

Blessed Margaret of Città di Castello
(Margaret of Metola)

Born 1287, Metola, Spoleto, Italy
Died 1320, Città di Castello, Umbra, Italy

Blind, hunchbacked, and barely four feet tall, Margaret was an embarrassment to her parents, who raised her in seclusion inside their castle. Hearing about miracles at a church in Castello, they took her there, prayed for a cure, and when none came, abandoned her there. All of Margaret's biographers agree on these facts, although they disagree about her age at the time. Some say that she was only five years old; others believe she was almost sixteen. Whatever her age, she was completely unprepared to be on her own.

A pious couple took Margaret into their home and she gained a reputation as a miracle worker, preserving her benefactors' house from fire and restoring sight to a woman who was going blind. She once confided to her confessor that every time she attended Mass she saw Christ Incarnate on the altar. He suggested that she more likely sensed Christ's presence, but Margaret insisted that she most definitely saw Christ. Well, then, the priest asked gently, could she explain what Christ looked like? *"Oh, Father",* Margaret sighed, *"you are asking me to describe Infinite Beauty."*

In her final hours, a procession of Dominican friars arrived to give Margaret her last rites and she died contemplating the Eucharist. A crowd kept a vigil outside her home and insisted that she be entombed in their church like a saint. A few years later Margaret's body was found incorrupt. Her heart contained three precious stones marked with the images of her favourite meditations: the virgin Mary, the birth of Christ, and the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. Today Margaret's incorrupt body is venerated on the altar at the Church of St. Dominic in Città di Castello. She is a patron of the unborn and those born with disabilities.

The Genius of Margaret Città di Castello:

In spite of her afflictions and the rejection by her parents, Margaret could not say:
"Oh, if only you knew what I have in my heart."

Reflection:

"For my father and my mother have left me; but the LORD has taken me up."

Psalm 27:10, keynote to pamphlet about Margaret