

On this day: Ven. Samuel Mazzuchelli, O.P.

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Nov. 4, 2011 NCR Today

On this day in 1806, Samuel Mazzuchelli was born in Milan, the fifteenth child of Luigi Mazzuchelli and Rachele Merlini. Samuel grew up in his parents' house behind the Cathedral. At 17, he entered the Order of Preachers. At 18, he made his final vows. At 21, "mandated 'Missionary for North America'", the young Dominican sailed for New York.

"Samuel was ordained in Cincinnati in 1830 by Bishop Fenwick and given his first assignment: a large area of the Great Lakes region in the northern United States to the border with Canada, with particular location on the island of Mackinac.

"He became a true missionary to all he met. His missionary travels were difficult?by horseback, on foot, by canoe; in the winter he had to travel on horse-drawn sleds or on snowshoes as the Indians did. He ate whatever he was offered?the meat of bear and deer and fish or rice and bread. He often went hungry. He accepted whatever hospitality was offered, having no residence of his own for the most part. Sometimes, he slept on the ground, sometimes in the teepees of Indians, sometimes in the simple huts of the immigrant pioneers?never known to complain."

--"[A Saint for Our Time.](#)" [1] by Sr. Mary Paynter, OP.

"The tri-state area, where Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois meet, was where Mazzuchelli finally settled. He became a respected leader in civic affairs as well as in religious ones. The first Wisconsin Territorial Legislature asked him to be their chaplain. He was appointed to superintend the construction of the county courthouse in Galena, Illinois, and he designed the county courthouse in Fort Madison, Iowa. One of his most enduring civic actions was the naming of the streets in Shullsburg, Wisconsin?the street crossing signs there still bear witness to his unique vision: Faith and Wisdom, Peace and Charity, Judgment and Truth, Friendship and Mercy."

"In 1847, he established a community of Dominican Sisters to help him carry on his mission of preaching and teaching. He ended his work on earth as pastor of St. Patrick's parish in Benton, Wisconsin. In 1864, he died of pneumonia, having contracted the illness while visiting the sick on a bitterly cold winter morning. However, the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa and the people and pastors of the parishes he founded continue to revere his memory as they carry on his mission today.

"In 1993, Pope John Paul II recognized his holy zeal and virtues by declaring him 'Venerable'?the first step in the process of official Church recognition of his sanctity."

--from a [brochure](#) [2] about Venerable Samuel Mazzuchelli on the Sinsinawa Dominicans' web site. There are several pictures, including one of St. Augustine Church, New Diggings, Wisconsin, and one of the Dominican Sisters and their students at St. Clara Academy in Benton, Wisconsin.

In the 1860 census, Samuel Mazzuchelli is listed living with Patrick and Bridget Cain and their three children, next to the "St. Clara Female Academy, Conducted by the Sisters of Charity." Ignatia Fitz, Johanna Clark, Clara

Conway, Josephine Cahile, Frances McCarty, Pius Corcoran, etc., were Dominicans, but, like many Protestants at that time, the enumerator apparently thought all Sisters were Sisters of Charity.

Click [here](#) [3] for "Our Churches' Histories," about the churches of Benton, Wisconsin. When "Happy Jack's Church," the Primitive Methodist church, was burned down, some thought by Copperheads, others thought by Catholics, Father Mazzuchelli donated \$25 to the rebuilding fund.

Click [here](#) [4] for *Memoirs: Historical and Edifying of a Missionary Apostolic of the Order of Saint Dominic Among Various Indian Tribes and Among the Catholics and Protestants in the United States of America*, by Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, O.P. The book is free online.

To join the Novena Prayer to Venerable Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, click [here](#). [5] Click the links at the left on that page for information about his Cause for Canonization and about some of the churches he built.

A very happy Founder's Day to the Sinsinawa Dominicans!

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[1] <http://www.goodshepherdmadison.com/content/father-samuel-mazzuchelli>

[2] <http://www.sinsinawa.org/Mazzuchelli.htm>

[3] <http://www.bentonwi.us/wp/wp-content/uploads/2007/05/church-histories.pdf>

[4]

<http://books.google.com/books?id=vechAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Mazzuchelli&hl=en&ar>

[5] http://www.sinsinawa.org/08_Fr_Mazzuchelli/Novena_Prayer.cfm