

Medallion J

BLESSED ANTONIO OF STRONCONIO

INSCRIPTION

BLESSED ANTONIO OF STRONCONIO, A MOST PURE LILY OF VIRGINAL MODESTY, WHO, TO PRESERVE IT INTACT, NEVER LOOKED A WOMAN IN THE FACE. HE WAS ALWAYS OCCUPIED WITH THE EXERCISES OF VIRTUE, AND TO AVOID IDLENESS, HE MADE WOODEN CROSSES, CONTEMPLATING IN THEM THE PASSION OF HIS CHRIST WHILE PRAYING. THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM, SAYING THAT HE GREATLY REJOICED TO SEE HIS MASS WELL ILLUMINATED, SO HE WORKED HARD TO ENSURE THERE WERE LIGHTS DURING ITS CELEBRATION. HE DIED ILLUSTRIOUS IN SANCTITY, WITH THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY AND MIRACLES, IN 1471 IN ASSISI, WHERE HE LIES INCORRUPT.

Blessed Giovanni from Stroncone, a man of great faith, the first vicar of Blessed Paolo Trinci from Foligno, the instigator of the Reform of the Observance, was told that a young friar, eager to enter the convent as a lay brother, would be arriving. He waited, and one day the young man arrived: he was small and sickly—how could he face the hardships that awaited him? However, Giovanni was very determined, and the young man's novitiate began. Gaunt, silent, patient, with his eyes always downcast, he spent many hours in church, praying and studying.

Twelve years passed when his superiors informed him that he was to leave for Corsica on a mission: the goal was to make the Franciscan Rule known and open small convents. Everything was done excellently. After returning to the Province of San Francesco, he was sent to the Convent of the Carceri, where he stayed for about thirty years, often retreating to a cave in the nearby forest. Throughout his life, illness made every task difficult for him, but he never complained. He ate little and reduced his water consumption to the bare minimum.

He was born in Stroncone, a town in the Province of Umbria, in the Diocese of Narni. His family was noble but deeply religious, so he was raised with the culture of sacrifice, prayer, and renunciation of any form of comfort. He learned to read and write, which allowed him to deepen his learning through his personal experience. Like Saint Francis, he repeatedly refused priestly ordination, wanting to take on the humblest tasks and be the most humble of all the brothers. He died in Assisi in 1461.

The fresco illustrates the inscription. Fra Giuseppe painted Jesus appearing in the clouds, asking for more light during the liturgy. Antonio has his arms crossed over his chest, which may signify inactivity due to listening; however, one hand holds small wooden crosses he made to avoid idleness, and the other holds the lily of chastity.

