

Secular Franciscans: Blessed Luchedio and Buonadonna Modestini

Luchedio and Buonadonna – April 28 (Died 1260) [a.k.a. Luchession or Luchsius & Bonadonna]

Luchedio and Buonadonna lived in Poggibonzi where he was a greedy merchant. As a young man, Luchedio was trapped in worldly interests, especially politics and moneymaking. So unpopular did he make himself by his violent partisanship of the Guelf cause that he was forced to leave Gaggiano, his native place, and to settle in Poggibonzi, where he carried on business as a provision merchant and money lender. More than most merchants, he was so entirely and solely concerned with material success that he was quite generally reputed to be an avaricious man.

Meeting Francis—probably in **1213**—changed Luchedio’s life. Luchedio was between thirty and forty years of age. His heart was touched by divine grace and he began to take interest in works of mercy, such as nursing the sick and visiting the prisons. He began to perform many works of charity.

At first **Buonadonna** was not as enthusiastic about giving so much away as Luchedio was. One day after complaining that he was giving everything to strangers, Buonadonna answered the door only to find someone else needing help. Luchedio asked her to give the poor man some bread. She frowned but went to the pantry anyway. There she discovered more bread than had been there the last time she looked. She soon became as zealous for a poor and simple life as Luchedio was. They sold the business, farmed enough land to provide for their needs and distributed the rest to the poor. The charity of Luchedio drew the poor to him, and, like many other saints, he and Buonadonna seemed never to lack the resources to help these people.

In the **13th century**, some couples by mutual consent and with the Church’s permission separated so that the husband could join a monastery (or a group such as Francis began) and his wife could go to a cloister. This choice existed for childless couples or for those whose children had already grown up. Luchedio and Buonadonna wanted another alternative, a way of sharing in religious life, but outside the cloister. They wanted to follow St. Francis as a married couple. Thus, they set in motion the **Secular Franciscan Order**. Francis wrote a simple *Rule* for the Third Order (Secular Franciscans) at first; Pope Honorius III approved a more formally worded *Rule* in 1221.

When he lay very ill and there was no hope for his recovery, his wife said to him, “Implore God, who gave us to each other as companions in life, to permit us also to die together.” Luchedio prayed as requested and Buonadonna fell ill with a fever, from which she died even before her husband, after devoutly receiving the Holy Sacraments. Luchedio died on April 28, 1260. Luchedio was **beatified in 1273**, 13 years after his death. His cult was confirmed in 1694, and his feast day is April 28th. **Buonadonna is often called “blessed,” though the title was not given officially.**