

8 June

Blessed Nicholas of Gesturi, *Religious*

Nicholas, whose secular name was Giovanni Medda, was born at Gesturi, in the Province of Cagliari in the Archdiocese of Oristano, on August 5, 1882. He was one of many children born to a fine Christian family of honest working people. In the death of his parents he was taken into the family of his elder married sister, working in the service of his brother-in-law. He performed the lowliest country chores with outstanding honesty, piety, blameless behaviour and austerity of life. In 1911, at the age of 29, armed with a flattering letter from his parish priest, he was accepted by the Capuchins of Cagliari, taking the name of Brother Nicholas. After his novitiate and profession he was given the office of questor, a job he held for 34 years. The great silence with which he fulfilled this task had a deep spiritual impact on people, who flocked to him as a true man of God. He died in Cagliari on June 8, 1858, and was beatified by Pope John Paul II on October 3, 1999.

From the Common of Saints

COLLECT

O God, in Blessed Nicholas,
who served you in prayer, humility and silence,
you have given us a model to imitate.
Through his intercession may we bring Christ to our brothers and sisters
and serve you with our whole lives.

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Office of Readings

SECOND READING

From the Earlier Rule of St. Francis of Assisi

(Francis of Assisi: Early Documents. The Earlier Rule, chapter I)

Begging Alms

Let all the brothers strive to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ and let them remember that we should have nothing else in the whole world except, as the Apostle says, *having food and clothing, we are content with these.*

They must rejoice when they live among people considered of little value and looked down upon, among the poor and powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside.

When it is necessary, they may go for alms. Let them not be ashamed and remember, moreover, that our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Son of the all powerful living God, set his face like flint* and was not ashamed. He was poor and a stranger and lived on alms — He, the Blessed Virgin, and His disciples. When people revile them and refuse to give them alms, let them thank God for this because they will receive great honor before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ for such insults. Let them realise that a reproach is imputed not to those who suffer it but to those who caused it.

Alms are a legacy and a justice due to the poor that our Lord Jesus Christ acquired for us. The brothers who work at acquiring them will receive a great reward and enable those who give them to gain and acquire one; for all that people leave behind in this world will perish, but they will have a reward from the Lord for the charity and almsgiving they have done.

Let each one confidently make known his need to another that the other might discover what is needed and minister to him. Let each one love and care for his brother as a mother loves and cares for her son in those matters in which God has given him the grace. *Let the one who does not eat not judge the one who does.*

Whenever a need arises, all the brothers, wherever they may be, are permitted to consume whatever food people eat, as the Lord says of David who ate *the loaves of offering that only the priests could lawfully eat.*

Let them remember what the Lord says: *Be careful that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that the day catches you by surprise, for that day will assault like a trap everyone who lives on the face of the earth.* Similarly, in time of an obvious need, all the brothers may do as the Lord has given them the grace to satisfy their needs, *because necessity has no law.*

RESPONSORY

Mt 25,35.40; Pr 19,17

- R.** I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome: * what you did to the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did to me.
- V.** Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord:
- R.** What you did to the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did to me.