

Bastia

The town of Bastia is located about four kilometers from Assisi and three kilometers from the Porziuncola. Located near the Chiascio River, this area was a lake in prehistoric times. AS the lake receded, a town was built on an island and called Isola Romano which later became Bastia.

When Clare left home during the dark of night on Palm Sunday, Francis and the brothers met her outside the city gate Porta Moiano. Clare had to make her way down from he fathers house at the top of the city by the Cathedral San Rufino in the dark to the lowest part of the city transitioning from the rich neighborhood to the merchant class neighborhood and to the poor neighborhood. The Porta Moiano was located right behind the Bishop's residence. This leads to speculation that the Bishop aided in Clare's escape especially since the city gates were locked and guarded at night.

The Friars lead Clare through the forest and swamps a couple of kilometers to the Porziuncola where Francis tonsure; the mark of belonging to the Church; a rough habit and a veil.

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San Paolo delle Abbadesse in Bastia, a Benedictine monastery for women, was granted the privilege of offering sanctuary by Pope Innocent III in 1201.

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After being received at the Porziuncola, Francis and the brothers escorted Clare through the swamps to The San Paolo monastery. (Just a note of trivia. In Italy women stay in a monastery and men stay in a convent just the opposite of America.)

Clare's Uncle Monaldo and seven knights from her family came several times to storm the monastery church, defying the status of sanctuary and demanding that Clare come to her senses and return home. Clare convinced them of her desire to enter Franciscan religious life by clinging to the altar of the church and revealing her tonsured head. Clare remained here 7-10 days.

The original pedestal that held the altar top.

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The Altar slab is the one that Clare held on to. The base was changed.



The brown spot on the altar top contains the relic.

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The windows are original except that they now have glass in them. Medieval churches generally had slits for windows for safety. A person could not get through them. Only very high windows were larger.

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Clare was formed into the plan of God by being received at the Porziuncola, experiencing an intense novitiate at San Paolo, and professing her commitment to religious life at the altar there.

When did you receive the call from God to live the way of life you have chosen? What difficulties did you encounter in answering this call?

Where is your place of “sanctuary” where you can review choices, make decisions, and renew your conviction to live your vocation: married, single, secular, religious?