

Blessed Bernard Maria Silvestrelli

Description

Blessed Bernard Maria Silvestrelli



Blessed Bernard Maria Silvestrelli was born in Rome on 7 November 1831 of a noble and wealthy family.

He was ordained a priest at Monte Argentario (Grosseto) on 22 December 1855 and made his

religious profession on 28 April 1857 in Morrovalle (Macerata) where his fellow novice was St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin.

In the Congregation he held various important positions– Director of students, master of novices, local Superior, Consultor and Provincial Superior. Finally, he was Superior General for 25 years.

Reluctantly, Pope Pius X accepted his resignation as Superior General due to ill health; but he retained the honorary title of Superior General. He died in the monastery of Moricone on 9 December 1911.

The period during which Father Bernard was Superior General was one of the most turbulent in the history of the Congregation. There were various internal problems caused by its presence in new countries, as well as the political storm that led to the suppression of religious orders.

Fr. Bernard opened or reopened new monasteries after the Napoleonic suppression. He worked for the expansion of the Institute while safeguarding its charism that was threatened by those who attempted to reduce the importance of the communal and contemplative aspects of our life. He established pre-seminaries for young men who wanted to be Passionists.

In his ministry as Superior General, he experienced many joys but also many sufferings. He lived the joyful moments with gratitude, and he

faced the difficult times serenely and patiently, humbly and yet with determination.

He was an enlightened and prudent superior, paternal and unwavering, intuitive, wise and insightful. He was able to address concrete projects, linked to sound traditions and was open to new ventures.

This holy Superior General continually called the religious to be faithful to the Founder and he constantly invited them to remain anchored in the traditions of the Institute and to draw genuine vitality from them in dealing with new situations. During his tenure as Superior General, the Congregation enjoyed an extraordinary flowering of ministry, vocations and new religious houses. At his death, he had doubled the number of religious, monasteries and provinces.

Above all, Blessed Bernard was a holy religious and superior, filled with wisdom that was the fruit of prayer and God's grace. He used his family's wealth for the good of the Congregation, while personally living in great and beloved poverty.

He wrote many books to raise the awareness of the Passionist charism and to protect it. Pope St. John Paul II beatified him on 16 October 1988.

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Prayer

Lord our God, you taught Blessed Bernard Mary to love the crucified Christ by perfect detachment from

material goods. Following his example and prayers, grant that through constant meditation on the Passion of our Lord, we may live and die for him who is our Redeemer. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

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