



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

Bl. Raymond of Capua, O.P.

1330 - 1399

October 5

“The Second Founder” of the Dominican Order of Preachers, Reformer, Spiritual Director, he worked with St Agnes of Montepulciano and St Catherine of Siena, hagiographer, teacher – born in c 1330 in Capua, Naples as *Raymondo delle Vigne* and died on 5 October 1399, aged 69, in Nuremberg, Germany of natural causes. Also known as – *Raymond delle Vigne, Raymund, Raimondo*. Raymond was a leading member of the Dominican Order and served as its Master General from 1380 until his death. First as Prior Provincial of Lombardy and then as Master General of the Order, Raymond undertook the restoration of Dominican religious life. For his success in this endeavour, he is referred to as the Order’s “Second Founder.” Raymond also worked for the return of the papacy to Rome and for a solution to the Western schism. The important Mystic, Reformer, Doctor of the Church, St Catherine of Siena, accepted him as her spiritual director because of his burning passion for the Church and for the revival of religious life, most especially in their own Order.

Raymond was first assigned to Montepulciano, where he served as a chaplain to a monastery of nuns of the Dominican Second Order. He was the first biographer of their venerated former prioress, **St Agnes of Montepulciano**, who had died about fifty years earlier. He was then stationed in Rome, to serve as the Prior of the Friars at Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Later he was sent to Siena, where he was assigned by the Master General to be the spiritual director and confessor to the noted Dominican tertiary, Catherine of Siena.

Raymond spent the next six years advising her and hearing her confidences. While there, Raymond gradually learned to trust her holiness and her judgement. This was sealed, when they both became involved in nursing victims of the plague in 1374. When he contracted the disease himself and lay near death, Catherine came and sat at his bedside until he recovered. Knowing how close he was to death, Raymond credited his recovery to her prayers.

By 1374 Raymond had come to the attention of Pope Gregory XI, then living in Avignon, as a result of his connection to Catherine and also for his novel ways of confronting issues like the Crusades in the Holy Land, the return of the papacy to Rome, and the general reform of the Church. He was well known for his ability to pass seamlessly from dealing with spiritual and supernatural considerations to the more mundane matters of practical politics. For four years Raymond accompanied Catherine in her journeys and went to Avignon to act as an intermediary between her and the Pope.

This experience of trying to reconcile the Church proved to be incredibly important for Raymond who, only weeks after St Catherine’s death, was elected Master of the Order. Not only had the Church been suffering through a schism but the Order too, was undergoing its own divisive period. Raymond strove to unite the two factions in the Order and with the help of holy friars, such as Bl John Dominici, he was able to re-establish the regular observance in the Order and restore peace and concord. For this, he was referred to as the “Second Founder” of the Order. Thanks to Raymond, the Dominican Order never split. During this time, Raymond also wrote *The Life of St Catherine of Siena*. In 1379 by command of Pope Urban VI Raymond was examined by Fra. Giacomo Altoviti who promoted him to the grade of Master of Theology.

Raymond was buried first in Nuremberg (now Germany) where he died but his body was later moved to Naples, to the Church of San Domenico Maggiore. In 1899 Pope Leo XIII Beatified him, on the 500th anniversary of his death.