

St. Rita of Cascia

Born 1371 in Roccaporena, Italy;
died May 22, 1447, in Cascia, Italy

Feast Day: May 22

Prayer: Lord, keep me safe... and give me the faith to pray for those who desire to harm me.



“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun run on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust.”
(Matthew 5:43-45, NAB)

Action: Pray with St. Rita about how you might work to mend a rift within your family without endangering yourself.

About St. Rita: It was a time when people married young—very young. Rita’s parents arranged for her to marry Paolo Mancini before she was in her teens, and the couple quickly had twin sons, Giovanni Antonio and Paulo Maria.

Despite the presence of children, family life was anything but peaceful. Paolo was a minor political figure, and the Mancinis were embroiled in a feud with the Chiqui family. Paolo also was a less than ideal husband, abusing Rita physically and verbally and spending time with other women. She prayed. She offered an example of love and forgiveness, and it is said Paolo began to have a change of heart and soul. However, his life was cut short when he was killed by one of the Chiquis.

While Rita was quick to forgive the killer, Paolo’s brother was not, and he encouraged the sons seek revenge. Giovanni and Paulo fell under their uncle’s influence despite Rita’s best efforts. Her prayers for an end to the violence began to be answered when the twins both died of natural causes shortly thereafter.

When Rita then attempted to become an Augustinian sister, the congregation was reluctant to take her for fear of more violence; members of the Chiqui family were among the women in the convent. Rita convinced the families to end their discord and became a nun at age thirty-six. She spent the next forty years working tirelessly for charitable causes and peace.

Rita’s story illumines the importance of faith and prayer in combatting abuse and hatred within our families. From a safe distance, we can pray for abusers and ask the Lord to shine his light on their souls so that they will be open to the help they need. – *Melanie Rigney*