

# St. Margaret of Cortona



*Despite the fact that St. Margaret of Cortona lived centuries ago, the obstacles she overcame are familiar to many modern women and families.*

*Margaret struggled as a young single mother. After her child's father and her own family refused to help her, she found herself homeless and alone. She turned to the Church for support.*

*Just as the Friars received and aided St. Margaret of Cortona in a time of need in the thirteenth century, single mothers and families may also find refuge with Catholic Charities in 2009 and for years to come.*

**Patronage:** The homeless and single laywomen

**Canonized:** 1728

**Feast day:** February 22

Margaret of Cortona was born in Tuscany in 1247. Margaret's mother died when she was seven years old. Her stepmother did not care for her high-spirited step-daughter. Rejected at home, Margaret eloped with a youth and bore him a son out of wedlock.

When her father refused to accept her and her son, homeless and alone she went to the Friars Minor at Cortona, where she received asylum. Margaret earned a living by nursing the sick. Later she gave this up to serve the poor without recompense, subsisting only on alms. Eventually, she joined the Third Order of St. Francis, and her son also joined the Franciscans a few years later. Margaret advanced rapidly in prayer and was said to be in direct contact with Jesus, as exemplified by frequent ecstasies. Friar Giunta recorded some of the messages she received from God.

In 1286, Margaret was granted a charter allowing her to work for the sick poor on a permanent basis. Others joined with personal help, and some with financial assistance. Margaret formed her group into tertiaries, and later they were given special status as a congregation that was called the Poverelle ("Poor Ones"). She also showed extraordinary love for the mysteries of the Eucharist and the Passion of Jesus Christ.