



Saints adoring Jesus Resurrected", by Fra Angelico – Detail of the Fiesole Panel, San Marco Museum, Florence (Italy)

Bl. Reginald of Orleans

1220

February 12

Bl. Reginald of Orleans also known as Reginald of St. Gilles, was known even during his lifetime for his brilliance, his prayer, his austerity, and his kindness toward others, especially the poor. Originally a powerful preacher and esteemed canonist associated with the University of Paris, Reginald encountered Dominic in Rome. Captivated by the apostolic way of life championed by Dominic, Reginald decided to join the newly-founded Order.

An illness struck him, however, before he could make his vows. When doctors began to despair of his life, Dominic begged Our Lady to intervene. Bl. Jordan of Saxony recounts that the Queen of Heaven herself appeared to Reginald, accompanied by the virgin martyrs, Saint Cecilia and Saint Catharine of Alexandria, to heal him, and, extending her virginal hand, anointed his eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, and feet, pronouncing certain words appropriate to each anointing. He told the brethren that the Mother of Mercy anointed his body saying, "I anoint your feet with holy oil to make them ready to spread the gospel of peace." and, at the same time, revealed to him the signal element of the Dominican habit: the scapular.

Then she showed him the habit of the Friars Preachers, saying to him, "Behold the habit of thy Order," and so she disappeared from his eyes, and Reginald perceived that he was cured. He related all that had passed to his Holy Father, praying him, however, to keep the circumstances secret till after his death. Saint Dominic complied with his request; and, in announcing to his Brethren that the linen surplice of the Canons Regular was to be exchanged for the woolen scapular, which was the particular part of the habit which the Blessed Virgin had been seen holding in her hands, he did not make known the reason of the change until after Reginald's death. This beautiful story is commemorated in the ceremony of clothing, in the words which accompany the giving of the scapular, "Receive the holy scapular of our Order, the most distinguished part of the Dominican habit, the maternal pledge from heaven of the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary towards us." To this day is the only part of the habit that is blessed and has always been considered the habit.

One of the most remarkable subjects whom he drew to the Order was Blessed Jordan of Saxony, to whom God was pleased to reveal the approaching death of Reginald in a vision, wherein he beheld a clear and sparkling fountain suddenly spring up in the Dominican Church of Saint James, and as suddenly fail.

No more than thirty-seven years old, he received his eternal reward in early February, 1220 and was buried at Notre Dame des Champs. The faithful soon began to visit and pray at his grave. Several miracles were reported. When, between 1605 and 1608, his body was taken up to be placed in a shrine, it was found to be incorrupt. This served to increase the devotion towards the man of God.

A few years later (1614), Our Lady of the Fields became the property of the Carmelite Sisters. Thus, the tomb of Saint Dominic's early disciple, because in their cloistered church, ceased to be visited by the people at large, who had been accustomed to seek his intercession for nearly four hundred years. The holy sisters, however, held him in the deepest veneration, and poured out their hearts in prayer before his sacred remains. In 1645, they had Father John Francis Senault, general of the Oratorians, write his life. His relics remained in this secluded place, ever an object of devotion for Christ's cloistered spouses, until they were desecrated and destroyed by the villains of the terrible French Revolution.

Beatification date: July 8, 1875 by Pope Pius IX.