

Eucharistic Miracle of RIMINI

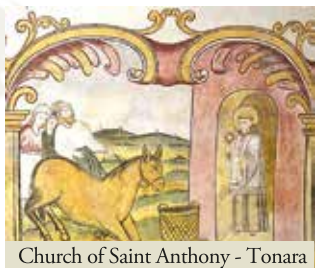
ITALY, 1227



This Eucharistic miracle was performed directly by Saint Anthony after he was challenged by a certain Bonovillo to demonstrate the truth of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The most ancient biography of Saint Anthony, *L'Assidua* (The Untiring), carries Bonovillo's exact words: "Father! I tell you before all these people: I will believe in the Eucharist if my mule, after fasting for three days, adores the Host which you offer him rather than eating the fodder which I give him." The mule, despite the fact that it was exhausted by hunger, knelt before the Host and refused its food.



Fresco of Girolamo Tessari (1511). Basilica of Saint Anthony, Padua



Church of Saint Anthony - Tonara



Donatello di Niccolo di Betto Bardi, called Donatello. *Miracle of the Mule*, (1446-1448) Padua, Basilica of the Saint



Temple of the Most Holy Eucharist, Rimini



Eucharistic Miracle of Saint Anthony, Salvaterra de Magos, Matriz Church, Portugal



Domenico Beccafumi, *Saint Anthony and the Miracle of the Mule* (1537) Louvre, Paris



Miracle of Saint Anthony, Collection of the Diocesan Museum of Milan



Altar constructed on the trunk of the column from which Saint Anthony performed the miracle

In Rimini, it is still possible today to visit the church that was built in honor of the Eucharistic miracle performed by Saint Anthony of Padua in 1227. This episode is also cited in *Begninitas*, considered one of the most ancient sources regarding the life of Saint Anthony. "This saintly man was speaking with a faithless heretic who was opposed to the sacrament of the Eucharist and whom the saint had nearly led to the Catholic faith. But, after numerous arguments, this heretic declared: 'If you, Anthony, produce a miracle and demonstrate to me that the Body of Christ is truly Communion, I will completely renounce my heresy and immediately convert to the Catholic faith. Why don't we have a wager? I'll keep one of my beasts locked up for three days to feel the torments of hunger. Then I will bring it forth in public and show it food. You will stand in front of it with

what you maintain is the Body of Christ. If the beast, leaving aside its food, hurries to adore its God, I will share the faith of your Church.'" Saint Anthony, illuminated and inspired from above, accepted the challenge.

At the chosen day and hour, the priest and heretic entered the Grand Piazza (today the Three Martyrs Piazza). Saint Anthony was followed by Catholic faithful; Bonovillo (this was the name of the Catharist heretic) by his allies in unbelief. The saint held between his hands the consecrated Host, contained in a monstrance; the heretic held his hungry mule. The saint, after having requested and obtained silence, turned to the mule with

these words: "In virtue and in the name of your Creator, Who I, as unworthy as I am, hold in my hands, I tell and order you: Come forward immediately and render homage to the Lord with all due respect so that heretics and evildoers will understand that all creatures must humble themselves before their Creator whom priests hold in their hands at the altar." And immediately the animal, refusing the food offered by its master, docilely approached the priest. It bent its front legs before the Host and paused there reverently. Anthony's adversary was true to his word, and threw himself at the saint's feet denouncing publicly the errors of his ways. From that day, he became one of the most zealous cooperators of the miracle-working saint.