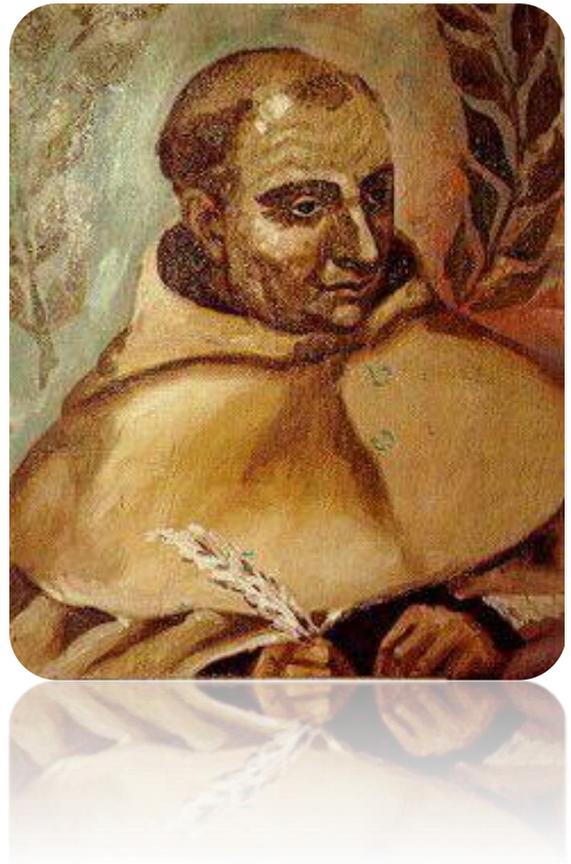


March 21

Blessed John Buralli of Parma

Hello, good people. May the Lord give you peace!

To capture the life of the man who visits us today would take a week-long stay. He lived what we might call a "big life." Blessed John of Parma served as the seventh minister general of the Order. He came to office when there was considerable controversy among the brothers. He was ministering during a time when the Order was experiencing growing pains. As if all of this were not enough to try a man's soul, Pope Innocent IV called on him for personal guidance as well as the staggering task of reuniting the Greek and Roman Churches. He spent the last years of his life in prayer and solitude.



As you might imagine, while serving both the Order and the larger Church in leadership roles, he was subject to ridicule and calumny. Friars, secular priests and laity were not reticent to vociferously protest his efforts. We are reminded of the quote from Shakespeare: "uneasy is the head that wears the crown." Yet, with a firm purpose and peaceful countenance Blessed John was able to bear the burden and succeed in many of his responsibilities.

How true for many of us, too. We may have only the very best of intentions, yet these are thwarted by others who think otherwise. There are a host of social concerns today that are sources of controversy. There is the temptation to have recourse to vitriol and ridicule in these situations. It is best if we can remember John and his patient forbearance with others who held differing opinions.

Let us pray.

Lord God, one of our most powerful tools of evangelization and peace-building in our world is our language. Finding a way to foster reconciliation and not alienation, finding a way for acceptance and not rejection, finding a

way to offer an invitation and not an act of exclusion, these are our commitments. Through the intercession of Blessed John of Parma may we be blessed with words of reconciliation, acceptance and invitation. We ask this through Christ, the Word made flesh, who lives with you and Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Blessed John of Parma is a Friend of God we welcome today.