

Blessed Emily Bicchieri
born 3 May 1238, Vercelli, Italy
died 3 May 1314, Vercelli, Italy

While pregnant, the countess Adalasia dreamed about a beautiful young woman in white robes who was crowned with a wreath of white roses. Other young women gathered around her, all dressed the same way, and they marched into a church that the countess had never seen before. Her priest assured her that the dream meant her child would become a saint. Soon after this, she gave birth to a daughter she named Emily.

In about 1256 Emily and her two sisters inherited their father's fortune. Emily used it to found a Dominican monastery where she was joined by thirty companions. On the day of the dedication of their new church, Emily and the other young nuns entered the building in white gowns, veils, and wreaths of white roses. Emily's mother immediately recognized the scene from her long-ago dream. Emily's monastery was not cloistered, so the nuns could move around town freely, assisting wherever they were needed. Emily also eliminated the traditional two-tier system that divided the women into educated choir nuns who sang the Latin hymns and prayers and illiterate lay nuns who did the heavy labour. At Emily's convent, everyone shared the work. She is considered the spiritual mother of all active Dominican sisters working in schools, hospitals, and other institutions.

Emily had a special devotion to Christ's Crown of Thorns. She asked the Lord to let her share Christ's pain, and he granted her the stigmata* in the form of a crown of thorns. This event lasted only three days, but Emily retained her great devotion for the rest of her life. The Dominican Order keeps Emily's feast on 4 May.

The Genius of Emily Bicchieri:

Her motto was: *"To make all for God alone."*

Reflection:

They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Wearing a crown of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!"

Matthew 27.28-29

*the appearance of bodily wounds on the hands, wrists, feet or side which correspond with the wounds of Jesus.

Gallick, Sarah, The Big Book of Woman Saints p. 249