

BLESSED LITTLE MARGARET OF CITTA DI CASTELLO

1287 – 1320

I recently returned from another trip to Italy, and a visit to my beloved Margaret in the Church of San Domenico in Citta di Castello (northern Umbria province at the border with Tuscany). Margaret's little uncorrupted body lies peacefully in a glass coffin under the high altar.

Although I've visited her several times, this time I was there for the 8:30 Sunday morning Mass. That was so special, and I felt sure that Margaret was aware of me being there.

The Church is in the center of the town, Gothic in design, and built in 1424. The interior is beautiful and peaceful. Its plain exterior is deceiving. Of all the Churches I've visited in Italy, my favorite stained glass windows are here. I wish they were down lower for better viewing.



Christianity is said to have arrived in the Province of Umbria through the preaching of Crescentian (between the 3rd and 4th centuries) and a Bishop Floridus (Florido) in the 6th century. Umbria has given us the most Saints of any region in Italy (including Saints Francis, Clare, Benedict, Rita and Valentine). It's a very picturesque, mountainous province that's considered Italy's "greenbelt." In early July, you drive past so many fields of Sunflowers in full bloom. The Umbrian countryside is quite different. Hills are stark, rocky, not heavily populated – and they appear lonely and harsh. Small towns have a strong fortress-like quality that makes Umbria's medieval hill towns among the most captivating in Italy. They have a subtle, indefinable charm that time hasn't diminished.

The "Umbri" were the region's earliest inhabitants. Not much is known about them except that they either left or were assimilated when the Etruscans arrived. No one really knows where the Etruscans came from or what happened to them.



Umbria is a fascinating example of man's fruitful collaboration with nature over the last 3,000 years and a living treatise on the history of European architecture. It's replete with traces of the greatest builders of the ancient world, but it was also part of the heartland of the ancient Etruscans from whom the Romans learned much of their engineering. What is called "Roman civilization" had Etruscan origins.

Umbria became a kind of Papal State in ancient times. Powerful families exerted control in the Middle Ages -- a time of Umbria's greatest glory, when European civilization came out of the Dark Ages. Romanesque architecture evolved, and Gothic design made its appearance (such as the breathtaking Cathedral of Orvieto).



Long periods of poverty were hard, but Umbria's extraordinary wealth in art and architecture remained substantially unspoiled. With beautiful landscapes, mountains, and patterned fields, Umbria is one of Italy's most satisfying destinations.

Citta di Castello is still surrounded by remaining portions of high stone walls built in the 1500s. Although the outskirts have grown with various businesses, most buildings in the town's central area look much the way they would have looked when Margaret lived and died there. At the end of World War II, Citta di Castello was liberated by the British.

Margaret was born in 1287, in a castle on top of a steep mountain in Metola -- a small village in a mountainous area outside Citta di Castello. Metola is actually over the Umbrian border in the Marche Province (pron. 'lay markay') east of

Citta di Castello. Only the castle's tower remains. I was determined to get up close to the castle area this time, as we couldn't do that before with the map we had. This time we had the marvelous assistance of an area historian whose father had a copy of an old military map that showed the correct dirt road leading up there.

The exact date of Margaret's birth is unknown, but we know she died on April 13, 1320. She was born blind and deformed -- extremely hunchbacked, and one leg was much shorter than the other. This made her head appear large in proportion with the rest of her body. She was tiny at just over 4 ft. tall -- and so lame she had great difficulty walking.

To the best of our knowledge, the information we have has been passed down through the castle's Priest who befriended Margaret, and from castle servants and townspeople. There are Diocese archives that contain ancient writings and artifacts for the area that includes Citta di Castello -- however, we don't know of anyone ever having searched through those archives for information about Margaret. Ancient information, written in Latin, stated that her father's name was "Pariso" -- and her mother's name was "Emilia." It would be wonderful to know the last name and find out what happened to her parents.



Margaret's father was a wealthy nobleman who inherited and ruled over the vast forest beneath his Metola castle. He was despised, feared and cruel. He had planned a large celebration for the birth of a son. Instead, the firstborn baby was Margaret. He was furious ... and Margaret being blind and deformed made matters worse.

If Margaret were conceived today, she would probably be aborted, abandoned and left to die at birth, or killed at birth (as are many such children in countries we've heard about).

Margaret's mother had a kind personal maid. Strangely, Margaret was not Baptized immediately. It was the maid and her husband who later took Margaret to be Baptized in

Mercatello. Her parents surely hoped she would not live and wanted her existence to remain a secret. The parents probably thought their own identities could remain secret if the Priest didn't see their faces and discover Margaret's physical deformities during her Baptism. Fortunately, their hopes failed. The Priest at Mercatello knew Margaret's last name from the maid. Unfortunately, Baptism records weren't officially kept until about the time of the Council of Trent (the middle of the XVI Century). Some large towns (like Pisa and Venice) had Baptism records from 1400, but none older are now known.



The Church in Mercatello ("Pieve d'Ico") is beautiful and in the main piazza (below). Many Churches in Italy have plain facades ... and wonderful old doors sorely in need of lemon oil ... but when you open the doors, Wow!! The ancient interiors are incredible.

By car, Citta di Castello in Umbria to Metola in the Marches took us a good half hour. From Metola we continued on to Mercatello. It isn't too far from Metola to Mercatello – but it would have been quite far to go by horse and wagon in Margaret's day.

(Mercatello is about 39 km from Citta di Castello.)



A small square park in the center of Mercatello has a statue of Margaret. To the left is a picture of the Baptismal font where Margaret was Baptized. No one knows why her mother's kind personal maid and the maid's husband were instructed to take Margaret to Mercatello, instead of simply having her Baptized right at the castle in Metola.



We don't know the answers to lots of questions – but everyone who worked in her parents'

household and on their vast lands knew about Margaret from the minute she was born. She couldn't possibly have remained a secret.

When Margaret did not die after birth, her parents wanted to at least keep her out of sight – so her mother's maid was given complete charge and instructed to keep Margaret away from her parents and visitors. When Margaret was about six, however, she wandered away from her mother's maid into a hallway leading to her parents' rooms. Guests who were arriving saw her and almost discovered who she really was. Her mother's maid quickly picked up Margaret and whisked her away. When her father heard about the near discovery, he immediately had his workmen build a stone room next to the tiny Church below his castle.



Little Margaret lived as a prisoner in that stone room for 13 or 14 years; she couldn't get out by herself. The Priest was furious with her father, but he was helpless to do anything that might bring harm to Margaret. Instead, he became her close friend, teacher, confidant ... and provided the Sacraments. The Priest educated Margaret as best he could. He even carved a cane to make it easier for her

to move around. Margaret easily memorized the Psalms and other Bible verses. She was unusually brilliant ... always loving, never complaining, and expressed no resentment toward her cruel parents. She actually felt guilty for having been born blind and handicapped, causing them such great embarrassment.

The stone room is still firmly attached to the tiny Church. You can walk into it from the Church. (The little rooftop bell works!)

Although you can see the castle tower as you drive up from the main road, you can't see the Church until you get close to it around a sharp bend.

Margaret survived in her stone prison room until an attack was eminent from another region. Her father arranged for Margaret and her mother to stay with someone he knew in Montefeltro. Even then, Margaret was kept in the Montefeltro house's basement rooms until the fighting was over and they could return to Metola. (What did those Montefeltro people think?)

The first time we went to Citta di Castello and traveled a road leading to Metola, we took a turn at a sign (in S. Angelo in Vado) that said "Metola" – but it led us around an immediate narrow hairpin turn onto a dirt road that had partially collapsed on our right (with only simple warning ropes tied to stakes). We drove up that treacherous, winding rough road until we came to a padlocked gate that blocked the dirt road. Beyond the gate was a large house that looked quite new. We could see the castle tower farther up past the house, but not the Church and stone room that were on the other side of the hill, below the tower.

We recently heard that the castle area property is now privately owned. We assume that the owners are the ones who built the new house a distance below the tower and installed that gate across what is now their private road, to have privacy from people (like us) trying to get up to the castle area, Church, and stone room. We wouldn't risk leaving our car parked at that private gate and walking around the fence to attempt a climb up the steep hill. Besides, the little Church and prison room would have been way down below the castle tower on the other side of the mountaintop. Also, you never know these days: We could have been chased at gunpoint or found our car pushed over the steep embankment at that locked private gate. Besides, if the property owners were out, our parked car would have blocked them from returning home – and if they were home, they'd have been blocked from going out. That firmly locked gate across the narrow dirt road said all that was necessary (besides being on the wrong side of the mountain for reaching the Church and prison room).



I was so fortunate being able to get in touch with a knowledgeable area historian to explain what we encountered. His father had an old military map that showed a different road leading to the Metola castle hilltop ... from the other side of the

mountain. The historian and his father checked it out by driving up there. Their old map took them to the road leading up to the Church and stone room via a narrow dirt road with sharp turns.



From Citta di Castello, the road leading up to the castle and Church area is through Palazzi (not on our local maps or easy to find). The sign points to the dirt road going up to the prison room. It says 'Oratorio Beata Margherita della Metola (Sec XIII)' – but driving there from Citta di Castello the arrow would be pointing in the opposite direction. We photographed it from this side because it was too faded to read on its other side.

The road ends very high up at a small, rocky "plateau." There's a short wooden fence across from the Church's front door, to warn of a sheer drop on that side.

Someone asked me if a tour bus could get up the winding dirt road to the stone room and Church. It most definitely could not. Our car got up just below the area; however, someone 'coached' the driver's difficult turn-around so we could drive back down the road.

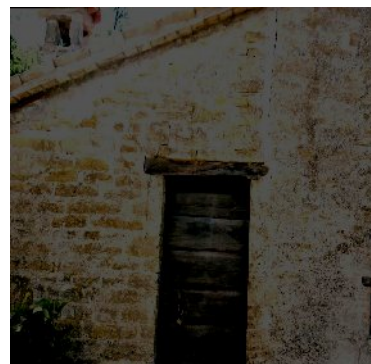
The Church area is about ¼ of a mile up a very rough dirt road from the arrow sign on the main road. Maybe you could park along the sides of that dirt road and walk the remaining distance. As we approached the hidden Church area, we passed only one house -- old, very large, and undergoing major restoration.

When you stand outside the front of Margaret's room, the castle tower is directly above. You can't drive up past the Church and stone room, but there's a (kind of) overgrown path (only if you are wearing solid, sturdy shoes or hiking boots and heavy slacks to protect your legs from sharp pricker bushes with nettles).

The Church is maybe 18 ft. wide x 18 ft. long. Margaret's attached room is the same length, but very narrow. I didn't think to bring a measuring tape. Just to the right side of the outer front wooden door, you can see the vertical "seam" (below) where the structures are joined.



The front door to the prison room is wood with a heavy ancient lock. The Priest and her mother's maid would have used that front door to bring things to Margaret.



A statue and large Rosary are under an inscription honoring Margaret. To the right of the statue you can see the connecting archway with a drape hanging from the top. That opening leads

you up a step into Margaret's room. She had large uneven stones for a floor and one small window in the back. The window still has thick iron bars. The seam between the room and the Church can be seen just to the left of the back window.

Margaret's body deformities would have caused constant pain no matter where she lived. Surviving for all those years in that stone prison room, through bitter cold winters and stifling hot summers, is unimaginable ... incomprehensible ... call it what you will.

Inside the Church there is a low, open archway into Margaret's room, undoubtedly made years later so that the outer wooden front door to her room can be kept closed. It's surprising that we found the front door of the Church unlocked; wonderful in these times.



This picture is of Margaret's only window, taken from inside her room.

Someone painted a picture hanging in the Church, and there are a few arrangements of artificial flowers. When I can go there again, I plan to bring a few flowers to add to the arrangements.

I'd like to be sitting in the Church or in Margaret's room when those "someones" come to tend things. Who are the "secret caretakers?" What do they look like? Where do they live? How often do they come? Do they speak any English so I could ask questions (and not struggle with my meager knowledge of Italian)? I'd like to meet them and say, "Mille Grazie."

I can't even put into words the powerful feelings of love and peace that came through to my hands as I touched the stone walls of Margaret's prison room. I strongly felt her presence. There was an old round table and tablecloth in the room + a few dilapidated wooden chairs probably stored there for use on a commemorative day for Margaret. Perhaps people sit in that tiny room and do the Rosary. I didn't look under the tablecloth to see the top of the table, but I wondered if Margaret used it. There's no flat bench that would have had a straw or animal fur mattress where she could sit or sleep.



There is a commemorative day for Margaret at the site. This hand-written notice was held in place by a rock and photographed by the historian who graciously found the road for us. It says,



"Feast of Blessed Margaret of Metola, Patron Saint of the Blind and Handicapped. Traditional pilgrimage 8 a.m. starts from the town of Palazzi, 9 a.m. Holy Mass ... and after will be the traditional party."

Margaret's mother heard about miracles taking place in Citta di Castello at the tomb of well-known Fra Giacomo inside the Church of S. Francisco. Her parents thought it a good idea to take her there and achieve a miraculous healing. Under cover of darkness, they took her to Citta di Castello. I can't imagine them walking Margaret, in her physical condition, the distance up or down from that stone room to a horse and wagon so they could leave in darkness. Their trip from Metola to Citta di Castello probably took from early morning to dusk. Margaret later told someone that it was the only

time she remembered her parents showing her any sign of warmth.

When they arrived in Citta di Castello, they left her amongst others seeking cures at the tomb inside the Church of S. Francisco. They returned later that day, but Margaret was unchanged. Without saying a word, they quietly fled back to their castle in Metola. They deserted her! After the Church closed that night, she sat outside on the Church steps waiting for her parents and worrying about them. In the morning, beggars saw and befriended her. She lived with them, became a beggar herself, and converted them to Christianity by example.

Townsppeople quickly learned where Margaret was from. When a Priest tried to get her into the town's convent, the Nun in charge didn't believe who Margaret really was and didn't want to accept her without a dowry. The Nun went to the Priest at Mercatello who Baptized Margaret and verified who Margaret really was. Nuns didn't travel alone even then – and I've often wondered if the Nun and her traveling companion tried to go to the castle in Metola on their way back to Citta di Castello -- to speak with Margaret's parents about a dowry. Maybe the Nuns didn't know how to reach the castle ... were afraid ... got chased away by guards ... or maybe they did find their way up to the castle and discovered that the parents had already moved out.

Margaret was accepted at the convent, but it had lax rules and was badly managed. Margaret, however, quietly adhered to the rules she knew should be followed. She didn't complain about anyone else, but the other Nuns felt awkward. When Margaret was told to leave, the convent stopped receiving donations of food and money because of their shameful treatment of her. (That convent and a later school for the blind closed.) Margaret then became a Dominican Mantellate (lay Religious) and lived with two affluent families. The first family moved away, and she was living with the second family at the time of her death. She tutored the children and helped in every way possible.

Even though she was aware that her parents regarded her as a repulsive embarrassment, Margaret still loved them and felt guilty about her condition. She was so very religious, possessed mystical qualities and performed many miracles, helped the poor, the ill, and even prisoners. Margaret had such a kind, gentle nature. Everyone who knew her loved her and treasured her presence ... except her parents.

Whenever I walk the streets in Citta di Castello, I know that Margaret walked them, too. When I was in her little prison room, I was standing where she stood.

I can't help but wonder: What happened to her parents? Did they ever have other children? Did they die at the castle ... and are they buried on the property? Did the father die and the mother leave? Did someone kill them because of their treatment of Margaret?

Margaret accepted her suffering through the eyes of faith. She didn't know why God permitted her to have so many deformities. She felt that because it was He who permitted her misfortune, He didn't need to reveal His purpose. Margaret wondered why people pitied her. Pain made her sensitive, compassionate, and understanding toward others. Her faith was uncompromising. She found strength in prayer and the Sacraments.

When Margaret died, she wasn't embalmed. Later, there was water damage to her original coffin. Official witnesses were shocked to find her body perfectly preserved when the coffin was opened (1558), but her clothing had deteriorated.

The area historian told me that her body was taken, for a week, to a hospital in Lerchi for examination by physicians and Vatican experts. Following the examination, Margaret was re-clothed in the Dominican habit she wears today. Careless exposure to air and



other elements during that time caused her skin to darken ... but her body, teeth, hair, nails, etc., are intact.

If you know anything about little Margaret and go to see her, when you walk up to kneel in front of her glass coffin it takes your breath away – while it calms and centers every inch in your own body. Take time to light a candle and sit in a pew. There are donation boxes at a candle station and postcard area. Strangely, the boxes have no locks – and things have been stolen. Older street children were soliciting when I sat having coffee at a café, and they were watching as I entered the Church. Rather than putting cash Euros in the donation boxes, on returning home I sent the Church of S. Domenico a generous U.S. international bank money order with a note (and the Bishop and Priest both wrote to me). If you can attend Sunday Mass, put cash Euros in the collection plate -- but if you can't be there for Mass, get a bank Euros check made out to the Church and insert it in a donation box. I passed a bank walking from the Hotel Tiferno to Margaret's Church, and I could have obtained a Euros check from them. At a Mass, however, Euros can be safely placed right in the offering basket.

*Margaret came to be declared "Blessed" because of her life story and several miracles attributed to her. Without question, she should be Canonized as a **Saint for Protection of the Unborn, Physically Handicapped and Abandoned.** We who are devoted to sharing the story of little Margaret are trying to do something about that – but it's very hard and complicated.*

What better time could there possibly be than right now for Margaret to be Canonized as a Saint! (Look at all the others born in very recent times who have been Canonized!)

Please pray that her Canonization comes about. Maybe the best thing is for all of us to talk with little Margaret herself, and ask her to perform new miracles to support her Cause. During Margaret's lifetime and for a long time after her death, towns and whole regions in Italy were always fighting amongst themselves. There were also hundreds of years of foreign invasions and frequent times of famine and plagues. (The Black Death alone killed about half of Europe.) Then came World Wars I and II ... so who knows what happened to the original documents that existed and which were required for Margaret's Canonization?

The group that handles Canonizations is the "Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi." Relevant to Little Margaret, I am in contact with Fr. Francesco M. Ricci, O.P., a Dominican Friar in Rome, working toward her Canonization. The process takes time and is expensive. If you want to make a donation to the Canonization Cause for Little Margaret of Citta di Castello, you must send a photocopy of your international money order or bank transfer receipt to Fr. Ricci -- otherwise, he has absolutely no way of knowing what has been sent toward Margaret's Cause. Banks don't keep track of that. It's up to the donor to tell the Congregazione della Cause dei Santi (i.e., Fr. Francesco M. Ricci) what they have sent.

To make contributions, read this information from Fr. Ricci:

Deposit at:

JPMORGAN CHASE BANK NEW YORK
270 Park Avenue
New York NY 10017 – USA
ABA 021000021
Cod Swift CHASUS33

in the Account of: Istituto per le Opere di Religione - VATICAN CITY
Acc. n. 001 - 1 - 975000

in favour of: POSTULAZIONE GENERALE DOMENICANI
account n: 39130001

- *Send a photocopy (by fax, e-mail, or regular mail) of your payment receipt to the Congregazione Della Cause dei Santi -- and note on your receipt that it was made in behalf of the Canonization of Little Margaret of Citta di Castello.* (The Vatican Bank doesn't communicate to what purpose you made a monetary gift.)

Fr. Francesco Ricci, O.P., is the Secretary of Dominican General Postulation, Office of the Postulator General of the Roman Dominican Curia for the Causes of Saints. His address is: Convento Santa Sabina, Piazza Pietro d'Illiria 1 – Aventin, Rome, Italy 00153.

- Les rogamus envien una fotocopia (par fax o e-mail) del recibo del pago, puesto que la Banca Vaticana no nos comunica cuando el pago ha sido hecho.
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FAX : +39 06 575 06 75

E-MAIL: postulatio@curia.op.org

If you drive to Citta di Castello, stay at the historic Hotel Tiferno. It's located a short walk to little Margaret in the Church of S. Domenico. It's also right across the street from the Church of S. Francisco where she was abandoned. The Tiferno has been a private home, convent, and monastery residence. Furnishings include many beautiful Italian antiques. Each floor has a little private outdoor patio with an umbrella table, chairs, and window boxes planted with Jasmine. They serve a delightful Continental breakfast, and the front desk is so helpful.

After checking in, I quickly walk across the street to the Church of S. Francisco. The entrance has been repaired, and walking up the steps is very emotional. I enter silently, walk all around, and sit near the tomb of S. Giacomo where Margaret's parents brought her.

Be sure to visit the town's Duomo (Cathedral). Don't miss a marvelous museum called the "Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera," previously a private mansion, with superb artwork, furnishings, and a restored garden. There are many town museums and highlights. Be sure to check all hours before you go and lunch closing times.

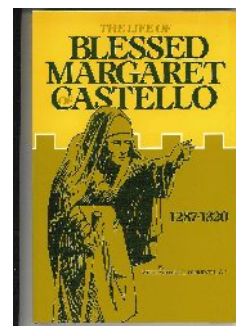
It's very sad to leave Margaret in Citta di Castello. I always thank her for being part of my life, whether I'm there in person at her glass coffin or mentioning her in my prayers.

If I could have daydreams answered, they would be:

- *To live in an old stone house on the outskirts of Citta di Castello;*
- *To see the town completely regress back to Margaret's time for just one day when I visit there again; and,*
- *To sit and talk with Margaret for two hours over coffee.*

When planning your visit, get a detailed road map. Make sure it shows Citta di Castello in Umbria and Metola in the Marches.

Read the paperback book by Fr. William Bonniwell, O.P., entitled, "The Life of Blessed Margaret of Castello." It contains a few photographs. This is the book's cover from a 1983 printing.

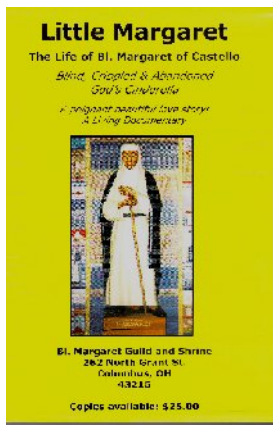


Tan Books sells it, Amazon.com, and EWTN-TV. It's the only one I know of. (I've seen numerous write-ups and websites about Margaret that contain wrong and very misleading information.)

There are a few U.S. shrines ... such as the one with a beautiful statue of Margaret at the St. Louis Bertrand Church, 1104 South Sixth Street, Louisville, KY 40203. (I recently learned of a shrine being built in the northwest U.S., but there is no exact address yet.)

St. Patrick's Church in Columbus, OH has a shrine for Margaret and a Little Margaret Guild. Their address is 280 North Grant Avenue, Zip Code 43215.

A marvelous, captivating, re-enactment movie about Margaret's life was filmed right in Citta di Castello several years ago.



It's available through St. Patrick's Church in Columbus, OH.

They sell the movie on DVD or VHS. The price is only \$25 plus postage.

The Church doesn't take credit cards.

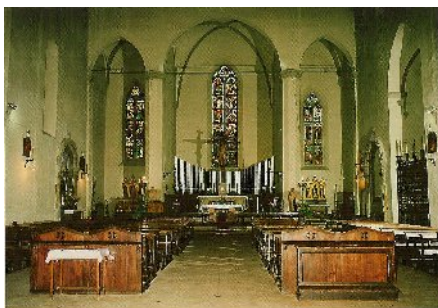
I don't know of anyone else who sells this beautiful movie.



Postage within the U.S. is currently \$1.56 and to the UK \$3.76, but inquire about other countries. Rates often change. It's best to use a money order within the U.S. For the UK or other foreign areas, ask the Church.

St. Patrick's Church also sells numerous Little Margaret items such as medals and relic cards. The statue above is available through them. It's 5½ in. tall and beautifully made. Ask the Church to send you a list of what they have and the prices with postage. Leave your full name and address on their answering machine. The telephone number is 1-614-463-1786.

The "History Channel" aired (and sells) an hour-long program entitled, "Saints Preserved." Margaret was shown and mentioned several times.



If anyone reading this write-up knows of a shrine or devotion group for Bl. Little Margaret, please share the information with the writer.

This is the interior of the Church of S. Domenico on the corner of Via Luca Signorelli.

A side door garden is open at certain hours.



* * *

Mass is said on Sundays (at 8:30 or 11). Be sure to confirm the times if you plan to visit.

I acquired a paperback pilgrimage guide book from about 2000 that incorrectly states that the Church closes for the winter! That's definitely not so, but because of a vandalism problem it was closed on weekdays for a short while. It's now open during the day.

*The Bishop is Mons. Domenico Cancian, F.A.M., (Vescovo di Citta di Castello)
at Palazzo Vescovile, Piazza Gabriotti, 10, Citta di Castello (PG) Italy 06012.*

If you venture to Citta di Castello, Metola or Mercatello in search of sites honoring Margaret, please share that information and any discoveries, too.

Several people planning to see Margaret have contacted me, and it made me feel very good. If you drive, it's easy; however, a friend traveling there recently took a train from Rome and was told she could get a connecting train to Castello if she got off at the Ponti San Giovanni stop in Perugia. It was a short ride from there to Castello. Connecting train schedules must be double-checked when you buy tickets. My friend stayed at a hotel just inside the old walls, because it was a very short walk from the Castello train station. I'm not familiar with that hotel, but I'll try it next time I visit Margaret (if I take a train from Rome).

Margaret's liturgical calendar Feast Day is April 13th (in the U.S.) -- but I was told that there is a traditional Feast Day for her celebrated on the second Sunday of May in the Church of San Domenico.

If you would like a copy of the Novena to Margaret, send me your street address. The Novena is on two sides of an 8 ½ x 11 paper that folds like a pamphlet, so it can't be sent via E-mail.

Alva Anderson gnomehome@tampabay.rr.com

Prayer for Little Margaret's Canonization

*O God, beloved Jesus, Mary and Joseph –
Glorify your servant blessed Margaret
by granting this favor I so ardently desire.*

*This I ask in humble submission to Your will, God ...
for Your honor and glory, and the salvation of souls.*

Amen ...



(Updated 2/17/2011)

Received via E-mail from --

Fr. Francesco Ricci, O.P.
Secretary of Dominican General Postulation
Office of Postulator General of the Roman Dominican Curia
for the Causes of Saints

Rome, 15 February 2011

Dear Mrs. Anderson,

I am writing to let you know about the last news concerning the cause of canonization of Blessed Margherita of Città di Castello.

The Cause of Canonization of Blessed Margherita has been re-examined in 2000 in the Diocese of Città di Castello, with a diocesan inquiry on her reputation and fame of sanctity.

Finished the diocesan phase, the cause will be studied and examined in Rome. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints will prepare a Positio that will be printed in order to be examined by a commission of Theologians and a commission of Cardinals.

Another miracle should be examined before the final Canonization Decree. If all this will be done and the judgement regarding the miracle will be positive, the regular canonical process concerning the miracle will be held and at this point it will be valid for the canonization.

After the conclusion of the Diocesan Inquiry on the miracle, this should be studied, analyzed and prepared also in Rome. The Positio super miro should be examined by a Medical Board, the Congress of Theologians and a Congress of Bishops and Cardinals of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

In the meantime a major work has been done in order to spread the cult of Blessed Margherita of Città di Castello:

- In 1999, a canonical recognition of the body of the blessed under the main altar of the Church of Saint Dominique in Città di Castello has taken place;
- Little pieces have been taken from her body in order to prepare relics. Requests of her relics may be presented to the Dominican Monastery of S. Maria del Rosario – Via Alberto Cadlolo, 51 – 00136 Rome (25 euros);
- In 2001 her biography has been published in Polish;
- In 2002 her biography has been published in Italian;
- In 2003 the habit of blessed Margherita has been found.

The process is still long and the expenses to be afforded are elevated. It would be more rapid if we could dispose of an economic budget. If I should suggest an indicative amount needed, I would say that we should raise at least \$ 40.000,00/ \$ 50.000,00.

I would be grateful to you for any contribution that you would give to this cause. Here attached I am writing our bank codes and I would be glad to receive any information regarding your deposits because the Vatican Bank does not give advises regarding the records of the deposits.

Grateful for all that you are doing in order to keep alive and always effective the cult of Blessed

Margherita of Città di Castello in the United States of America.

I send you my regards fraternally in Christ

Fr. Francesco M. Ricci, O.P.
secr.post.gen.