

JOURNEY TO HOLINESS

A sign of the **reputation of Mother Gertrude's holiness** was already the large attendance at her funeral on 19 February 1903.



Mino Marra: Portrait of Saint Gertrude

The Foundress was initially buried in the chapel of the Sisters of Charity.

On 23 May 1908, she was moved to a columbarium in the new Civic Cemetery due to the suppression of St. George's Cemetery. Those who attended the recognition for the identification testified that the body was substantially incorrupt

On 14 February 1912, the Institute purchased a mortuary cell in the Unique Cemetery and Mother Gertrude's body was transferred there.

On 9 August 1926, the Bishop of Bergamo, Monsignor Luigi Marelli, allowed the Sacramentine Sisters to transfer Mother Gertrude's body to the **Institute's chapel in the Mother House** with a service that was widely attended. During the ritual recognition, the integrity of the body was again verified despite the twenty-three years that had passed since her death. For more than a month it was exposed to the veneration of the faithful, among whom some claimed that they had already received graces. Countless people came to visit her in a continuous pilgrimage.

Later on, many people from Bergamo, but also from other areas, attracted by Mother Gertrude's reputation of holiness, visited her tomb in the Mother House, to invoke **material and spiritual graces** from her or to express gratitude for those they had received.

Mother Zaveria Cassia, at that time Superior General of the Institute of the Sacramentine Sisters, carefully gathered memories and accounts about the Foundress, and on 18 February 1928 the **ordinary informative process** for the Cause of Canonisation of Mother Gertrude presided over by the Bishop of Bergamo, Luigi Marelli, opened at the Curia of Bergamo.

On 4 June 1941, Pope Pius XII gave his approval to set up the Commission that had to work on the introduction of the cause for beatification, and on 31 March 1943 a new recognition of the body was made, followed by the veneration of many of the faithful, who were joined by the pupils of the Schools within the Mother House. The Bishop of Bergamo, Monsignor Adriano Bernareggi, also surveyed the objects that belonged to Mother Gertrude and sealed them.

From 1942 to 1945, they held the **apostolic processes** in Bergamo and Brescia.

On 20 March 1956, a new phase of the Apostolic Process opened in which a Commission was appointed to study the life of the Servant of God. From this new phase, new elements and testimonies of graces received emerged.

On 26 April 1961, Pope John XXIII declared Mother Geltrude Comensoli “**Venerable**” for «heroic virtues».

On 1 October 1989, Pope John Paul II proclaimed her “**Blessed**”, thanks to a miracle that took place in Brazil: an incurably ill child, Solano Favarin, was healed after pleas to our Foundress. Solano was the third son of Anadir Pasini Favarin and Donato Favarin.

The pregnancy had gone smoothly, but, when the baby was born, they discovered that he had a genetic disorder for which he would not be able to walk normally; he suffered from congenital hip dislocation, an abnormal development of the hip joint that gradually causes the head of the femur to dislocate.

They would have to subject the child to a complex treatment: they would have to put the child in a plaster cast from the waist down. The doctor warned that other problems, such as skin necrosis, might arise later, and that the child for nine months to a year would need to be on a plaster patch to be changed every eight days.

If he was not cured in this way, he would undergo surgery. The doctor did not feel able to guarantee that the suggested treatment would be effective. This saddened the parents, but they decided that they would return within 30 days to begin the treatment.

The whole village felt sympathetic to that family's sorrow; the Sacramentine Sisters with some women began praying to Mother Geltrude Comensoli for nine days to obtain Solano's recovery.

On the last day of the novena, Mother Gertrude was present and answered the plea: Solano no longer presented any health problems. Emotion and happiness were felt in that small community of believers.

Solano had normal development and when he was one year and three months old he was already walking.

As a sign of gratitude, Solano's family travelled to Italy for Mother Gertrude's beatification.

In Rome, during the **beatification** Mass, at the age of ten, Solano received his First Communion from the hands of Pope John Paul II.

On 26 April 2009, Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed Mother Geltrude “**Saint**” after a new miracle attributed to her intercession: the scientifically inexplicable healing, in Agnosine (BS), of Vasco Ricchini, a four-year-old boy who was struck by fulminating meningitis on the evening of 29 September 2001.

Unconscious, during the night he was admitted to the intensive care unit, where he was intubated and subjected to mechanical ventilation. It was a very aggressive form of purulent *Hemophilus influenzae* meningitis.

On 2 October, the doctors told his parents that Vasco's life was in danger because the bacteria had crossed the threshold of his brain, but his mother, Rita Salvadori, continued to hope for a recovery.

During the night between 2 and 3 October 2001, Vasco's father Ettore called the Sacramentine Sisters who ran the nursery school attended by the child and informed them of the situation.

At the initiative of the sisters, the community of Agnosine was involved in a great commitment of individual and collective prayer.

Il 3 ottobre venne iniziata una novena alla Beata Geltrude, una cui immagine con le reliquie, insieme a quella di Padre Pio, fu messa da Suor Bianca Pasinetti sotto la testa del bambino.

During the night of 3 to 4 October, there was an improvement and Vasco opened his eyes.

On 6 October, Vasco told his mother to take him home: against all the doctors' predictions, the child did not suffer any consequences and was perfectly healed.

On 17 October 2001, he was discharged without after-effects. It had been an inexplicable recovery: rapid, complete and lasting. From pre-mortem coma, Vasco had gone into full recovery in just six hours. No one could give an explanation for what had happened.

Vasco said he did not remember anything about his illness, but he had well in mind the moment when he had woken up and spoken to his mother who, crying, had embraced him.

Back at school, Vasco related that during his illness he had seen Padre Pio and Mother Geltrude walking around the hospital; the Foundress had approached his bed, made him play under a tree with many coloured balloons and gave him a yellow one. She had also touched his stomach to remove an evil that would develop in the future.

Vasco kept saying to his mother that Paradise is beautiful.

The case, after the diocesan process, was submitted to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, which promulgated the decree on the miracle that led to canonisation, after a new examination of the relics on 24 October 2008. (news taken from 'THE SISTER AND THE CHILD' by Livio Gilberti)

The liturgical memory of St Gertrude falls on **18 February**.

PRAYER TO S. GELTRUDE COMENSOLI TO OBTAIN A GRACE

O God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
who among the beloved of your love
you chose St Geltrude Comensoli and,
in daily sacrifice of humility and charity
for the glory of your kingdom of love,
you made her an apostle of the divine Eucharist,
a guide to youth, comfort to the suffering:
grant us, through her intercession
the grace that we humbly and confidently ask of you.
Through the Most Sweet Heart of Jesus
through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, our Mother,
for your Saints,
listen, O most loving Trinity, to our prayer. Amen.



Trento Longaretti: Santa Geltrude Comensoli