

St. Bernardino of Siena

We had a special and surprising treat today. About six or seven miles from Tagliacozzo is another small mountain village know for it's Madonna of the Orient.



St. Bernardino of Siena



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It is reported that the image is painted on wood and dates from the early 1100's. It is a sacred site to thousands of Italians and a point of pilgrimage for them.

But we went to see something that no one has seen in centuries. That is St. Bernardino of Siena. St. Bernardino was entombed in marble in another church and was not visible. Two years ago, an earthquake rendered the church uninhabitable. However, St. Bernardino of Siena's tomb was untouched. The local Bishop ordered his remains to be moved to this small church and left in the care of the friars there. So for the first time, he is available for viewing to a select audience.

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St. Bernardino of Siena was a friar during a tumultuous time. The friars has split into the “community” and the observants. Bernardino tried to reconcile the two factions. He failed and the capuchins were formed.

Bernardino popularized the “Name of Jesus”. He would go to a village piazza put up a banner with the letters IHS surrounded by a circle with rays coming out like the sun. He would preach for three hours at a time on the Name of Jesus.

Eventually some people turned him into the Pope saying that he was preaching heresy. The Pope asked him to meet and bring his banner. The Pope asked him to put a crucifix over the IHS and gave him his blessing.

Bernardino died in 1444. This is his original skin. He is uncorrupted.