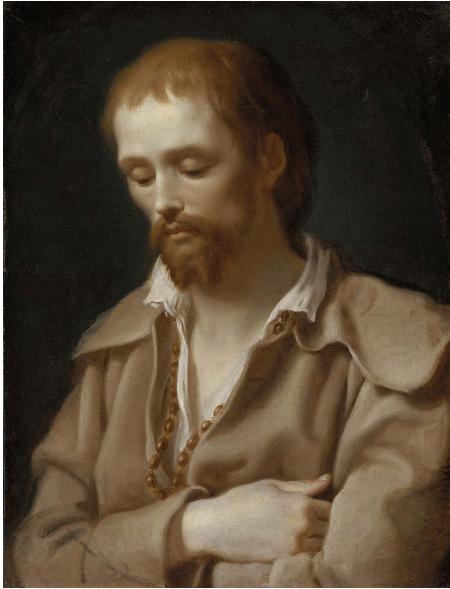


THE EXAMPLE OF ST. BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE



Born: 26 March 1748, Amettes

Died: 16 April 1783, Rome

Canonized: 8 December 1881, by Pope Leo XIII

Buried: Parish Church of Santa Maria ai Monti, Rome

After having been refused entry by many monasteries in France, “in Italy his true vocation was revealed to him. The Lord called him to a solitude even greater than that of the cloister: He set him upon the road, and on the road he was to remain, becoming in this world the pilgrim of God. He detached himself from everything, exposing his body to the elements, while his soul rose ever higher in prayer, from which nothing could distract him. His clothing consisted of a tunic and a novice’s scapular, and from his shoulders hung a bag containing all his earthly possessions: The Imitation of Christ, the New Testament, and the breviary which he recited every day. On his chest he wore a crucifix, around his neck a rosary, and in his hands another rosary. A morsel of bread and a few herbs sufficed for his daily nourishment; he never asked for anything, and whatever he received through charity but did not need, he gave to other poor people. He would rest almost always in the open air — at the foot of a tree or along a hedgerow. Benedict Joseph visited repeatedly the shrines of Loreto, Assisi, Naples, Bari, and Fabriano.

The last years of his life were spent in Rome (except for an annual pilgrimage to Loreto), where he usually slept among the ruins of the Colosseum. One morning in April 1783, he was found unconscious on the road leading to Santa Maria ai Monti and died on the 16th of that month in the backroom of a butcher’s shop that had taken him in. He was thirty-five years old. As soon as he passed away, a voice spread throughout Rome: ‘The saint is dead.’ He was buried in the Church of Our Lady of the Mounts, to the left of the high altar.”

Hubert Claude, *Benedetto Giuseppe Labre*,
in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, vol. II, So. Gra. Ro, Rome 1962, pp. 1218-1220