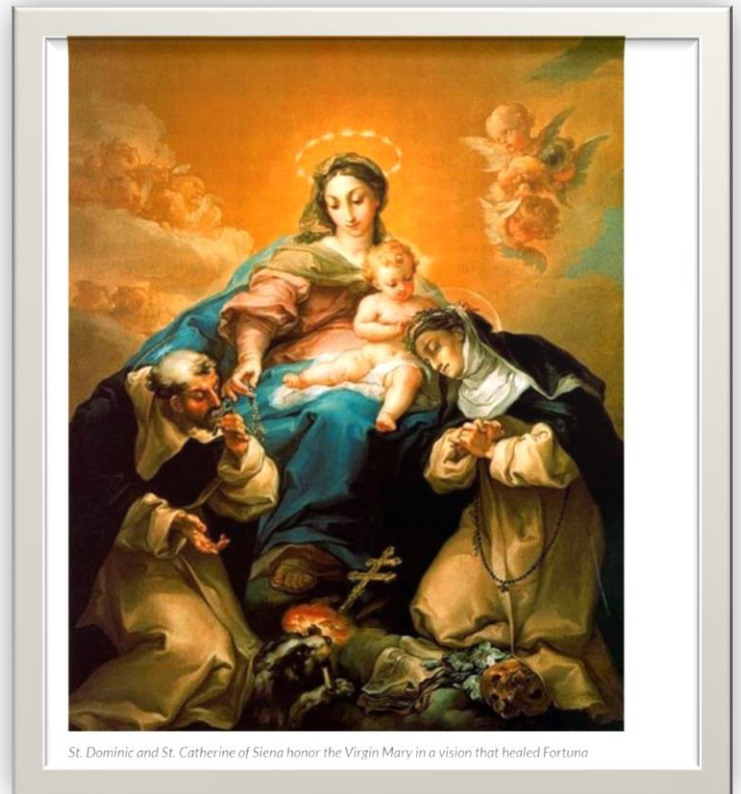


## Our Lady of Pompeii-Italy 1884

Bartolo Longo was the son of a doctor and a devout catholic mother. He went through a crisis of faith in his university years as he studied to become a lawyer. He joined a sect and was ordained as a priest of Satan. He publicly ridiculed Christianity and did all in his power to subvert catholic influence. Vincent Pede a good friend of Bartolo showed the gentleness of christ and arranged for him to meet a saintly Dominican priest, Alberto Radente. The Dominican had a deep, personal devotion to Mary and fostered the devotion of the rosary. Bartolo saw Mary as a refuge of sinners and attributed his own miraculous conversion of her. Now he wanted to do penance for his past life and serve the church that he had so viciously slandered. He made a promise to work for the poor and destitute. In 1872 he arrived in marshy, impoverished Pompeii, accompanied by two armed escorts for protection against bandits. He was shocked and filled with great pity at the ignorance, poverty, and lack of religion of the inhabitants. Discouraged and full of doubts, he distinctly heard a voice speak to him on October 9. The voice said clearly that if he sought salvation, then he should promulgate the rosary. The voice said that this was Mary's own promise. He promised our lady in return that he would do everything in his power to do so. I will not leave this valley until I have propagated your rosary.

Bartolo began teaching the catechism, spreading rosary devotions, and holding rosary festivals with games, races and even lottery. From 1873 to 1875 he restored an old church and held an annual festival on the feast of the holy rosary in honor of our lady of the rosary and obtained and restored a worn painting of Mary from convent in Naples for this church. The large painting was tattered, torn , cracked and worm eaten, arriving on its back in a wagon of manure. The new shrine of our lady of the rosary was completed 1883. Within the month, miraculous events began to take place at the shrine.



Four healings were recorded, including Fortuna Agrelli a very ill young girl suffering three incurable diseases that most doctors had given up on, was joined by her family in saying a novena or rosaries starting on February 16, 1884. The virgin Mary then appeared to her on March the 3<sup>rd</sup>, sitting upon a high throne, profusely decorated with flowers. She held the divine child on her lap and a rosary in her hand; both were clad in gold embroidered garments. St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena accompanied them. Fortuna asked Mary as the queen of the rosary for a cure for herself. You have invoked me by various titles and have always obtained favors from me. Now, since you have called me by the title so pleasing to me, Queen of the Holy Rosary, I can no longer refuse the favor that you petition for this name is most precious and dear to me. Make three novenas and you will obtain all.

Fortuna did as Mary said and was completely cured. Mary appeared to her again and said, "whosoever desires to obtain favors from me should make three novenas of the prayers of the rosary in petition and three novenas in thanksgiving" And this is how the rosary novena devotion to Mary originated. Many healings are attributed to our lady of Pompeii. Between 1891 and 1894, hundreds of Miracles have been officially recorded at the sanctuary. The image of our Pompeii represents our lady of the rosary as queen of heaven. In the image she and Jesus are handing our rosaries to saint Dominic and saint Catherine of Siena. The neoclassical pontifical shrine and Basilica of our lady of the rosary of Pompeii, in all frescoed, marble splendor, was dedicated in 1891. This happened sixteen years after Bartolo longo began to collect pennies from the peasants to build this temple to blessed Mary. On October 21, 1979 pope John Paul II visited Pompeii in a national pilgrimage to our lady of Pompeii. He beatified Bartolo longo on October 26, 1980. Blessed Bartolo, a third order Dominican, founded the sisters of the holy Rosary of Pompeii. He established homes for the poor, for orphans, and for the children of people in prison. Bartolo longo was called the man of the Madonna and the apostle of the rosary.