



Blessed Margaret of Castello (1287-1320)

The Patron Saint of Disabilities

Blessed Margaret's life is one of the most heart-wrenching stories in the roster of saints. She was born blind and with severe curvature of the spine; her right leg was an inch and a half shorter than her left, and her left arm was malformed. She never grew taller than four feet.

Her parents kept little Margaret hidden away in their house in Metola, in the Italian province of Umbria. When Margaret was six years old, the family traveled to a shrine at Castello, hoping for a miracle. When none took place, her mother and father abandoned her.

Some women of Castello found the terrified child and took care of her. A husband and wife, Venfarino and Grigia, adopted Margaret and treated her with love and kindness as their own daughter. She appears to have spent the rest of her life with them.

Margaret's disabilities did not make her bitter; rather, she became one of the most generous, sympathetic people in Castello. She nursed the sick, consoled the dying, and visited prisoners. She regarded her own disabilities as a means to unite her pain with the suffering Christ endured on the cross. Her courage, patience, and deep religious devotion won her the affection of everyone in town.

At Margaret's funeral, the crowd was immense. The parish priest planned to bury Margaret in the churchyard, but the mourners insisted that she have a tomb inside the church, alongside the other distinguished dead of Castello. The priest was still arguing the point when a girl whose legs were crippled dragged herself to Margaret's coffin. She touched the casket and then stood up and began to walk. The priest gave Margaret a tomb inside the church.

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