

## Saint Benedict Menni

24 APRIL 2022

### An overwhelming passion for Christ expressed through the care and aesthetics of hospitality

St Benedict Menni was born in Milan on 11 March 1841. The horrors of the war and the example set by the Brothers of St John of God awakened his vocation to become a Hospitaller. On 1 May 1860 Angelo Ercole Menni entered the novitiate of the Santa Maria d'Aracoeli hospital in Milan, taking the name of Benedict, making his simple vows, and after three years, his solemn profession. In 1867, with the blessing of Pius IX, he was sent to Spain to re-found the Hospitaller Order.

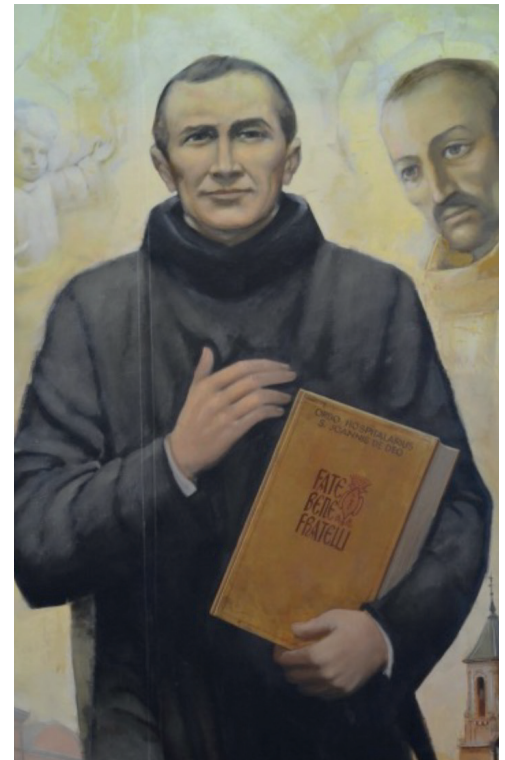
During the latter part of his life Benedict held important and prestigious posts within the Order. Pope St Pius X appointed him General of the Order in 1911. During this brief period of his Generalate he suffered from misunderstandings and slander which led to his resignation as Prior General. He himself said in a letter to the sisters: "...outside this love (Jesus), the earth is a place of exile, a wasteland, a prison; but this love transforms pain and sorrow, and crosses, and being reviled and imprisoned into the highest good."

Benedict died in Dinan, France, on the morning of 24 April 1914. His remains lie in the Mother House of the Sisters Hospitallers he founded at Ciempozuelos.

He was canonised by Saint John Paul II on 21 November 1999.

**Saint Benedict Menni teaches us that the aesthetics of Hospitality is manifested by caring.**

In the words of Brother Benedetto Menni to the Brothers: "...*Aesthetics, that is, the art of making what we see around us beautiful and artistic, is of such importance that it would be a cause for serious censure for a prior to neglect this in the hospital entrusted to him. The prior must therefore make sure that the entrance to the building looks attractive, as well as the rooms and wards, and let us not overlook the need to make the floors and the furniture, plants and flowers look spotlessly clean, both inside and outside the house, in the gardens, on the balconies, in the courtyards, at the entrances, in the dormitories... of the Hospital.*". And again: "*We also command all our Brothers to pay attention to their personal cleanliness, especially their faces and hands. Their nails, clothes, shoes... and also their discretion; good manners, taking care to please everyone as well as possible, and to displease no-one (unless conscience tells us otherwise)... ensuring dignity, decorum and culture in our words and deeds, so that the other person is accorded all the consideration, respect and attention due to them... To do this*



*we must earnestly endeavour to acquire what we call good manners, in everything we do or say...*"

For Brother Benedict, the first act of care begins with the aesthetics of the hospital or centre, showing our care for beauty. Tidiness and cleanliness are not enough; we also need good taste, harmony, the ability to search after beauty.

Beauty embodies a virtue that reflects the beauty of God and awakens a desire and a quest for the Divine. The holiness of St Benedict Menni developed in this dimension. He was able to place the "leftovers from life, scraps to be discarded" at the very heart of his hospitality.

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## BROTHER BENTO (MANUEL) NOGUEIRA

At the age of 15 he joined the Brothers of St John of God. On completing his novitiate, and his temporary profession, on 8 December 1945 he dedicated himself to serving the sick and successfully completed the nursing course. On 26 April 1951 he made his Solemn Profession. He was ordained to the priesthood on 14 August 1960. After obtaining his Licentiate in Theology and the Diploma in Pastoral Care in Rome, he was appointed Master of Novices and Master of Scholastics, chaplain and lecturer at the Nursing College. In 1972, he left for the Upper Molocué Leprosarium in Mozambique, as a missionary, and remained there for thirty years. He bore witness to great holiness of life with a radiant faith, undaunted hope, and patient charity with the mentally ill, dedicating himself to the poor, and founding the Parish of St John of God with three Christian communities. He was twice imprisoned without having committed any crime. He died in Lisbon on 26 October 2003 from cancer, but above all, worn out by the hard work and hospitality he had practised without sparing himself. He was an example of life lived for the Gospel and missionary hope. Our Brother's reputation for holiness prompted the General Postulation to initiate the investigation into the life and virtues lived heroically by our Brother, with a view to opening the Cause of his Beatification and Canonisation.

## BROTHER BONIFACIO BONILLO

The meeting of the Bishops' Conference of Southern Spain on 17 and 18 February this year in Cordoba approved the launching of the Cause for the Beatification and Canonisation of our Brother Bonifacio Bonillo, who was born on 14 May 1899 in Cañaveruelas (Cuenca), Spain.

On 7 December 1924, the Eve of the Immaculate Conception, he entered the novitiate at the San José de Carabanchel Alto Asylum (Madrid). On completing the novitiate on 3 June 1926 he made his temporary vows, consecrating himself to the Lord in the Hospitaller Order of St John of God.

On 5 May 1935 he was posted to the San Rafael de Córdoba Nursing Home, now a hospital, named after St John of God, where he remained for 43 years, travelling around the city and the Province begging for alms for the poor and disabled children in the hospital. He died in Córdoba on 11 September 1978. On the centenary of his birth in 1999, his mortal remains were translated to the Chapel of the St John of God Hospital in Córdoba. It is in the Córdoba Hospital that his mission of solidarity is still being carried out through the Social Centre named after him, taking care of the poor and the many families in difficulty. Although more than forty years have passed since his death, his reputation for holiness remains alive. We now entrust ourselves to the wisdom of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, to gather evidence of his holiness. After the Nulla Osta of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, the preliminary investigation into his heroic virtues will begin with the examination of witnesses.

