

Medallion K

SAINT COLETTA OF CORBIE

INSCRIPTION

SAINT COLETTE, VIRGIN, REFORMER OF THE ORDER OF MINORS AND THE POOR CLARES, WAS ENDOWED WITH A PROPHETIC SPIRIT, THE GIFT OF TONGUES, ECSTASY, AND THE ABILITY TO PERFORM MIRACLES... HER CONTINUAL MEMORY OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST... 1447 IN THE CITY OF CANT.

Colette (Colette Boylet, French) was 17 years old when in 1398 she met a Franciscan friar and confided in him her desire to dedicate her entire life to God.

The friar advised her to take a vow of chastity.

For several years, Colette explored different paths that might give her the answers to her quest for perfection, but none seemed satisfactory: at first, she joined a group of Beguines who served in the local hospital, then she joined a community of Urbanist Poor Clares (who followed the Rule of St. Clare as revised by Pope Urban IV), and finally, she joined a Benedictine community.

Advised by a Franciscan, she decided to join the Third Order and live as a recluse. At the age of twenty-two, she was walled into a small cell adjacent to the church. There was only a window with a grille that allowed her to speak with visitors. This experience was exhausting: the visitors were numerous, and each one tried to prolong the conversation with this young woman, who exuded sanctity and heaven and had the gift of reading hearts. Colette listened, spoke, and when alone, devoted herself to small tasks. She was now convinced that this was her life, and despite some discomforts and temptations, she never imagined changing it.

One day, unexpectedly, she had a vision: St. Francis, prostrated at the feet of Christ, prayed that Nicoletta be given to him for the reform of the Poor Clares and Franciscan friars; the Virgin Mary also joined her request with Francis'. Colette was willing to do anything, but the prospect was truly daunting. Not only did she have to reconnect with active life, but she also had to break down the protective barriers that the various convents had established to defend the many securities and significant benefits that the popes had guaranteed the Poor Clares.

Accompanied by a Franciscan from the Seraphic Reform, she went to Nice, where she met the antipope Benedict XIII, who placed much trust in her and authorized the foundation of new female convents with the first strict Rule of St. Clare. Twelve male convents followed suit and adopted the same reform. What was the new element? Colette understood that at that moment, Franciscans did not need to reform their spirituality, but rather strengthen their institutional life. Her pragmatism led her to write the Constitutions and organize convent life in strict adherence to them.

Hagiographers tend to overlook Colette's decisions, which were focused on solving legal, organizational, and even administrative problems. When opening a new convent, she studied the local resources, including economic ones, to ensure the continuation of the mission. In reality, her convents resisted violent historical challenges and are still active today.

Although she had left her hermitage, she carried with her solitude and inner silence, especially during moments of ecstasy after receiving Communion, and meditated on the Passion of Christ.

Fra Giuseppe portrays her in the habit of the Poor Clares. She holds the symbols of the Passion and grain in her arms, a Eucharistic symbol, which in this case could evoke her great love for the Eucharist.

She was canonized in 1807 by Pope Pius VII.

