

Bezel B8

BLESSED GIUNIPERO (JUNIPER)

INSCRIPTION:

IN THE YEAR 1342, THE PERSECUTION BY THE TURKS AGAINST THE CATHOLIC FAITH WAS SO FIERCE THAT MANY RELIGIOUS OF THE SERAPHIC ORDER, GUARDIANS OF THE HOLY PLACES OF PALESTINE, WERE PUT TO DEATH IN DEFENSE OF THEIR FAITH. AMONG THEM WAS THE BLESSED JUNIPER, A SICILIAN LAY BROTHER. HAVING GONE TO VISIT THE EARTHLY JERUSALEM, HE WAS CAST INTO A FURNACE OF FIRE BY THE TURKS. THROUGH MARTYRDOM, HIS BLESSED SOUL ASCENDED TO ENJOY THE HEAVENLY PARADISE FOREVER. ON THE 23RD OF FEBRUARY, OF THE SAME YEAR.

Fra Giunipero took on the habit of a simple lay friar in the province of Naples. As a nurse or apothecary, he was sent to Jerusalem to the convent on Mount Zion. However, the guardian father did not need his services, and Giunipero, disconsolate, decided to seize the first opportunity to return to Italy. While waiting, he collected many relics to take back with him.

During this time, the Muslims condemned a convert to Christianity to be burned at the stake. Fra Giunipero developed a fervent desire to be martyred for his faith. He went to the site where the martyr had been burned and collected some pieces of the bones as relics. One Sunday, he secretly entered a Moorish mosque. Seeing him enter so confidently, the Moors thought he wanted to convert, but he confessed that he was a Christian and would not renounce his faith under any circumstances. They chased him away with threats and beatings. Later, Blessed Giunipero returned to the mosque, and once again, they forced him to renounce his faith, threatening him with death. Junipero steadfastly declared that he was a Christian. As the Moors shouted for revenge, the Cadi struck him with a scimitar and then had his body burned.



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