

Benita Zita

Saint Name: St. Zita

Dates: 1212 AD – April 27, 1272

Location: Italy

Feast day: April 27



Zita was born into a poor but devout Christian family in Monte Sagrati (near Lucca) Italy 1212 AD. Zita's Uncle, Graziano was a hermit regarded as a saint by the locals. Her older sister became a Cistercian nun. As a child, Zita showed a willingness to do God's will obediently whenever her mother suggested. At the age of twelve Zita entered domestic service in the house of a rich weaver in Lucca, Italy. For a long time, she was despised, overburdened and often abused by her employers and fellow servants for her hard work and goodness. However, she found time every day to attend Mass and pray, as well as to carry out her household duties. She considered her work a part of her religion, assigned to her by God as part of her penance. She would say to others: "A servant is not pious if she is not industrious: work-shy piety in people of our position is sham piety." Her employers were at first upset by her generous gifts of food to the poor, but over time, they were completely won over by her patience and goodness and she became a close friend of the family. Zita was placed in charge of all affairs of the house; she was given free reign over her work schedule and busied herself with visits to the sick and those in prison. Word spread of her good deeds and the heavenly visions that appeared to her and she was sought out by prominent people. Her faith had enabled her to persevere and her constant piety eventually prompted a religious awakening by her employers. She spent the last forty-eight years of her life with the family, dying peacefully at the age of sixty. It was said that a star appeared above the attic where she slept at the moment of her death.

At her death in 1272 the people of Lucca, Italy acclaimed her as a saint. St. Zita was canonized in 1696 by Pope Innocent III. Her feast day is April 27 and she is the patroness of domestic workers, homemakers, waiters and waitresses.