

GENERAL POSTULATION

# Hospitality Spirituality Holiness

N° 09 - JANUARY 2024



## Closure of the Diocesan Investigation of the Cause of the Servant of God Brother Boniface Bonillo

Just over a year since the Diocesan Investigation for the Cause of Brother Boniface Bonillo was opened in the Diocese of Córdoba, the closing session on the life, heroic virtues and the fame and signs of holiness of the Servant of God Brother Boniface took place in Córdoba Cathedral on 30 September 2023 in the presence of the diocesan bishop, Mgr Demetrio Fernández González, marking another step forward in the Cause. The ecclesiastical tribunal, set up specifically to conduct the diocesan investigation, had concluded its work. The members of the tribunal had heard all the



Closure of the Diocesan Investigation in Córdoba Cathedral – Spain



The Notary, Father Miguel Varona Villar, sealing the packages containing the Diocesan Investigation acts to be sent to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in Rome

testimonies of those who had known the Servant of God whether directly or indirectly in several places and at different times. Gathering testimonies, which must be true, certain and credible, is a crucial part of the process of shedding light on Brother Boniface's reputation for holiness. The solemn reading of the final act of the Cause took place after the Bishop's address, followed by the affixing of the wax seals on the bundles of documents, that had been carefully collected, sorted and evaluated by the Tribunal and its experts, after listening to the witnesses and researching the local historical archives. The original copies of the acts were deposited in the archives of the Córdoba Diocesan Curia, while two copies were deposited with the Dicastery of the Causes of Saints in Rome, where they will be studied in the next – the Roman – phase of the Cause.

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## The Dicastery for the Causes of Saints has granted the 'Nihil obstat' for the opening of the Diocesan Investigation of Brother Bento Manuel Nogueira



Brother Bento Manuel Nogueira

After a long wait, the Nihil obstat for the opening of the Cause of Canonisation of Brother Bento was granted on 3 October 2023. This was an important event which authorised the Patriarch of Lisbon to appoint the members to conduct the Investigation: the Episcopal Delegate, the Promoter of Justice and the Notary who constitute the Tribunal, and the other

participants to the Investigation, namely, all the other official members of the Investigation, the Theological Consultors and Experts of the Historical Commission. The Servant of God Brother Bento Manuel Nogueira had spent his entire life at the service of the poor and sick in a number of Houses in the Portuguese Province with various assignments

with thirty years spent as a missionary in Mozambique, where he never ceased to give of himself until his death in Lisbon, on 26 October 2003 at the age of 76. Some biographical notes can be found on the Order's web page using the 'Postulation' link. We shall shortly be publishing a short biography which will illustrate his life and his holiness in greater depth.

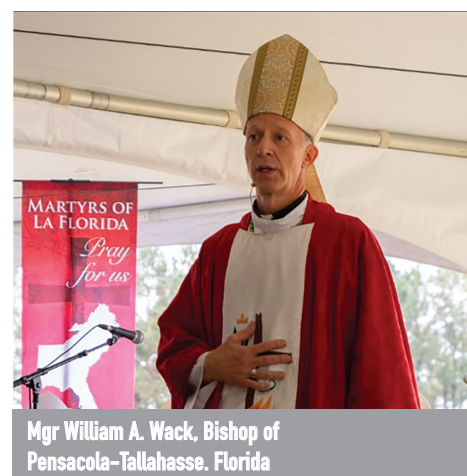
## THE MARTYRS OF LA FLORIDA.

### CLOSURE OF THE DIOCESAN INVESTIGATION

#### The Servants of God Antonio Inija and 56 Companions, martyrs

On 12 October 2015, the Bishop Emeritus of Pensacola Tallahassee, Mgr Gregory L. Parkes, formally launched the Cause of Beatification of the La Florida Martyrs. Since then, the members of the Historical Commission, appointed for the occasion, have extensively investigated and researched numerous 'putative' martyrs from the 16th to the 18th centuries who had died for the faith in the land that was once known as La Florida. These investigations required the Commission members to visit archives in Florida, Georgia, Missouri and Louisiana, as well as in Cuba, Mexico, Spain and Rome. The Commission members rigorously examined each martyrdom report to assess their accuracy and credibility. Of the many martyrdom reports studied, many were deemed to be reliable and fit to be submitted to the scrutiny of the Church, while others

that were not so well attested required further study and verification. On 14 February 2022, the new bishop, Mgr William A. Wack, presented the list of martyrs for whom credible evidence of martyrdom exists to Rome. The Dicastery for the Causes of Saints authorised the unified group for the Cause of the alleged martyrs killed in the evangelisation of Florida to proceed. One of the martyrs was one of our confrères, Brother Felipe Orbalaes y Abreo, a surgeon, and the Prior of the St John of God Hospital of the Presidio de Santa Maria De Galve in Pensacola. Our Brother was martyred on 1 September 1712 while attending the sick at Fort San Carlos de Austria. On 12 October, at a Solemn Mass in Tallahassee, Bishop William A. Wack closed the diocesan investigation. This marked another significant step towards the beatification of this group of martyrs who had shed their blood



Mgr William A. Wack, Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida

for the proclamation of the Gospel. The Cause is now continuing its journey in Rome at the Dicastery of the Causes of Saints, where further verifications and investigations will be conducted to gather evidence of martyrdom. For further information, please consult the attached link to the webpage of the Cause: [www.martyrsofloridamissions.org](http://www.martyrsofloridamissions.org)

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## The miracle that led to John of God's canonisation

The miracles of Saints are stories of faith and feats of wonder that often arouse admiration and devotion among the faithful. Miracles are considered to be signs of God's presence intervening through the intercession of a Saint. John of God, a great intercessor with God, performed miracles of charity in life and in death. The Saint of Hospitality continues to intercede for the poor and sick, praying for them and their physical and spiritual needs. One of the many miracles attributed to the intercession of John of God is the miracle acknowledged as such by the Church to proceed to his canonisation. For many years, in Rome and other cities in Italy, 1656 was referred to as 'The Plague Year', as it was the grim year of the Bubonic Plague which unleashed terror and death, but which also gave rise to many heroic works of charity. It was during this period that the Brothers of Saint John of God were ministering in the St John Calibita (Tiber Island) Hospital, many of whom perished while caring for the plague victims. And it was then that a miraculous healing occurred at the Tiber Island Hospital through the intercession of Blessed John of God, a healing that was so clear, evident and incontrovertible that it led to his

canonisation. In the process in relation to the healing of Isabella Arcelli on 11 September 1673, Brother Gabriele Barsanti delivered this testimony: "I have seen several miracles performed in times of plague here in Rome in Saint Bartholomew's on Tiber Island, which had been fitted out like a leper hospital to accommodate the plague victims, and I saw one such miracle performed thanks to the intercession of Blessed John of God. The island was the most ideal place to set up the leper hospital because it was an island cut off from the city surrounded by the waters of the River Tiber. The Prior General of the Order was the Neapolitan Brother Nicola Avagnale and the Prior of the Community was the Sicilian Brother Giovanni Battista Catalano.

One of the many people admitted to the island on the verge of death was a 16-year-old girl, Isabella Arcelli, who on 15 August 1656, had been taken to the women's leper hospital on Tiber Island, where Brother Pasquale de l'Homme was a surgeon. The sick girl was diagnosed with a 'malignant' fever, four 'carbuncles' in her back, a boil in her right groin and black petechiae in various parts all over her body. Brother Pasquale excised the carbuncles, but not the

boil, and treated her as the case demanded. But the patient's condition deteriorated. One evening some 17 to 18 days later, she received the last rites and was left peacefully knowing that that this was to be her last night on earth. Arrangements were made for her body to be taken to St Paul's cemetery the following morning.

Her sister had arranged

for three Masses to be celebrated in honour of Blessed John of God, asking him to intercede for her recovery, and she had urged her sick sister to be confident that she would be granted that grace. Isabella also prayed to be healed.

During the night, the Blessed John of God appeared to her and told her that she was healed. Isabella instantly felt perfectly well and cried out that there had been a miracle. She asked for her clothes, dressed herself, and left her bed, "reinvigorated and in high spirits". The fever, carbuncles, petechiae, boils and even the scars had disappeared instantly. Her skin regained its normal colour. In place of the inguinal boil there remained a hardened gland, completely painless, which the good Brother Paschal had decided to excise for greater safety, but without leaving a scar from that incision. It was an evident miracle and matched the criteria required by the then Congregation for the Causes of Saints for an instantaneous, scientifically inexplicable, total and permanent healing.

Twelve purported 'miracles' had been submitted for the canonisation of Blessed John of God, whose processes had been held in Rome, Naples, Madrid and Granada. Nevertheless, only two were considered, discussed and approved: the miracle of Isabella Arcelli, and the miracle in favour of Giovanni de Marino, who had lived paralysed for seven years and obliged to drag himself around on the ground, hunched over a board wearing two wooden clogs to propel himself about, who had been suddenly healed in 1667 in Naples in the chapel the 'Hospital of Peace'.

In 1690 John of God was canonised in St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican by Pope Alexander VIII.



Detail of the Alexander VIII monument in Saint Peter's Basilica: relief depicting the canonisation of Saint John of God on 16 October 1690