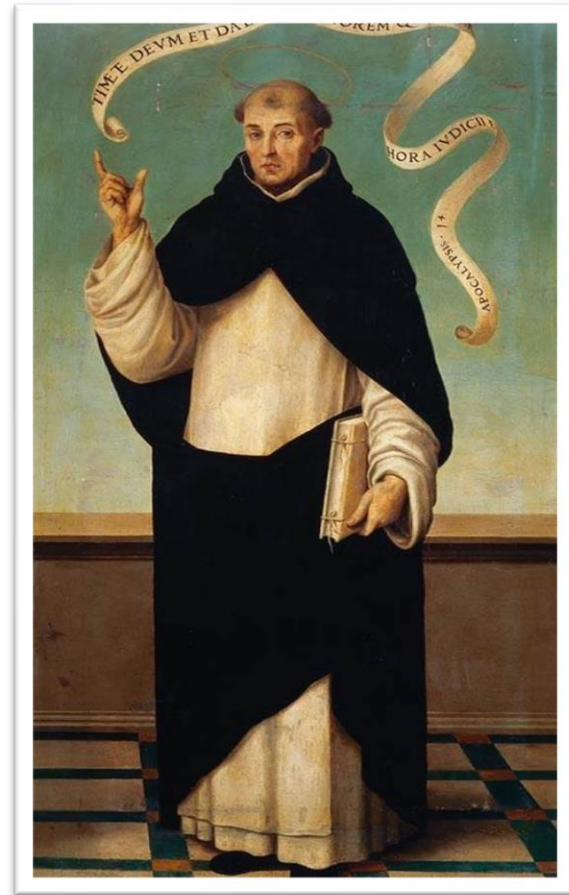


Saint Vincent ferrer

St. Vincent Ferrer was born on January 23, 1350 to William and Constance Ferrer, a very pious couple living in Valencia, Spain. Vincent was the fourth of eight children. The miracles started with this child even before his birth. To start, the mother felt none of the usual pains which always accompanied her pregnancies. During her pregnancy, Constance went to give her monthly alms to a blind woman. After asking the blind women to pray for a safe child birth, the blind women bent her head over onto the mother's bosom and said "May God bestow that favor on you!". At that instant the blind women could see. The baby Vincent in his mother's womb started to jump, as John the Baptist did. In the time just before his birth, Constance heard the child give utterances to cries like that of a little barking dog – resembling what the mother of St. Dominic encountered. In the weeks before his birth, his father had a dream where he entered the church of the Dominicans at Valencia. The preacher at the pulpit turned to him and said "I felicitate you, William; in a few days you will have a son who will become a prodigy of learning and sanctity;the world will resound with the fame of his wondrous deeds; ... he will put on the habit which I wear, and will be received in the Church with universal joy, as one of its first Apostles."



The Miracle of the Ships of Grain

In the spring of 1375, the city of Barcelona was in the midst of a terrible famine. The inhabitants made public prayers and processions to obtain God's intercession. At the end of one of these processions which ended in a public square, Brother Vincent exhorted everyone to repentance for the famine was God's punishment for their forgetfulness of the Divine Law. He then suddenly exclaimed that this night two vessels would arrive at port laden with grain.

But the crowd dismissed what he said due to the terrible seas which were present, and which would prevent any ship from reaching port. His fellow religious subsequently admonished Vincent about making such type of statements, and he was ordered by his Prior not to do anything which would draw attention to himself. Vincent accepted this admonishment and spent the rest of the day in prayer. Towards that evening, two vessels laden with grain arrived and over the next few days twenty others also arrived.

The Miracle of the Falling Worker

One day some block masons, working high on a wall on a prison roof, spotted Friar Vincent walking down the street. Just as he was passing by, one of the masons lost his footing and started to fall crying out: "Friar Vincent! Friar Vincent!" Looking up, Friar Vincent yelled out "Stay right where you are until I come back." Immediately, the man stopped falling and hung in midair high above the street. Running back to his Prior, Vincent said: "A man who is falling off a roof has asked me to help him, so he is waiting till I have your permission." "Waiting?" "Yes, he is waiting." The Prior answered: "Well, go back and finish it off, undoubtedly there is a crowd". Friar Vincent went back, and by this time there was a large crowd of astonished people gapping up at the man suspended this whole time in midair. "The Prior says you may come down" said Vincent. The man floated gently down to the earth. This miracle is the reason he is the patron saint of builders and construction workers.

The miracle of the unjust husband

There was a woman whose husband falsely accused her of infidelity and that their new born child was not his son. The woman went to Brother Vincent to seek his counsel. The Saint told her: "Come to my next sermon, bid your husband mix with the audience, and omit not to bring your baby with you." The woman obeyed the instructions. When Vincent had begun his talk to the huge crowd, he addressed himself to the baby: "Leave thy mother's arms and go in search of thy father in the midst of this great crowd of people." The little baby was given miraculous use of its feet to everyone's astonishment. It threaded its way through the crowd unassisted, then seizing its father's hand cried out "This is my father; I am really his child". The father sobbed aloud,

asked pardon of his wife, and made full reparation for having calumniated her.

The Miracle of the Dying Sinner and his Petition

One time while in Spain, St. Vincent was asked to help a dying man who was resolved to die without confession, in despair of forgiveness. Even after hearing from our Saint how his sins would be forgiven, the man refused confession. Then Vincent said to him: "I assure you that God has pardoned you. I have prayed for you, and have obtained mercy; nay, more, whatever merits I may have, these I have entirely made over to you." In hearing this the dying man was somewhat reassured and told Vincent that he would make his confession if the Saint would put this in writing. Writing all of this onto a piece of paper, the sinner then made his confession. Vincent placed the paper in the man's hands. The man drew his last breath and the paper disappeared. Later when St. Vincent was preaching in a public square to more than thirty thousand, the sheet of paper which had been given to the man, descended from heaven and landed in Vincent's hands.

The Miracle of the Violent Storm

While in the city of Barbastro, in Catalonia, Vincent had completed Mass and was unvesting, when a terrible storm suddenly unleashed itself. It was so violent that the people felt in fear of destruction. The Saint walked out of the church, made the sign of the Cross with holy-water, the storm immediately stopped and the sky became serene. Ascending the pulpit, he exhorted the people to give thanks to the holy Apostles because it was by their intercession that this storm was stopped. Adding that if it had not been abated, no leaves would have been left on the trees, nor green herbs in the fields. He also told them that unless they beseech God to preserve their goods and make holy use of them, the following year would bring a similar tempest which would devastate the land. Eleven months later a storm did exactly as he had warned about.

The Miracle of the Merchant who Lost his Sight

There was a merchant named Seuchier who had lost his sight. In hearing that St. Vincent was at the Benedictine Abbey at Montolieu, the merchant went there to seek healing. The Saint met the man, who cast himself on the ground before him saying: "Master, since you are, as I believe, a true disciple

of Jesus Christ, I pray you restore to me my sight which I have lost for the space of three years.” St Vincent made the sign of the Cross on the man’s eyes and the merchant immediately recovered his sight.

The Miracle of the Princess and the Heavy Stone

In Valencia, the Princess Jane Prades was known for her vanity, immodest clothing, and vain towering head dress. While Vincent was preaching in the timber market, a large heavy stone which had an unknown origin, crashed down through the shade awning and violently struck the Princess on the head. Everyone thought she was dead and all were greatly saddened at what they had witnessed. But the holy preacher told the crowd not to be alarmed because the stone did not fall to kill the Princess, only to knock down the extravagant ornament of her hair. Then Vincent said: “Princess Jane, rise up.” She immediately rose up sound and well. After this, she clothed herself in modest garb

The Miracle of the Dismembered Child

In the town of Morella not far from Valencia, Vincent had been invited to a home for dinner after his preaching. The husband who arrived shortly before Vincent, found that his wife had killed and dismembered their little child. As the husband wild with grief looked upon the bloody remains, St Vincent arrived. Consoling the husband, he gathered the parts of the child with his own hands. Kneeling down, making the sign of the cross, he prayed: “May Jesus Christ the Son of Mary, the Lord and Saviour of the world, Who drew the soul of this child from nothingness, restore it once again to its body, to the praise and glory of His great majesty”. To the witness of the parents and the neighbors who had come to the house in hearing the cries of the husband, the parts of the child rejoin together and the child was completely restored to life, with no indications of this great tragedy. This event is depicted in a painting by Francesco del Cossa in the New Picture Gallery in the Vatican.

The Miracle of the Assassins turned to Statues

In Spain while traveling from Lerida to Balguer, a group of assassins waited in ambush to kill Brother Vincent. These men were angry because the Saint’s preaching had caused the women of bad morals to repent of their trade, thus depriving these men of their income. Being aware of the assassins plans, the Saint told his companions: “They who come before us are the panders of the

women of abandoned life who are converted, and they are coming to me with a firm resolution of killing me.” The companions offered to defend him; but he said to them “I have no need of you; go on before, and leave me alone with these men.” No sooner was Vincent separated from his companions than the assassins surrounded him with their swords drawn preparing to slay him. St Vincent turned towards them, making the sign of the Cross said “By the sign of the Cross, deliver me from our enemies, O Lord.” The assassins immediately became like statues, unable to move. Then the Saint began to preach penitence to them. When he knew they were all repentant, he gave them permission to depart. At these words they were restored. They cast down their swords, fell at his feet, asked pardon of him, asked permission to join his company and to perform public penance. They joined the group and gave great example to all.

The Miracle of the Donkey Shoes

One day, at Montblanch, Brother Vincent brought his donkey to a farrier begging him in charity to be so good as to shoe his beast, which had lost a shoe. When the job reshoeing all four was completed, the farrier asked to be paid. Vincent told him “I have nothing to give you, but God will recompense you for your charity”. The workman answered “Oh Father, I cannot work merely out of charity ... pay me or I will not restore to you your donkey”. The Saint again asked him for this charity, but the workman said “I cannot afford it, and you shall neither have the beast nor the shoes until you have paid me.” Then St Vincent turned to his donkey and said: “This man will not give the shoes which he has put on you, because I cannot pay him, restore them to him, and let us go.” At this the animal shook its feet one after the other, miraculously casting off the shoes. At the sight of this miracle, the workman, stupefied, fell on his knees before the Saint, besought pardon for his obstinate avarice, then reshod the donkey.

The Miracle of the Woman made Beautiful

St Vincent was one day passing through a certain street in his home town of Valencia, when he heard arguing, cries of rage, blasphemies and horrible imprecations coming from a house. Entering the house, as the husband was leaving, he found the wife continuing to curse her husband. He asked her why she was so furious and for what reason she uttered such shameful blasphemies. The sobbing woman answered: “Father, it is not only today, but

every day and every hour of the day, that this wretched man, my husband, persecutes me, and always ends by cruelly beating me and bruising me with blows; this is not life, my Father, it is a constant death, damnation of the soul, and a hell worse than that of the devils." Vincent sweetly answered "No my daughter, you must not speak thus; this anger will profit you nothing, except to offend God still more grievously ... tell me why your husband persecutes and maltreats you in this manner." "It is because I am ugly" the women replied. The Saint then said "And is it for that, that he offends God so exceedingly?" Then raising his right hand over the woman's face, he added: "Go, my daughter, now you will no longer be ugly; but remember to serve God, and become holy." At that moment she was transformed into the most beautiful woman in Valencia. This miracle was so celebrated in Spain, that for centuries there was the common expression when encountering a less than attractive woman: "This woman has great need of the hand of St. Vincent.

The Miracle of the Jew brought back to Life

On Palm Sunday, 1407, there was a rich and important Jew of Andalusia, named Abraham, who had gone to Master Vincent's sermon partly from curiosity and partly in defiance. After uttering a stream of sarcasms, he began to leave in anger while Vincent was preaching. As some people at the door opposed his passing, St. Vincent cried out: "Let him go! Come away all of you at once, and leave the passage free!" The people did as ordered, and at the instant the Jew left, part of the porch structure fell on him and crushed him to death. Then the saint rose from his chair and went to the ghastly crushed body. He knelt there in prayer. Abraham came to life fully restored, and his first words were: "The religion of the Jews is not the true faith. The True Faith is that of the Christians."

The Miracle of the Note from Heaven

While in Pampeluna, some of the people there besought Master Vincent to come to the spiritual aid of a woman of notoriously bad character. He found her completely hardened, obstinate, and so despairing of her salvation that she exclaimed "It is impossible for me to be saved; God cannot pardon either the multitude or the enormity of my sins." He continued to beseech her and to offer ample reasons for her to not despair, but to no avail. Finally, he raised up his heart to God, made a short prayer, then promised the woman

that if her absolution should come in writing from heaven, if she would promise to make her confession. She immediately began to ridicule but eventually said: "If it be so, I am very willing to confess." Then St Vincent took a pen and paper, and wrote these words: "Brother Vincent Ferrer beseeches the most Holy Trinity to grant the sinner here present the absolution of her sins." He then folded the paper and tossed it into the air. The document flew out of the house. After some minutes the paper came flying back into the house, folded and landed into St Vincent's hand. He unfolded the paper and found the following written in gold: "We, the most Holy Trinity, at the request of our Vincent, grant the sinner of whom he speaks, the pardon of her faults; We dispense her from all the punishment which she ought to undergo; and if she confesses, she shall be carried to heaven in half an hour, where she shall reign eternally with us . . . From heaven . . . We, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Without delay, the happy woman made her confession; in half an hour afterwards, she left this earthly life for heaven.

The Miracle of the Farmers Field

At Montecalieri there was a farmer who gave Vincent hospitality. The man asked "Master, what can I do to be delivered from the storms which, year after year, devastate the countryside?" "For this year," replied the Saint, "I will see to it." Some time later a terrible storm came on the area with devastating hail. The fields of crops were devastated everywhere except for the cornfield of this farmer. His land was an island of green among a sea of devastation. There were other similar miracles by St Vincent where he would bless a field and there would be a miraculously abundant harvest, far above what could be considered possible.

The Miracle of the Bridge

On Good Friday, the year 1410, Master Vincent was in Tortosa praying in the church prior to commencing his preaching. The crowds were immense and had filled the Ebro river bridge which was constructed of boats. The bridge collapsed under the strain and broke in two. A terrible cry, which rose as the masses of people were tossed into the river, reached our Saint in the church. Rising and with unhurried steps, he came to the church porch, then making one Sign of the Cross, repaired the damaged bridge. The people struggling in the water suddenly found themselves back on the shore. The miracle-worker calmly returned to prayer.

The Miracle of the Innocent Man heading to Execution

At Pampeluna an innocent man had just been condemned to death. St. Vincent knew of his innocence and pleaded for him, but in vain. As the grim procession led the poor man to the scaffold, they met another procession, that of a man already dead. The corpse was being borne on a stretcher to the burial place. Vincent seemed to have a sudden inspiration. He stopped suddenly and addressed the corpse: "You no longer have anything to gain by lying. Is this man guilty? Answer me!" The dead man sat up, then spoke the words: "He is not!" As the man began to settle down again on his stretcher, Vincent offered to reward him for his service. He gave him the opportunity of remaining alive on earth. But the man responded, "No, Father, for I am assured of salvation." With that he died again as if going to sleep, and they carried his body off to the cemetery.

The Miracle of the Poor Village Inn

Travelers crossing the mountains between Vicq and Granollers found few villages in which to find food, being the villages along this road were small and very poor. St Vincent, with about three thousand followers, were traveling through these mountains when they came to the small village of Locana. They stopped at the door of a poor village inn. The landlord was aghast at seeing the crowd. "Father" he said, "you are bringing an army with you, how can you imagine that we have provisions for so many? I have just five loaves and a flagon of wine, and not the best wine at that." St Vincent told him "Give what you have, nevertheless, and keep on giving." The inn-keeper did as he was instructed and found he had ample for the whole company, and that the wine he was serving was of the best. The man was amazed and terrified, but he kept his head, and when the meal was over, he asked Vincent to bless his house. At the blessing, the corn-bin and wine-cellar were miraculously filled anew. There were many such miracles of provisions multiplied. For example, during a journey through Aragon, almost daily the food and drink were miraculously multiplied to serve the needs of those who followed Vincent.

The Miracle of the Blind Man before the Crucifix

While at Compostello, a young man who was strong and healthy but thoroughly blind, was brought to Master Vincent. Kneeling at the Saint's feet, the young man implored him to cure him. "Go," said Vincent, "to the cathedral at Orviedo and there, kneeling before the crucifix, tell Our Lord that I have sent you, ask for your cure and you will be heard." The blind man did not hesitate, making this long journey as quickly as he could. He went straight to the cathedral, kneeled before the crucifix saying "O Lord, Brother Vincent has sent me to you to be cured." He then immediately received his sight.

The Miracle of Speech which was Taken Back

There were occasions when our Saint would undo a miracle he had wrought. For example, one day a beggar girl, dumb at birth, was brought to St. Vincent. He asked her: "What do you want, my child?" "My daily bread, and the gift of speech" she answered. The miracle already given. However, Vincent then said "You shall have your daily bread, but as for the gift of speech, you know perfectly well by the bitterness of your thoughts that you would make bad use of it. Go and thank God for what He has done for you, and put out of your mind any idea of asking Him for something which would be bad for you." The girl bowed her head and went away, and though she continued life dumb, she lived seven more years as a model of patience and piety.

The Miracles which Occurred at St Vincent's death

St Vincent Ferrer died the evening of April 5, 1419, the Wednesday of Passion-week. At his dying moments, the windows of the room opened by themselves and a large flock of pure white, beautiful tiny birds, no larger than a butterfly, filled the room and the house. As soon as he breathed his last, they all disappeared leaving a delicious scent. The saint's body, which reflected the years of fasts and long travels, suddenly became fair and luminous, as though it were living. Another prodigy was that someone who had candles used at the Saint's Mass, but which had disappeared from a locked box, were discovered back in their box and miraculously lighted at that same time. The Saint's dead body gave off a piercingly sweet fragrance. The Duchess of Brittany who washed the body, perceived the same sweet odor from the water she had used. This water was carefully preserved and

many miracles occurred through its use; while the fragrance remained until the water itself had evaporated.

The Miracles which Occurred immediately following St Vincent's death

The Saint's body, clothed in the religious habit, was carried in solemn procession to the Cathedral of Nannes where it was exposed for public veneration. The people witnessed the suppleness of the limbs, the fresh color of the face, and the exquisite perfume which it exhaled. Two dead persons who were placed beside the dead Saint were restored to life, to bear witness to the sanctity of Vincent. The remains of this Saint were placed in a marble vault in the Cathedral of Vannes, France. That evening, a leper was instantly cured after prostrating himself on the slab of the Saint's tomb. On hearing this, multitudes of invalids followed his example and were also cured. The sculptor who carved the Saint's tomb, moved by the many healing stories, and who had a leg wound which no remedy could heal, was moved to have recourse to our Saint. He said: "Friend of God, good Father Vincent, pray to God for me!" At that moment his leg pain was gone and in a few days the leg was perfectly healed. Four hundred people recovered their health by merely lying on the bed in which the Saint had died. After he was placed into his tomb there continued to be daily miracles at his tomb. Each Sunday there was a reading of the list of miracles which had occurred the prior week. The bells of the Cathedral would be rung when an extraordinary miracle occurred.

A few Noteworthy Miracles Associated with St Vincent after his death

After the Saint was canonized on October 1, 1458, his body was transferred from its original vault to a new more expensive tomb. In doing so, they found his body to be incorrupt, unchanged from when it was placed there almost forty years earlier. His body was again exposed for public veneration. During the Mass, two dead persons were covered with the cloak in which St Vincent had been buried, and were restored to life in the presence of the vast congregation. Also, during this Mass, a relative of the Duke of Brittany was cured of leprosy, and a man born blind received his sight.

A cypress tree trunk taken from Vincent's childhood home, was to be used to carve a wooden statue of the Saint even though it was not quite large enough. It miraculously increased in width and height to the size of a man as it was transported to the carver's shop. In 1525 some of the bones of this Saint were given to the Dominicans at Valencia. The day they arrived, a young girl blind from birth and very sick, was instantly cured of her sickness and blindness. In 1600 a rib bone of St Vincent was given to the Cathedral of Valencia. On this occasion a crippled woman, who asked for our Saint's intercession, was suddenly cured, as was a person who was born dumb. In 1836 Naples was suffering a terrible scourge of cholera. The people turned to St. Vincent Ferrer in prayer and penance, and the cholera ceased. Naples decreed that the Saint should be the city patron and had a silver statue made.

A woman of Toulouse, who had for many years been a victim to excruciating pains in her head was cured instantly by the placing the Saint's hat on her head. A woman, the mother of Theobald Lasset, had her sight restored immediately on making a vow to visit the Saint's tomb. Four hundred sick persons were cured by merely resting on the couch on which the Saint had lain. Fifty years after Vincent's death, the twelve year old child of Duchess Leonor de Pimentel, died. The Duchess' confessor, Jean Lopez de Salamanque, counseled the noble lady to invoke his fellow Dominican, the recently canonized St Vincent Ferrer. The mother made a vow to build a church and convent in St. Vincent's honor if her son was restored. As soon as she had formulated her vow, her boy came back to life. The Duchess became very devoted to Vincent and fervently desired that his life, virtues, and miracles be written about. When a grand ceremony was held at the newly finished cathedral, the Duke and Duchess presented their son. It was only then that the raised boy learned of his miraculous resuscitation. This boy grew up to become the Archbishop of Seville, and a Cardinal.

The Miracle of the Murdered Boy and his Father's Faith

There was a fourteen month old child named Vincent Pistoia who was killed by his mother. His body had been dismembered by the mother. The father, who had a great devotion to St Vincent, in his grief rushed to the tomb of St Vincent and poured his request in tears and prayers. When the hour for closing the church came, the poor man was afraid to go home; but when he did, it was to find his child alive and well in his cradle, yet with the marks of the knife plainly visible, marks which never effaced. This child would grow up and join the Dominican order on April 15, 1481, spread devotion of St

Vincent to Sicily, and lived to the age of 105 years. A living testimony to the miracle.

The Saint's Appearance to a Dying Boy in Valencia

In the year 1701, Valencia was in a severe drought. During this time, an eight year old boy named Vincent Villarasa was suffering from fever and was near the point of death. His father, who had a great devotion to our Saint, and mother were not able to witness their son's passing. They left the room and had the boy's aunt there at his bedside. At the moment when the aunt thought the child had breathed its last, the boy was suddenly revived and cried out: "Aunt, the Saint!" "Aunt, the Saint!" The parents and other relatives in the adjacent room, in hearing this, rushed into the room. Seeing the boy well, they inquired who the saint was who appeared to him. He answered: "It is a saint clothed in black and white; he holds his hands pointing towards heaven, and bears on his head a bright flame." "He told me that I am already cured and that it will rain tomorrow." The next morning the parents went to the Church of St Dominic to offer thanksgiving to St. Vincent for their son's miraculous healing. That morning a heavy rain started which lasted for three days.

The Gift to Cast out Demons

Another class of miracles of St. Vincent Ferrer both during his life and after his death, was the expulsion of demons, that of either the possessed or obsessed. He had such power over devils that it was often enough for him to touch a possessed person for him to be freed. The Bollandists state that seventy possessed persons were freed by our Saint. There was the testimony given during the process of inquiry that "when the possessed persons were brought into the Saint's presence, the demon fled before the usual Exorcism prescribed by the Church was recited." At times, a possessed person would be freed from the devil merely upon going to the same place as where Vincent was or even simply when Vincent's name was pronounced. After the Saint's death, it was customary to bring persons so afflicted to the tomb of the Saint, where they were set free.

The Gift of Reading Hearts

St Vincent was given the grace to be able to read people's souls. For example, when hearing confessions, he would recall the sins which the penitents had forgotten. During his sermons, he would sometimes fix his eyes on individuals who he had never before seen, and then begin to talk about specific sins which these individuals had often committed. It was common for those attending his sermons to say: "This man is truly a saint, for he knows the most hidden secrets of our hearts." There was a person named Gaja who in asking to be admitted to the Saint's band of followers, was instructed to sell everything and to give it to the poor. The man did sell everything but gave only half to the poor; secretly retaining the balance for himself. When the man came to Vincent to be admitted, the Saint admonished him for having only given half his money away. Gaja fell to Vincent's feet, asked for forgiveness, gave away the half he had kept, and joined the company of the Saint. Then there was a pilgrim who had been following with Vincent's group but who doubted the miracles and conversions he witnessed. He watched carefully so that he might be able to disprove the miraculous events. One day Vincent went to this man and exposed to him all of the secret thoughts in his heart. The man confused and repentant, threw himself on his knees seeking Vincent's pardon. Lastly, there was a man named Don Ferdinand who outwardly appeared to all to be very pious but who interiorly was not. St Vincent took this man aside and said: "Really, if I did not know that you would one day undertake great hardships for my honour, I would chase you from my company, for you are wicked." Thereafter, Don Ferdinand embraced the most virtuous life and later became the chaplain to the bishop of Telesia.