

REGIONAL FORMATION: SUMMER STUDY ON FRANCISCAN SAINTS

ST. ZITA



Article written by:
Barbara Morgan OFS
Director of Formation
San Damiano Fraternity
(O'Fallon, MO)

ST. ZITA

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

Blessings to each of you!! I hope that everyone is having a glorious summer! Currently, I am the formation director for the San Damiano Fraternity. I have served in a variety of positions on both the local and regional level. I love being formation director and hopefully, guiding people to a closer relationship with Christ and a better and deeper understanding of St. Francis and the charism of our order.

I have chosen to write about a saint that I reach out to very often, St. Zita. In a bit, I will let you know why I call on her almost every day. St. Zita was a member of the Third Order with a sweet, joyful disposition. At the age of 12, in order to help her family, Zita became a housekeeper to a wealthy family. Zita saw her work as an assignment from God. She once said, "A servant girl is not pious, if she is not industrious; work shy piety is sham piety." Words for all of us to live by! Zita religiously prayed and attended Mass each morning before the rest of the household awoke. She was known for charity and her great love of the poor. Initially, her employer was not happy with her giving away his food. Two miracles occurred along these lines. One day Zita was smuggling bread to the poor and a fellow servant told her master. When he pulled open her cloak, flowers fell to the ground instead of bread. On another occasion she gave away all the beans to the poor. She was very apprehensive when it was time to sell the beans for a great profit, but when the master checked the bean supply were all there! There were also other miracles in her life. Zita remained at her position for 48 years and died on April 27, 1278.

In 1580, Zita's body was found incorrupt when they exhumed the body. St. Zita certainly demonstrated the gift of Piety. She revered God with filial affection, paying worship and duty to God. In my opinion, she was a great example of two of the fruits of the Holy Spirit: Joy and Generosity. Her joy was an interior contentment that came from being close to God. Her generosity was apparent in her giving of herself to others and giving food to those less fortunate.

I feel that as a Secular Franciscan Zita lived a humble life serving others. She did what God asked her to do and she did her best. We are not all called to greatness and being in the forefront, but we are called to do our best at whatever task we are given. It is not important the job or position we have, but that we live our lives in quiet joy, doing what God asks of us without need for acclaim.

Finally, why do I pray to St. Zita on an almost daily basis? *Well, she is the patron saint of lost keys and I just can't seem to keep track of mine much of the time!!*

God bless you all
Pax et bonum!!
Barb Morgan