

Florence was shaken by frequent earthquakes during three years, beginning in 1453, and a large tract of land was laid desolate by a violent storm. The saint maintained, lodged, and set up again the most distressed, and rebuilt their houses. He also labored most assiduously to render these public calamities instrumental to the reformation of his people's manners. Cosimo de' Medici used to say, that he did not question but the preservation of their republic, under its great dangers, was owing chiefly to the merits and prayers of its holy archbishop. Pope Pius II, has left us, in the second book of his Commentaries, a most edifying history of the eminent virtues of our saint, and the strongest testimonies of his sanctity. The love of his flock made him decline secular embassy to the Emperor Frederic III.

Antoninus had a great reputation for theological learning, and sat as a papal theologian at the Council of Florence in 1439. Of his various works, the list of which is given in Quétif-Échard, *De Scriptoribus Ordinis Praedicatorum*, vol. i. 818, the best-known are his *Summa theologica* (Venice, 1477; Verona, 1740) and the *Summa confessionalis, Curam illius habes* (Mondavi, 1472) are valuable works for confessors. This is one of the three guides he wrote for confessors. His writings, some in Italian, reflect a pronounced awareness of the problems of social and economic development. He urged in them that the state had a duty to intervene in mercantile affairs for the common good, and the obligation to help the poor and needy.

Saint Antoninus died on 2 May 1459 kissing the crucifix, and repeating the words, "To serve God is to reign." He was canonized by Pope Adrian VI. His feast day which was not in the Tridentine Calendar, was inserted in the General Roman Calendar in 1683, for celebration on 10 May as a Double, a rank altered in 1960 to that of a Third-Class Feast. The Roman Martyrology however, still indicates that it is still is to be observed on 2 May, the day of his death.

\* (excerpted from: [www.magnificat.ca](http://www.magnificat.ca); [www.traditioninaction.org](http://www.traditioninaction.org); [www.ewtn.com](http://www.ewtn.com); and [//en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org))



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## **Saint Antoninus** **of Florence, Italy** **Feast Day: May 10**



*Eternal God, you blessed Saint Antoninus  
with a marvelous gift of counsel.  
By the help of his prayers while we walk in the darkness of this life,  
may we learn from the light of Christ all that we ought to do.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God forever and ever.  
Amen.*

## Saint Antoninus of Florence

\*Saint Antoninus, or Little Anthony, as he was affectionately nicknamed by his fellow citizens because of his short stature, was born at Florence, Italy in 1389. From early childhood, he applied himself to learning and study, and was known for his keen intelligence and piety. Influenced by the sermons of Blessed John Dominic, a great Italian religious reformer of the period, Antoninus applied for admission to the Dominican Order at Fiesole when he was 15 years old. The Superior, to test his sincerity and perseverance, told him he must first learn by heart the book of the Decretals, or Canon Law, containing several hundred pages. This apparently impossible task was accomplished within twelve months; and Antoninus received the coveted habit in his sixteenth year. He was sent to Cortona to make his novitiate under Blessed Lawrence of Ripafratta, along with Fra Angelico and Fra Bartolommeo, the one to become famous as a painter, the other as a miniaturist.

While still very young, he was chosen to govern the great convent of the Minerva in Rome, and after that, was successively prior at Naples, Cajeta, Cortona, Sienna, Fiesoli, and Florence: where he zealously enforced the practice of the rule of Saint Dominic, and more by actions than by words. In San Marco, Florence, he was involved with the establishment of the convent, wherein the convent's cells, including one for Cosimo de' Medici, were painted in frescos by Fra Angelico and his assistants. He often preached, and with great fruit. The works which he published increased his reputation. He was consulted from Rome, and from all quarters, especially in intricate cases of canon law. Because of his wonderful prudence, he was known as "the Counselor."

In 1446, Antoninus was compelled to accept the archbishopric of Florence. He was consecrated Archbishop of Florence on the initiative of Pope Eugene IV, and quickly won the esteem and love of his people, especially by his energy and resource in combatting the effects of the plague and earthquake in 1448 and 1453. In this dignity, he earned for himself the title of "the Father of the Poor," for all he had was at their disposal. Saint Antoninus never refused an alms which was asked in the

name of God. When he had no money, he gave his clothes, shoes, or furniture.

One day, being sent by the Florentines to the Pope, as he approached Rome, a beggar came up to him almost naked, and asked him for an alms for Christ's sake. Outdoing Saint Martin, Antoninus gave him his whole cloak. When he entered the city, another cloak was given him; by whom, he knew not. His household consisted of only six persons; his palace contained no plate or costly furniture, and was often nearly destitute of the necessities of life. His one mule was frequently sold for the relief of the poor, but was ordinarily bought back for him again by some wealthy citizen.

In the plague of 1448, the holy archbishop exposed himself first, and employed his clergy, both secular and regular, especially those of his own order, in assisting the infected; so that almost all the friars of St. Mark, St. Mary Novella, and Fiesoli were swept away by the contagion, and new recruits were sent from the province of Lombardy to inhabit those houses. The famine followed this first scourge. The holy archbishop stripped himself of almost everything; and by the influence of his words and example, many rich persons were moved to do the like. He obtained from Rome, particularly from the pope, great succors for the relief of the distressed. Indeed, the pope never refused anything that he requested; and ordered that no appeals should be received at Rome from any sentence passed by him.

Humility made him conceal his heroic practices of penance and piety from others, and even from himself; for he saw nothing but imperfections even in what others admired in him, and never heard anything tending to his own commendation without confusion and indignation. He formed many perfect imitators of his virtue. A handicraftsman who lived in obscurity was discovered by accident serving the poor, doing penance, and passing Sundays and holidays in the churches. Antoninus discovering this hidden treasure of sanctity, secretly honored the handicraftsman for his practices.