BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: June 7

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IN BRIEF

Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli

Ligurian priest, founder of the Daughters of Mary of the Garden and bishop of Bobbio (1789-1846).

Feast day	June 7
Born	April 12, 1789, Cerreta, hamlet of Carro (Liguria)
Died	June 7, 1846, Piacenza (Italy)
Canonized	October 21, 1951 by Pius XII
Era	19th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli for Pastors and All Who Serve

Novena to Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli

Bobbio Cathedral

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli

Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli (Antonio Maria Gianelli) was an Italian priest and bishop, born on April 12, 1789, at Cerreta, a hamlet of Carro in Liguria, and died on June 7, 1846, in Piacenza. As archpriest of Chiavari he founded in 1829 the Daughters of Mary of the Garden, then became bishop of Bobbio, where he rests. Canonized by Pius XII in 1951, he is celebrated on June 7.

Who was Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli?

Anthony Mary Gianelli was a pastor of the first half of the 19th century, a time when the Church in Italy was recovering from the upheavals of the Revolution and the Napoleonic era. Teacher, parish priest, founder and then bishop, he put uncommon energy at the service of souls, so much so that his contemporaries nicknamed him "the man of iron". His life joined personal rigor, poverty and great gentleness toward the faithful. His most lasting work is the congregation of the Daughters of Mary of the Garden, present today on several continents.

Key dates in the life of Anthony Mary Gianelli

- **April 12, 1789**: Born at Cerreta, a hamlet of Carro, in the Ligurian hinterland.
- **c. 1808**: At nineteen, he enters the seminary.
- **c. 1812**: He is ordained a priest, then teaches letters and rhetoric.
- **1826**: He becomes archpriest of Chiavari, on the Ligurian coast.
- **January 12, 1829**: The first young women begin to live in community; the Daughters of Mary of the Garden are born.
- **1838**: Appointed bishop of Bobbio, he founds there in November the Oblates of Saint Alphonsus for parish missions.

- **April 1845**: The first signs of the consumption that will take his life appear.
- **June 7, 1846**: He dies in Piacenza; he is buried in the cathedral of Bobbio.
- **April 19, 1925**: Beatified by Pope Pius XI.
- **October 21, 1951**: Canonized by Pope Pius XII.

The teacher and the parish priest of Chiavari

Born in the hinterland of La Spezia, Anthony Mary entered the seminary at nineteen and was ordained a priest four years later. He first taught letters and rhetoric, training generations of young clerics to speak well in order to proclaim the Gospel better. In 1826 he was appointed archpriest of the church of Saint John the Baptist in Chiavari, one of the main parishes of the Ligurian coast. He stayed there until 1838 and launched many pastoral initiatives, much appreciated by the faithful: preaching, catechism, care of the poor and the sick.

The Daughters of Mary of the Garden

In Chiavari, Gianelli was given charge of a work for the care and education of orphans. To sustain it, he first organized in 1827 a company of ladies of charity. Then, on January 12, 1829, thirteen young women began to live in community, to practice eucharistic adoration and to devote themselves to the education of the young and the care of the sick and the elderly. Catherine Podestà became the first superior and governed the institute for forty years. The sisters soon took the name Daughters of Mary of the Garden, in honor of Our Lady of the Garden (Nostra Signora dell'Orto), the Virgin venerated in Chiavari. The congregation was approved by the Holy See in 1868 and spread to Latin America, then to Africa, Asia and Oceania.

The bishop of Bobbio, "the man of iron"

In 1838 Gianelli became bishop of Bobbio, a small diocese in the Apennines, heir of the ancient abbey of Saint Columban. The same year he founded the Oblates of Saint Alphonsus, a society of priests placed under the patronage of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, to preach parish missions and direct seminaries. This society did not survive him, but it shows his concern to form a zealous clergy. As bishop he lived in austerity and poverty. He carried out his pastoral mission with a blend of firmness and gentleness. His tireless activity earned him the nickname "the man of iron".

In April 1845, at fifty-six, the first symptoms of consumption appeared, which doctors did not recognize at once. After a brief improvement, he died in Piacenza on June 7, 1846.

The tomb and the cult

His funeral was celebrated in the cathedral of Bobbio, and his body was first laid in the crypt of the bishops, beside his predecessors. Today he rests in a transparent shrine placed under the altar of a chapel dedicated to him, in the crypt of the cathedral. Beatified by Pius XI on April 19, 1925, he was canonized by Pius XII on October 21, 1951, and his feast was set on June 7. He is depicted as a bishop, with a crucifix or a book. He is also honored in his native village, at the shrine of Cerreta, where a statue recalls his memory.

What can we learn from Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli?

Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli shows us a pastor who did not spare himself. As a teacher he formed others; as a parish priest he saw the needs of orphans and the sick and called forth a work to meet them; as a bishop he wanted missionary priests. His firmness was not harshness: it served a patient gentleness. He invites each of us not to wait until we are perfect before acting, and to entrust our works to Mary.

Where to pray to Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli

- At the cathedral of Bobbio (province of Piacenza), where he rests in a shrine, in the crypt.
- At the shrine of Cerreta, in Carro, his native village.
- In Chiavari, where he was archpriest and where the Daughters of Mary of the Garden were born.
- In the houses of the Daughters of Mary of the Garden, in Italy and around the world.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli for Pastors and All Who Serve

Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli, archpriest of Chiavari and then bishop of Bobbio, founded the Daughters of Mary of the Garden for orphans, the sick and the elderly. He was called "the man of iron", so fully did he give himself to his mission. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him pastors, educators, caregivers and all who spend themselves for others.

Prayer to Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli

Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli,
tireless pastor and father of the poor,
you saw orphans, the sick and the elderly
and wanted them to be loved.
Open my eyes to those who need me.

You joined firmness to gentleness:
teach me to serve without growing weary,
to correct without wounding,
to persevere when tiredness sets in.

Bless priests and bishops,
the Daughters of Mary of the Garden and their works,
and entrust us all to the Virgin Mary.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli

- On his feast day, June 7.
- For bishops, parish priests and missionary priests.
- For educators, caregivers and those who look after the elderly.
- For orphans and children without a family.
- When tiredness or illness slows down our service.

An invocation to Our Lady of the Garden

> *Our Lady of the Garden, keep our families and our works.*
> *Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli from May 30 to June 7, and discover the life of Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli

This novena accompanies Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli, teacher, archpriest of Chiavari, founder of the Daughters of Mary of the Garden and bishop of Bobbio. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To end it on his feast day, June 7, begin it on May 30. You can also pray it at any other time of the year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the sign of the cross and entrust your intention to God. Read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with: "Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A child of Liguria

Anthony Mary was born in 1789 at Cerreta, a hamlet of the Ligurian hinterland. God prepares his servants in hidden and simple places.

Prayer: Lord, bless the villages and families where vocations are born.

Act of the day: Pray for the parish where you were baptized.

Day 2: Answering the call

At nineteen he entered the seminary. Four years later he was a priest. From then on his whole life was given.

Prayer: Lord, give your Church priests after your own heart.

Act of the day: Pray for a seminarian or for vocations in your diocese.

Day 3: Teaching in order to proclaim

As a teacher of letters and rhetoric, he taught young people to speak well. Well-formed speech can serve the Gospel.

Prayer: Lord, may my words build up and not wound.

Act of the day: Say a word of encouragement to someone who doubts himself or herself.

Day 4: The parish priest of Chiavari

Archpriest of Chiavari for twelve years, he found new ways to reach his parishioners. A shepherd seeks his sheep where they are.

Prayer: Lord, bless our parish priest and our parish.

Act of the day: Offer your help for a service in your parish.

Day 5: The orphans

Put in charge of a work for orphans, he did not merely manage it: he called forth people who would give themselves to it. Charity needs available hearts.

Prayer: Lord, protect children without a family and give them loving homes.

Act of the day: Support a work for children in difficulty.

Day 6: Under Mary's gaze

The sisters he founded bear the name of Our Lady of the Garden, the Virgin venerated in Chiavari. He entrusted his work to Mary.

Prayer: Virgin Mary, I entrust to you my plans and those I love.

Act of the day: Pray one decade of the rosary.

Day 7: The man of iron

As bishop of Bobbio he lived poorly and spent himself without counting. He was called "the man of iron". His strength came from prayer.

Prayer: Lord, give me the strength to serve without losing heart.

Act of the day: Finish a task you have long been putting off.

Day 8: Forming missionaries

He founded the Oblates of Saint Alphonsus for parish missions. He wanted the Gospel proclaimed to all, even in the countryside.

Prayer: Lord, send laborers into your harvest.

Act of the day: Share with someone a Gospel word that has touched you.

Day 9: Illness and death

Stricken with consumption, he died in Piacenza on June 7, 1846, at fifty-seven. He rests in the cathedral of Bobbio, among the people he served.

Prayer: Saint Anthony Mary, obtain for us the grace we entrust to you, and faithfulness to the end.

Act of the day: Visit a sick person or pray for him or her.

PILGRIMAGE

Bobbio Cathedral

The cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption in Bobbio, in the Apennines of the province of Piacenza, is where Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli rests, bishop of Bobbio from 1838 to 1846. His body lies in a transparent shrine, under the altar of a chapel in the crypt that bears his name.

A cathedral born from the abbey of Saint Columban

The diocese of Bobbio was created in 1014 by Pope Benedict VIII and Emperor Henry II, to protect the property of the ancient monastery founded by Saint Columban. For some fifty years the bishop was also abbot, then the two offices were separated. The Romanesque church was built from 1070 and completed five years later. It was enlarged between 1450 and 1475: the facade was brought forward to the two side towers, and the transept and crypt were created, the crypt topped by a strongly raised choir. Today the former cathedral is the co-cathedral of the diocese of Piacenza-Bobbio.

What you can see

The church has a Latin cross plan with three naves, marked by sturdy pillars. The choir is decorated with paintings begun in 1723 by Francesco Porro; the naves were decorated at the end of the 19th century. The organ and gallery date from the 18th century, and the octagonal baptismal font is a modern work. Around the church stand the bishop's palace, with the diocesan museum, and the former seminary with its cloister.

From the transept, two staircases lead down to the crypt, built in the 15th century. There is the sepulcher of the bishops, where the bishops of Bobbio have been buried since 1600; Saint Anthony Mary was first laid there after his

funeral. Opposite is the chapel of Saint Anthony Mary Gianelli, where the saint rests in a transparent coffin placed under the altar.

Praying in Bobbio

Bobbio is a small town in the Trebbia valley, about fifty kilometers southwest of Piacenza. The cathedral is a working church: you can pray there outside services, keeping silence. Before the shrine, people entrust to Saint Anthony Mary priests, educators, the sick and the elderly, or a work they carry. June 7, his feast day, is the preferred time for pilgrimage. The visit can continue at the nearby abbey of Saint Columban, which keeps the tomb of the founder of Bobbio.

Credits and sources

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