

## **63// HERE FOLLOWETH THE LIFE OF ST. PETER OF MILAN [i.e. ST. PETER MARTYR]**

**S**t. Peter the new martyr, of the Order of the Friars Preachers [i.e., the Dominicans], was born in the city of Verona in Lombardy. His father and mother were of the sect of the Arians. Then he descended of these people like as the rose that cometh of the thorn, and as the light that cometh of the smoke.

### **HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH**

At the age of seven years, when he learned at the school his credo, one, his uncle [uncle], which was a heretic, demanded of him his lesson, and the child said to him: *Credo*, till to *creatorem cœli et terræ*. His uncle said to him that he should no more say so, for God hath not made temporal things. The child affirmed that he ought to say none otherwise, but so as he had learned, and that other began to show him by authority his purpose. But the child, which was full of the Holy Ghost, answered so well and wisely that his uncle departed all confused, and all achauffed [hot] said to the father that he should take away his son from school, for he doubted when he shall be great that he should turn against their law and faith, and that he should confound them.

*Peter is as much to say as knowing or unhosing [removing one's pants], or Peter is said of petros, that is constant and firm, and by that he understood three privileges that were in St. Peter; he was a much noble preacher, and therefore he is said knowing, for he had perfect knowledge of scripture, and knew in his predication [preaching] what was behoveful [necessary, appropriate] to ever each person. Secondly, he was pure and a virgin, and therefore he was said unhosing, for he unhosed and did off his will from his feet, and despoiled all mortal love, insomuch that he was a virgin, and not only of body but also of mind. Thirdly, he was a martyr glorious of our Lord and therein he was constant and firm, to the end that he should suffer steadfastly martyrdom for the defence of the faith.*

And so it happed, and so he prophesied like as Caiaphas did, but God, against whom none may do, would not suffer it for the great profit that he attended of him. Then after, when he came to more age, he saw that it was no sure thing to dwell with the scorpions. He had in despite father and mother and left the world whiles he was a clear and a pure virgin.

He entered into the order of the friars preachers there, whereas he lived much holily the space of thirty years or thereabout, full of all virtues and especial in defending the faith, for love of which he burnt. He did much abstinence for to bring his flesh low. He fasted, he entended to wake by night in studying and in prayer when he should have slept and rested, and by day he entended to the profit of the souls, in preaching, in confessing, and in counselling, in disputing against the heretics and Arians. And in that he had a special grace of Jesu Christ, for he was right sore founded in humilty.

He was marvellously piteous and debonair, full of compassion, of great patience, of great charity, and of steadfastness. So ripe and so well ordained in fair manner that every man might behold as in a mirror, in his continence and in his conversation. He was wise and discreet, and so emprinted in his heart that all his words were firm and stable. Then he prayed many times to our Lord that he would not let him die but by sufferance of martyrdom for him and for his faith. And thus as he prayed God accomplished in the end.

## **MIRACLES HE PERFORMED**

### **The Cooling Cloud**

**H**e did many miracles in his life, for in the city of Milan, on a time when he examined a bishop of the Arians that the Christian men had taken, and many bishops, religious, and great plenty of other people of the city were there assembled, and was then right hot, this Arian said to St. Peter tofore them all: O thou Peter perverse, if thou art so holy as this people holdeth thee for, wherefore sufferest thou this foolish people to die for heat, and prayest not God that he would shadow them.

Then St. Peter answered and said: If thou wilt promise that thou shalt hold the very faith and thou wilt leave thine heresy, I shall pray therefor to our Lord. Then all they that were on the party of the Arians cried that he should promise him, for they supposed that he should not get it specially, because the air was so clear and no cloud was seen, and the Christian men doubted that their faith might thereby come to confusion. But the bishop, the heretic, would not bind him thereto. St. Peter had good faith and trust in God, and made his prayer openly that he would convey over them a cloud, and he made the sign of the cross, and anon the cloud came and overspread them like a pavilion [tent] that there were assembled, and abode as long as the sermon endured, and it stretched no further but there.

### **The Lame Man**

There was a lame man which had been so lame five years and might not go, but was drawn in a wheelbarrow, and brought to St. Peter at Milan, and as St. Peter had blessed him with the sign of the cross, anon he was whole and arose.

### **The Miraculous Cope**

Yet other miracles God showed for him by his life. It happed that the son of a gentleman had such a horrible disease in his throat that he might neither speak ne draw his breath, but St. Peter made on him the sign of the cross, and laid his cope on the place where the sore was, and anon he was all whole.

The same gentleman had afterwards a grievous malady and supposed to have died, and made bring to him the said cope, which with great devotion laid it on his breast, and anon he cast out a worm with two heads which was rough, and after he was brought in good health and anon all whole.

## The Dumb Man

It happened that a young man was dumb and might not speak a word, wherefore he came to St. Peter, and he put his finger in his mouth and his speech came to him again.

### Peter is Appointed Inquisitor in Lombardy

Now it happened that time that an heresy began much in Lombardy, and that there were much people that were fallen in this error, and the pope sent divers inquisitors thither of the Order of the Friars Preachers, and because that at Milan there were many in number of great power and engine [talent], he sent thither St. Peter as a man wise, constant, and religious, which doubted nothing. And by his virtue he reprov'd them, and by his wit he understood their malice, and when he had enterprised the office of Inquisition, then began he, as a lion, to seek the heretics over all, and left them not in peace, but in all places, times, and all the manners that he might, he overcame and confounded them.

## HIS MARTYRDOM

### He is Assassinated by Heretics

When the heretics saw that they might not withstand the Holy Ghost that spake in him, they began to treat how they might bring him to death. Then it happened on a time, as he went from Cumea to Milan for to seek the heretics, he said openly in a predication that the money was delivered for to slay him. And when he approached nigh the city a man of the heretics, which was hired thereto, ran upon him and smote him with his falchion on the head, and gave and made to him many cruel wounds, and he that murmured not ne grudged not, suffered patiently the cruelty of the tyrants, and abandoned or gave himself over to suffer the martyrdom, and said his *credo*, and *in manus tuas*, commending his spirit unto the hands of our Lord.

And so the tyrant left him in the place for dead, and thus told the tyrant that slew him, and friar Dominic which was his fellow was slain with him.

And after, when the tyrant saw that he removed yet his lips, the cursed and cruel tyrant came again and smote him with his knife to the heart, and anon his spirit mounted in to heaven. Then was it well known that he was a very prophet, for the prophecy of his death that he had pronounced was accomplished.

After, he had the crown of virginity, for as his confessors witness that in all his life he had never done deadly sin. After, he had the crown of a doctor, because he had been a good fast firm preacher and doctor of holy church. After, he had the crown of martyrdom, as it appeared when he was slain.

The renown [news] thereof came into the city of Milan, and the friars, the clergy, and the people, came with procession with so great company of people, that the press was so great that they might not enter into the town, and therefore they left the body in the abbey of St. Simplician, and there it abode all that night, and so he said the day tofore to his fellow.

### How His Passion Resembles the Lord's

The passion of St. Peter ensued much like the passion of our Lord in many manners, for like as our Lord suffered for the truth of the faith that he preached, so St. Peter suffered for the truth of the faith that he defended; and like as Christ suffered of the Jews, so St. Peter suffered of the people of his own country, and of the heretics; Christ suffered in the time of Easter, so did St. Peter. Jesu Christ was sold for thirty pence, and St. Peter was sold for forty pounds. Jesu Christ showed his death to his disciples, and St. Peter showed it in plain predication. Jesu Christ said at his death: Lord God, into thy hands I commend my spirit; right so St. Peter did the same.

### MIRACLES OF ST. PETER MARTYR

#### The Nun Cured of the Gout

There was a nun of Almaine [Germany], of the abbey of Oetenbach, which had a grievous gout in her knee, which had holden her a year long and more, and there was no master ne physician that might make her whole. She had great devotion to St. Peter, but she might not go thither because of her obedience, and because her malady was so grievous. Then demanded she how many days' journey was from thence to Milan, and she found that there were fourteen journeys. Then purposed she to make these journeys by her heart and good thoughts, and she said for every journey one hundred paternosters. And always as she went forth by her mind in her journeys, she felt herself more eased, and when she came to the last journey in her mind she found herself all guerished. Then she said that day all the Psalter, and after returned all the journeys like as she had gone by her thoughts in her heart, and after that day she felt never the gout.

#### The Man Who Voided Blood Continually

There was a man that had a villainous malady beneath, in such wise that he voided blood six days continually; he cried to St. Peter devoutly, and as he had ended his prayer he felt himself all whole; and after he fell asleep, and he saw in his sleep a friar preacher which had a face great and brown, and him seemed that he had been fellow to St. Peter, and verily he was of the same form. This friar gave to him a box of ointment and said to him: Have good hope in St. Peter which late hath shed his blood for the faith, for he hath healed thee of the blood that ran from thee.

And when he awoke he purposed to visit the sepulchre of St. Peter.

#### The Candles That Would Not Go Out

There was a countess of the castle Massino, which had special devotion to St. Peter and fasted alway his vigil; now it happed that she offered a candle to the altar of St. Peter, and anon the priest for his covetise quenched the candle, but anon after the candle was light again by himself, and he quenched it again once or twice, and always as soon as he was gone, it lighted anon again; then he left that and put out another candle which a knight had offered in the honour of St. Peter, which knight fasted also his even, and the priest assayed two times if he might put it out,

but he might not. Then said the knight unto the priest: What, devil, seest thou not well the miracle, that St. Peter will not that they be quenched?

Then was the priest abashed [stricken with surprise] and all the clerks that were there with him, in so much that they fled out of the church and told the miracle overall.

### The Exorcism

There was a man called Roba which had lost at play his gown and all the money that he had. When he came into his house and saw himself in so great poverty, he called the devils and gave himself to them; then came to him three devils which cast down Roba upon the soler [floor] and after took him by the neck, and it seemed that they would have estrangled him, in such wise that he unnethe [hardly] might speak.

When they that were in the house beneath heard him cry, they went to him, but the devils said to them that they should return, and they had supposed that Roba had said so, and returned, and after anon he began to cry again; then apperceived they well that they were the devils, and fetched the priest, which conjured in the name of St. Peter, the devils, that they should go their way. Then two of them went away and the third abode, and his friends brought him on the morn to the church of the friars.

Then there came a friar named Guillaume of Vercelli, and this friar Guillaume demanded what was his name, and the fiend answered, "I am called Balcefas." Then the friar commanded that he should go out, and anon the fiend called him by his name as he had known him, and said: Guillaume, Guillaume, I shall not go out for thee, for he is ours and hath given himself to us. Then he conjured him in the name of St. Peter the martyr, and then anon he went his way and the man was all whole, and took penance for his trespass, and was after a good man.

### The Speechless Heretic

St. Peter whiles he lived, it happed that he disputed with a heretic, but this heretic was sharp, aigre [fierce], and so full of words that St. Peter might have of him none audience. When he saw that, he departed from the disputation and went and prayed our Lord that he would give to him place and time to sustain the faith, and that the other might be still and speak not; and when he came again he found this heretic in such case that he might not speak. Then the other heretics fled all confused, and the good Christian men thanked our Lord.

### The Nun's Vision of the Assumption

The day that St. Peter was martyred, a nun that was of the city of Florence saw in a vision our Lady that styed [ascended] up to heaven, and with her two persons, one on the right side and that other on the left, in the habit of friars, which were by her, and when she demanded who it was, a voice said to her that it was the soul of St. Peter, and was found certainly that same day he suffered death, and therefore this nun, which was grievously sick, prayed to St. Peter for to recover her health, and he gat it for her entirely.

### The Scholar with the Broken Leg

There was a scholar that went from Maloigne unto Montpellier, and in leaping he was broken that he might not go. Then he remembered of a woman that was healed of a cancer by a little of the earth of the sepulchre of St. Peter, and anon he had trust in God, and cried to St. Peter in such manner as she had done, and anon he was whole.

### The Man with Swollen Legs

In the city of Compostella there was a man that had great legs swollen like a barrel, and his womb like a woman with child, and his face foul and horrible, so that he seemed a monster to look on. And it happed that he went with a staff begging his bread, and in a place where he demanded on a time alms of a good woman, she saw him so swollen that she said that it were better for him to have a pit to be buried in than any other thing, for he was no better than dead, yet nevertheless, said she, I counsel thee that thou go into the church of the friars preachers, and pray St. Peter that he make thee whole, and have in him very faith and I hope he shall make thee all whole.

This sick man went in the morn to the church, but he found it shut and closed. Then he slept at the door, and he saw in his sleep that a man in the habit of a friar brought him into the church, and covered him with his cope, and when he awoke he found himself in the church and was perfectly whole, whereof much people marvelled because they had seen so short time tofore, him like as he should have died forthwith.

There be many more miracles which were over great a labour to write all, for they would occupy a great book.

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The [iconography of St. Peter Martyr](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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