

Margherita Lotti

Saint Name: St. Rita of Cascia

Dates: 1381 – May 22, 1457

Location: Italy

Feast Day: May 22

Margherita (“Rita”) Lotti was born at Spoleto, Italy, in 1381 to Antonio and Amata Ferri Lotti, noble and charitable people. From a very young age, Rita expressed the desire to become a nun but her elderly parents insisted that she marry a nobleman named Paolo Mancini at age twelve. Paolo was a rich, quick tempered, immoral man, with many enemies. After eighteen extremely abusive and unhappy years of marriage, her husband was stabbed by an enemy he was feuding with. Despite having endured his insults, physical abuse, and infidelities for years before his death, Rita nonetheless prayed for his soul. Fearing that her two sons would seek revenge for their father’s murder, she tried to persuade them not to retaliate, but to no avail. Fearful that they’d follow in their father’s footsteps and commit a mortal sin and murder, she petitioned God to take her sons to save their souls. Her sons died of dysentery a year later. Pious Catholics believe this was God’s answer to her prayers, taking them by natural death rather than risk them committing a mortal sin punishable by Hell. Left as widow and childless, Rita followed her early desire to become a nun and tried unsuccessfully to enter the Augustinians convent at Cascia. She was initially refused because she was a widow and because of the requirement that all sisters should be virgins. Finally, in 1413, the order gave her permission to enter the convent, where she began a life of perfect obedience, devotion to prayer, and charity. Rita had a great devotion to the Passion of Christ. When Rita was about sixty years old, while meditating before an image of Christ, Rita pleaded, “Please let me suffer like You, Divine Savior.” Suddenly a thorn from the crucifix struck her forehead, leaving a deep wound which did not heal. For the next fifteen years until her death she bore this wound.



St. Rita of Cascia died May 22, 1457 of Tuberculosis. She was canonized May 24, 1900 by Pope Leo XIII. St. Rita is often portrayed with a bleeding wound on her forehead, which is understood to indicate partial stigmata. She is the patron of impossible causes, abused wives and heartbroken women. We celebrate her feast day on May 22.