

Saint Paul of the Cross

1694-1775

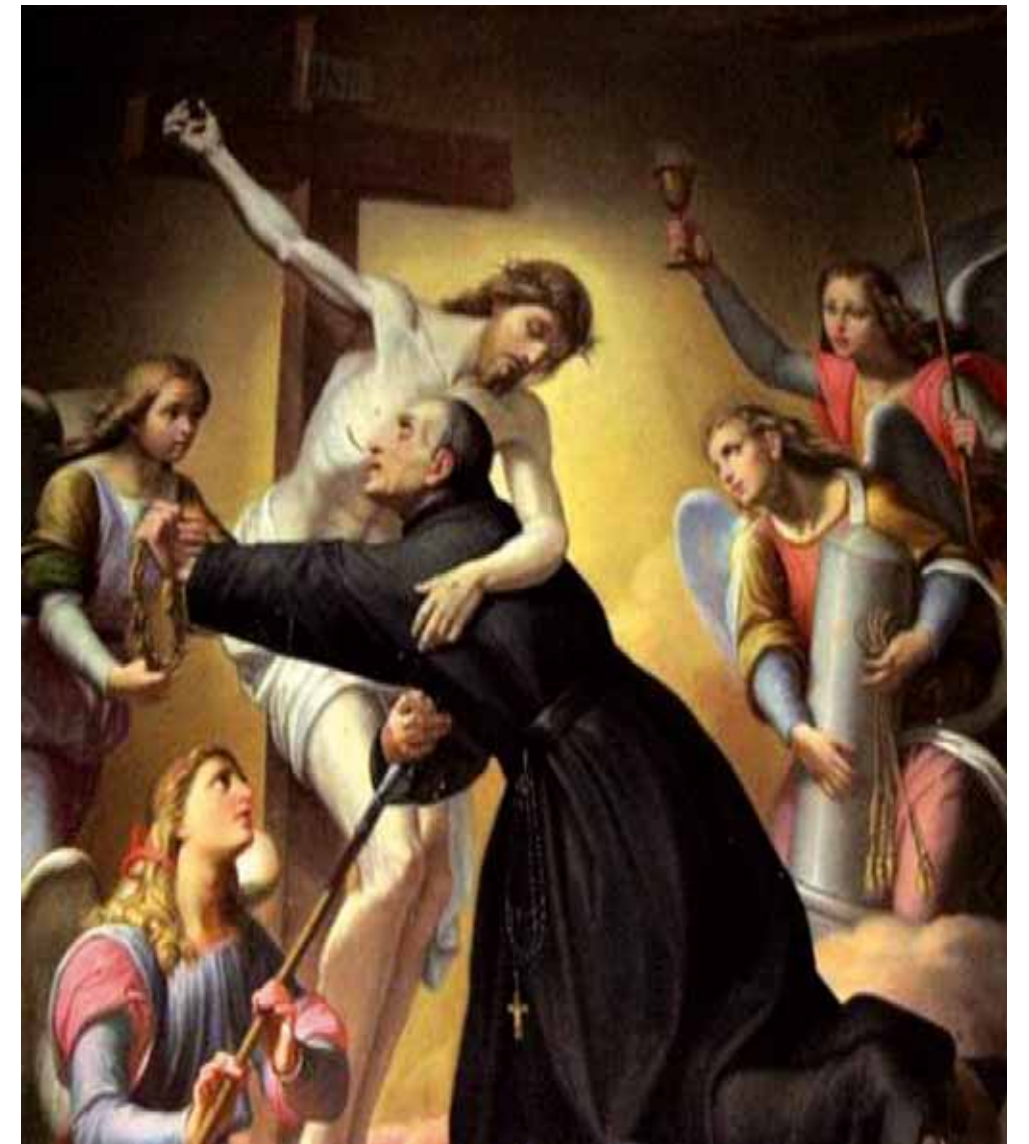
PARADISE

While Saint Paul of the Cross was dying (1775), his penitent, Rosa Calabresi was praying while laying down in her room in Cerveteri. She was absorbed in prayer, when all of the sudden she saw her room light up with an extraordinary light and in the middle of the light was a man elevated in the air dressed in a priestly robe so glittery that you could not focus on it. He called her three times: Rosa..., but the young lady did not respond for fear it was a diabolic illusion. Then the person that was seen in the middle of the light said expressively: "I am Father Paul; I have come to bring you the new me for I died a little while ago and now I am going to Heaven to enjoy God..., until we meet again in Paradise". Rosa told him that she would pray to God until she was also made worthy of going to enjoy Him in Heaven. The vision disappeared.

The next morning there was a letter from her new director, Father Ignazio, giving the news of the death of Saint Paul of the Cross. Rosa, having had the vision, was not displeased. It was useless by now to pray for him; plus she had to keep her promise she made him during their spiritual conference and she ran to church and began the Way of the Cross.

She got to the third station, she saw a great light and in the middle of the light Saint Paul, not dressed as a Passionist, but with a beautiful white and red cloak, surrounded and courted by a great multitude of angels". She marveled at seeing him dressed in that unusual way and asked him what it meant. The saint replied: "This is the symbol of chastity, purity and fervent love, virtues of mine that I so loved and practiced in my life and because I was a martyr for penance and suffering". Saint Paul invited her to offer up a Way of the Cross for the suffering of the souls in purgatory and he bid her farewell saying: "Goodbye child, I am waiting for you in heaven to see you with God, praise be to God, to have and hold God for all eternity".

Saint Paul was born in Ovada, Alessandria, in the Piedmont region of Italy on January 3, 1694 to a noble family although of economic difficulty. His father was a merchant and Paul worked with him to help out; but his desire was to start a religious order and fight the Turks. At the age of 26, the bishop allowed him to live as a hermit in the church of Castellazzo Bormida. Here he developed the idea of a new order and in 1725 Pope Benedict XIII authorized



him to gather members: the first one being his brother John Battista. He began calling himself "Father Paul of the Cross", then he founded the congregation of Barefoot Clerics of the Cross and the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Passionists). In 1727 he was ordained a priest in Rome, and then he went back to settle in Monte Argentario. In 1750, back in Rome, he preached at the Jubilee. Pope Clemente XIV often asked him for advice as did Pope Pio VI his successor. He died October 18, 1775 in Rome and Pope Pio IX proclaimed him a saint in 1867.

