

# Saint Rita of Cascia

1381-1457

*Rita* was born at Roccaporena in 1381. She was the only child of Antonio Lotti and Amata Ferri who were members of the Party of Christ in the political and domestic controversies between the Guelph and Ghibelline factions.

Rita married Paul of Ferdinand Mancini when she was 16 years old and she bore him two sons. She dedicated herself so completely to her family that she was instrumental in converting her husband to a life of virtue. As a result of the hatred between the political parties, her husband was murdered. Rita, nevertheless, in imitation of Jesus completely forgave the accomplices which had caused her so much sorrow. Her sons, however, were consumed with a desire

Once, Saint Rita had a vision while at prayer before the Crucifix. A ladder appeared with God at its top inviting her to climb it. There were hosts of Angels ascending and descending the ladder. A voice then told her: "Rita, if you wish to be with God in paradise, you must climb this ladder." After the vision left her, Saint Rita remained in contemplation, meditating all the while on what she had seen. She finally realized that she had to build a ladder whose rungs would



for vengeance. Their mother, realizing that this would bring them spiritual and physical harm, prayed for their death rather than see them stained with blood; they both died of illness at an early age.

After the death of her sons, Rita decided to enter the Augustinian monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena at Cascia, where she lived for 40 years, serving God and her neighbors.

In her final 15 years, Rita bore the stigmata of one of the thorns from Christ's crown on her forehead, sharing the sufferings of Jesus on her body.

She was venerated as a saint soon after her death – and this is attested to from her wooden sarcophagus and the Codex Miraculorum – documents which date from 1457, the year of her death.

be the acts of virtue she would have to ascend to arrive at the joys of Heaven. The devil often appeared to her and often attempted to distract her from prayer. Saint Rita was never discouraged, but simply made the sign of the cross at which the devil suddenly vanished. It happened once that a woman who for many years was possessed by Satan was brought to the saint to test her faith. Saint Rita began to pray with great concentration. She then traced the sign of the cross on the forehead of the woman who was instantly delivered from her bondage. As Satan was leaving the scene, he let out such screams that the bystanders were filled with terror.