

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



*Servite Blessed John Angelo Porro:
The model of a life rooted in the
contemplation and knowledge of God*

BI. John Angelo was born in 1451 in the Duchy of Milan, Italy, of good Christian parents. In 1468 he received the habit of the Servants of Mary and lived for five years in the Servite Priory of Saint Mary in Milan. According to some of the Order's writers, he then retired to a life of solitude to lead a life of contemplation and penance. In 1474, John Angelo was sent to the Servite Church of the Annunziata in Florence, Italy, where he was noted for his regular observance of the Servite life. During this period, he completed studies and was ordained to the priesthood. John Angelo continued to consider the possibility of a hermit's life and eventually went to the Servite birthplace, the Sacred Priory of Monte Senario. Blessed John Angelo's stay on Monte Senario was of such particular importance in his life and spiritual development, he even came to be known as "John of the Mountain." Whenever he had to leave Monte Senario for reasons of health or obedience, he would always return to its solitude with great personal joy.

In 1484, John Angelo was called to Florence to instruct the novices for whom he had written some "useful instructions." Three years later, John Angelo was named the rector of the hermitage of Monte

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Senario, a position which he filled with responsibility, competence and holy wisdom. The prior general greatly esteemed his prudence and religious spirit and often sought his wisdom.

In 1495 John Angelo returned to Milan and was elected prior of the local Servite community. Even in the center of that famous city, he managed to preserve something of the solitary life which he so loved. His biographer Fra Filippo Ferrari tells us that "he lived in a room a little removed from the others." It was during this period that another important aspect of John Angelo's apostolate developed: the education of children





in Christian doctrine. Ippolito Porro writes that “even though he was prior, every feast day he would stand at the church doors or wander through the streets attracting the children to himself that he might teach them Christian doctrine”. Bl. John Angelo died on 23 October 1505, in the Servite priory of Milan, and was mourned by both friars and laity alike.

In Blessed John Angelo, we see the image and model of a life centered on contemplation and the knowledge of God which has found a way to express itself throughout the Order’s history. John Angelo had a special love for prayer and silence. He sought an ever-deepening intimacy with God in prayer and was,

coming to know God becomes an action of the Holy Spirit in the heart and soul and in the intellect. What we come to know of God through prayer and study, we share with others to assist them in encountering the love of God in the person of Jesus. The life of Bl. John Angelo teaches us that the discernment of God’s will comes through prayer which is consistent, personal and open to the call of the Lord and to sharing with others what we know of the Lord to lead them closer to Jesus.

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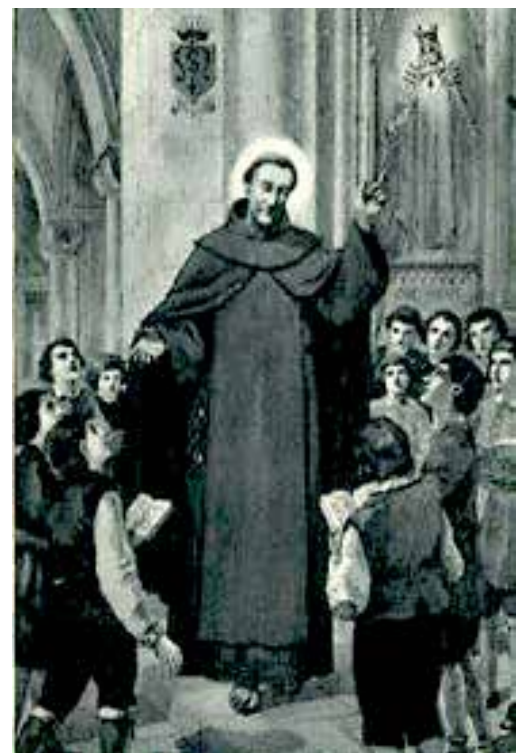
Prayer:

O Lord, Bl. John Angelo was faithful in his religious life and zealous in teaching Christian doctrine. May he pray for me, that I may always be close to you, observe the counsels of the gospel, be fervent in apostolic work and know your will for my life. I ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

therefore, drawn to solitude and away from associations which “wasted time”. Not infrequently, though, his fraternal charity won out over his love for solitude. He loved the Order and was always concerned for its individual members. Though somewhat frail physically, he gained control over his body through constant renunciation. Poverty and simplicity of life were especially important for him. John Angelo had great reverence for Our Lady and composed a prayer in her honor which he recited daily.

In 1737 Pope Clement XII proclaimed John Angelo blessed. His almost incorrupt body is venerated in Milan in the Church of San Carlo, formerly known as the Church of Saint Mary of the Servants. Following a very old custom, sick children are still brought to his tomb to ask his intercession for their cure.

The life of Bl. John Angelo Porro is a reminder that prayer and time alone with God are necessary in one’s pursuit of knowing God. Moments of prayer become encounters with God where the love of God is heard in the quiet of the heart and experienced through grace which fills the soul. The prayerful experiences of God illuminate our study of theology that



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follow



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