brought up by his aunts. At school in Sienna, he displayed a remarkable intelligence. His general popularity was in no way lessened by his outstanding goodness and purity. His life was an example of holiness expressed in his love for God and his fellowman.

When he was seventeen years old, he joined a Marian confraternity at the La Scala hospital and began a secluded religious life. Yet in 1400, he willingly emerged during a severe outbreak of the plague and volunteered to care for the people who were sick and became a successful organizer of the hospital services. Although he escaped infection, he fell ill through exhaustion and spent two years recovering. He never fully recovered.

In 1402, he joined the Franciscans, throwing in his lot with the 'Observant' reform-party (a convent of strict observance) and was ordained in 1404. For several years, he studied and lived the life of a quiet monk behind the walls of the convent. In 1417, he was sent to Milan to celebrate Mass and preach in one of the parish churches there. Here, Bernardine came into his real ministry. News of his exciting sermons spread throughout what is now Italy, and soon he had invitations to travel and preach all over the peninsula. He responded, bringing his message of zeal for our God to hordes of people. They walked miles in the Mediterranean sun to hear him. One of his listeners became his scribe. This unnamed man would copy his words on a wax tablet then would go home and transcribe them onto vellum. His career is a record of indefatigable preaching

journeys, usually afoot, all over Italy. He is best remembered for his sermons on devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus which drew very large crowds wherever he went.

To assist him in promoting the Holy Name of Jesus, Saint Bernardine designed a symbol which he displayed during his sermons. It consisted of an abbreviated form of the name of Jesus at the center ('IHS'), surrounded by a blazing sun. Soon the symbol began to appear on buildings and in the homes where Saint Bernardine had spoken. The use of his own symbol to promote devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus was disapproved of by some people of his time and charges of heresy were made against him. He was found innocent by Pope Martin V, testifying to the worthiness of his life and his chosen apostolate.

His habitual topics of preaching was for the need of penance and denunciation of prevalent vices, especially civil and political strife, usury, gambling and 'vanity' in dress and social behavior. He treated these worn themes in a fresh manner, using pregnant anecdotes and illustrations, thereby holding vast crowds for hours and bringing about impressive conversions.

In 1430, he was elected vicar general of the Franciscans of the Strict Observance. During his twelve year term of office. Many Conventual monasteries, which enjoyed a looser rule, changed to the Strict Observance to benefit from Bernardine's diplomacy and vision. He added scholarship to their routine insisting upon introducing theology and the study of canon law. He loved knowledge.