

Statue of St Annibale Maria di Francia

Erected in Rome by Pope Benedict XVI



Saint Annibale was the special extraordinary confessor of the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta and published the first 19 volumes of her manuscripts which Jesus called *“The Book of Heaven”* and also *“The Hours of the Passion”* and *“The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom”* with the imprimatur of his bishop and the approval of Pope Pius X. He was assisted in the propagation of these writings by Fr Beda Ludwig, who gained permission from Fr Calvi, Luisa’s confessor, to translate it into German, calling the Treatise **‘the greatest that has ever been written on this theme.’** And **‘I have set aside my great work on stigmatics ... (for) the Kingdom of the Divine Will is over everything else. I remain faithful to the work to which I have consecrated myself with a vow.’** He published 55,000 copies of *The Hours of the Passion* and 50,000 copies of Luisa Diaries, known now as *“The Book of Heaven”* – the name Jesus gave to these writings.

In Ch 10 of Hugh Owen’s Book *“Thy Kingdom Come – The Life and Mission of Luisa Piccarreta”* says **“For Fr Ludwig and Fr Di Francia, the driving force behind their efforts to publish Luisa’s writings was the fruit they derived from their own study and practice of the Divine Will teachings. As Fr Beda wrote Luisa: ‘The Kingdom of the Divine Will keeps me busy day and night. It is the most important thing in my life and I would like this Divine Will to be my own life ... The deeper we penetrate into this Treatise, the more we discover the divine, which absorbs us and penetrates us so gently and sweetly that to follow it and live it is everything. Between 1926 and 1938, through the efforts of Fr (Beda) Ludwig and Fr Di Francia, tens of thousands of people learned for the**

first time about Luisa’s writings. In Luisa’s writings, Fr (St) Annibale and Fr Beda Ludwig both recognized not only a sublime doctrine, but a public invitation to the Church and to the world. Luisa’s confessor, Don Benedetto Calvi, also strongly supported Fr Annibale’s plans for mass circulation of Luisa’s writings.”

NOTE: Fr Beda Ludwig was a well-known Benedictine scholar who was introduced to Luisa’s writing by Maria de Regibus from Turin. *“Fr Beda had already published numerous books including a work on the sanctification of the week, which passed through 6 editions totalling 48,000 copies in four different languages. At the time of his first reading of Luisa’s writings, Fr Beda was engrossed in an encyclopaedic study of Catholic Stigmatists. Fr Vitale, Fr (St) Annibale’s successor as leader of The Rogationist Institutes, in conjunction with the Archbishop of Trani sent Luisa’s writings to a highly respected theologian and friend of the Rogationists, Fr Domenico Franze O.F.M. Fr Annibale describes him as ‘a holy Franciscan Missionary ... also a doctor, having studied medicine’ ... a surgeon and professor of physiology and a member of the Pontifical Academy of Missions in Rome and an investigator for the Congregation of the Causes of the Saints. In 1931 Fr Franze wrote back to Fr Vitale with his evaluation of the selections from Luisa’s writings. He told Fr Vitale that he had not only studied the writings thoroughly but that he had also asked other competent theologians to review them and had visited Luisa in person to form a better opinion. His conclusions were totally positive. ‘In reality, if someone did not have the time or the desire to read the volume, it would be enough just to glance through the index to see how a soul called to perfection by God, gradually walks up the ways of detachment and abasement, of temptations and trials (one of which – an extremely grievous one – she has endured for a full forty-six years ... From my perspective as a religious regulator, it is comforting to have been assured that after so many years and after such exhaustive studies, doctors, confessors and the archbishops of the diocese have never discovered even the shadow of deception or fraud. Finally, from my perspective as a priest, I am filled with joy to have found in the patient not only all the delicate integrity of the Christian virtues, but also a soul tending to perfection, illuminated by a special grace ...”*

(All info and quotes from *“Thy Kingdom Come – The Life and Mission of Luisa Piccarreta”* by Hugh Owen Ch 10)