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Feb. 16, Bl. Bernard Scammacca, O.P.

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Feb. 16, 2010 NCR Today

Anthony Scammacca was born in 1430 to a noble family of Catania, Sicily. As was typical of young men at that time, he fought duels. In one of them, his leg was badly wounded.

(The Fiore dei Liberi [1] is an example of the fighting manuals of the day. Scroll down halfway to see an illustration of how a leg could be wounded.)

As Anthony convalesced, he had time to think about his life and his future. When his leg healed, he entered the Order of Preachers and was given the name Bernard.

As a priest, Fr. Bernard became known for his compassion in the confessional and for his tender concern for the sick and the poor. A hospital he founded in Catania with financial aid from his rich friends exists today. (And the Piazza Scammacca and the Via Beato Bernardo still exist, as well.)

For more about Bl. Bernard Scammacca, who died in 1487, click here. [2] (Italian.)

His story is included in *Saint Dominic's Family: Lives and Legends,* [3] by Sr. M. Jean Dorcy, the great Dominican scissors artist, published by Priory Press, 1964.

His body, "still incorrupt after a period of almost five hundred years, is exposed to view in the parish church of S. Biagio . . ."

--from *The Incorruptibles: A Study of the Incorruption of the Bodies of Various Catholic Saints and Beati,* [4] by Joan Carroll Cruz.

A blessed Shrove Tuesday to all! May we find confessors as gifted at shriving as Bernard Scammacca!

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Links:
[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flos_Duellatorum
[2] http://www.es.catholic.net/santoral/articulo.php?id=34652
[3] http://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?an=dorcy&sts=t&tn=st+dominic%27s+family&x=34&a
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