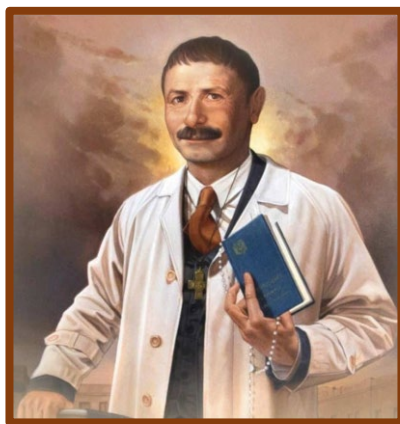


**St. Artemide Zatti**  
**(Italy/Argentina) 1880-1951**

*Served as a nurse at San Jose de Viedma Hospital, for the San Francisco de Sales School, the College of the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians, the Circle of Catholic Workers and the prison.*

*Was the protective angel of all the homeless of "his Hospital."*

*First non-martyr Salesian coadjutor to be raised to the honors of the altars.*



**Artemide Zatti** was born on October 12, 1880 in Boretto (Reggio Emilia), Italy to Albina Vecchi and Luis Zatti, a farming family.<sup>5, 6</sup> By the age of nine he was earning his living working as a farmhand. His family was forced by poverty to emigrate to Argentina at the beginning of 1897. They settled in Bahia Blanca, Argentina where his uncle Juan Zatti lived with his family. There they attended a parish run by the Salesians of Don Bosco. Artemides worked, first in a hotel and then in a brick factory.<sup>2</sup> His spiritual director, Father Carlo Cavalli directed him towards the Salesian life and at age 20, he became an aspirant in Bernal. He made his first profession as a Salesian lay brother on 11 January 1908.

He contracted tuberculosis while caring for a priest with this disease and was sent to the Salesian House of Viedma, where the climate was thought to be helpful to his recovery. There he met Father Evasio Garrone, a Salesian nurse, who suggested that Artemides entrust himself to Mary Help of Christians to ask for healing, promising in return, to devote his whole life to the assistance of the sick.<sup>2</sup> He made the promise to God. He would later say, "I believed, I promised, I got healed."<sup>1</sup>

He made his perpetual profession on 8 February 1911. He immediately consecrated himself to the hospital and initially took charge of the adjoining pharmacy, the Pharmacy of San Francisco de Sales of the San José hospital. "When Fr. Garrone died in 1913, the entire responsibility of the hospital was his. He became deputy director, administrator and an expert nurse, esteemed by all the patients and by the doctors themselves, who gave him greater and greater freedom."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to caring for the sick in the San Jose de Viedma Hospital, he traveled throughout the city and to towns on the banks of the Negro River: Viedma and Patagones. He traveled on a bicycle wearing a white coat and carrying a bag with the most common medicines. With one hand he held the handlebars of the bicycle and with the other held a rosary. Those who were sick from all over Patagonia came to receive his care as word that he was a saintly infirmarian spread. Though he cared for all, rich and poor, he most loved to serve those who had nothing. If he was given compensation, this was donated to the hospital. He made himself available to the sick any time of the day in any weather. "It was not uncommon for the sick to prefer the visit of the holy infirmarian to that of the doctors."<sup>1</sup>

He saw Jesus in the sick and was at times heard to say, "Sister, do you have a dress for a 12-year-old Jesus?" He was conscious of the sensibilities of patients and was seen removing those who had died to the mortuary during the night, carrying them on his shoulders while reciting the *De profundis*. He worked without rest, not ever taking a holiday — except for five days he was in prison after a prisoners in his care at the hospital escaped, for which he was blamed. Seeing the compassion with which he cared for the sick led people to believe in God. He also served as a nurse for the San Francisco de Sales School, the College of the Sisters of Mary

Help of Christians, the Circle of Catholic Workers and the prison. He was the protective angel of all the homeless of "his Hospital".<sup>5</sup>

He had a balanced temperament and was able to negotiate conflicts with all hospital staff, including between doctors and legal managers. In community, he was faithful to everything including community appointments and Don Bosco's motto: "work and temperance." People were amazed at his ability to accomplish his work, ring the bell on time and precede other to community activities.

In 1950 he was diagnosed himself with liver cancer based upon his symptoms. He continued to work for another year, heroically accepting his suffering. He died on 15 March 1951 fully conscious. Many people of the towns and villages of Viedma and Patagones attended his funeral. His reputation for holiness spread rapidly and many visited his tomb invoking his intercession. His body was laid to rest in the Salesian chapel at Viedma, Argentina.<sup>6</sup>

He was declared venerable by decree of heroic virtue on 7 July 1997. The miracle accepted for his beatification concerned the unexpected and inexplicable healing of Carlos Alberto Bosio, a twenty-four-year-old<sup>3</sup> Salesian seminarian, from "serious infectious complications resulting from purulent appendicitis, with multiple abdominal and pleural localization; generalized sepsis and polymicrobial etiology; state of severe immune anergia."<sup>2</sup> The miracle occurred in Muniz, Buenos Aires, Argentina on April 18, 1980. The Decree on the Miracle was issued on April 24, 2001. He was beatified by His Holiness, Pope St. John Paul II on 14 April 2002 in St. Peter's Square.

The miracle accepted for his canonization was the 24 August 2016 miraculous healing of a man from "right cerebellar ischemic stroke, complicated by voluminous hemorrhagic injury," which took place in Tanauan, Batangas,<sup>3</sup> the Philippines. Following the standard review by the Medical Council (1 July 2021) and the Theological Consultors (16 December 2021), Holy Father Francis authorized the promulgation of the Super Miraculous Decree on April 9, 2022.<sup>2</sup> Blessed Artemide Zatti was canonized on October 9, 2022 by His Holiness Pope Francis. "St. Artemide Zatti was the first non-martyr Salesian coadjutor to be raised to the honors of the altars."<sup>2</sup> (Memorial - 13 November).



Altar dedicated to St. Artemides Zatti,  
Basilica Maria Auxiliadora y San Carlos  
(Buenos Aires)

*"I believed, I promised, I got healed."*

The following is the English language profile, written prior to St. Zatti's canonization, provided by Fr. Pierluigi Cameroni, SDB, Postulator General of the Salesian Congregation and for the Salesian Family and published in "Come stelle nel cielo" (Like Stars in the Heavens):<sup>7,8</sup>

ARTEMIDES ZATTI,  
SALESIAN BROTHER, BLESSED

Declared Venerable: 7 July 1997

Beatified: 14 April 2002

Liturgical celebration: 13 November

Artemides Zatti was born in Boretto (Reggio Emilia) on 12 October 1880. It did not take long for him to experience the hardships of sacrifice, so much so that by the age of nine he was already earning a living as a farmhand. Poverty forced the Zatti family to emigrate to Argentina at the beginning of 1897, where they established themselves in Bahía Blanca. Young Artemides immediately began attending the parish run by the Salesians, and found that the parish priest, Fr Carlo Cavalli, was a devout and extraordinarily kind man, and became his spiritual director. It was he who guided him to Salesian life. He was 20 years of age when he went to the aspirantate at Bernal.

While assisting a young priest who had tuberculosis, Artemides caught the disease himself. Fr Cavalli - who was following him from a distance - showed particular and fatherly interest in him and saw that he was chosen to go to the Salesian house in Viedma where the climate was more suitable and there was a missionary hospital there with a good Salesian nurse who effectively functioned as a doctor: Father Evasio Garrone. He invited Artemides to pray to Mary Help of Christians for his recovery, suggesting he make a promise: "If she cures you you will dedicate the rest of your life to the sick people here." Artemides willingly made such a promise and was mysteriously cured. Later he would say: "I believed, I promised, I was cured."

The path was now clearly laid out for him and he embarked on it enthusiastically. In all humility and docility he accepted the suffering that he would need to renounce thoughts of priesthood. It was no small thing. He professed his vows as a Salesian brother at his first profession on 11 January 1908 and his perpetual profession on 18 February 1911. Consistent with his promise to Our Lady he dedicated himself immediately and totally to the hospital, initially working in the pharmacy. However, when Fr Garrone died in 1913, responsibility for the entire hospital fell on his shoulders: he became its vice-director, administrator, expert nurse respected by everyone, sick and healthy alike. He was gradually given greater freedom of action. It was said that his main medicine was he himself: his approach, his jokes, joy, affection. He did not only want to administer medicines but to help patients to see signs of God's will in their situation, especially when death was imminent. He was not just a nurse but an educator to the faith for everyone in their time of trial and illness. A "good Samaritan" in Don Bosco's style, "sign and bearer of God's love."

His service was not limited to the hospital but extended to the rest of the city, even to the two localities situated on either banks of the Rio Negro: Viedma and Patagones. In case of necessity he would go out at any hour of the day or night, to the hovels on the outskirts, doing it all free of charge. He would pray while he was pedalling on his inseparable bicycle and the few free hours left to him he would dedicate to study and reading. Even when he went to bed he was always available for any calls. His reputation as a nurse spread throughout the South and the sick came from all of Patagonia. It was by no means rare for sick people to prefer a visit from the saintly nurse than from their doctors.

Artemides Zatti loved his patients in a truly moving way. He saw Jesus himself in them to the extent that when he asked the Sisters for clothing for a new youngster who had arrived, he used say: "Sister, do you have some clothes for a twelve-year-old Jesus?" The attention he showed them was as delicate as it could be. Some recall having seen him carry away the corpse of a patient to the mortuary on his shoulders if that person had died during the night, so that other patients would not see the deceased person: and did so while reciting the *De profundis*. Faithful to the Salesian spirit and the motto that Don Bosco left his sons as a legacy - "work and temperance" - he carried out a prodigious activity with habitual readiness of mind, heroic spirit of sacrifice and absolute detachment from any personal satisfaction, without ever allowing himself holidays or rest. Some said that the only five days rest he ever had were the ones spent in ... prison! Yes, he also experienced prison after a prisoner who was being kept at the hospital escaped, and blame for the escape fell on him. He came away absolved of his crime and his return was a triumph.

He was a man of uncomplicated human relationships, visibly sympathetic and happy to work with humble folk. But above all he was a man of God who radiated the light of his presence. A doctor at the hospital, somewhat of an unbeliever said later: "When I saw Brother Zatti I wavered in my disbelief." and another said: "I believed in God when I came to know Brother Zatti."

In 1950 the tireless nurse fell from a ladder, and it was then that the first symptoms of cancer appeared that he himself clearly diagnosed. He continued with his mission just the same for a further year until after heroically accepting his suffering, he died on 15 March 1951 fully conscious, surrounded by the affection and gratitude of the entire population.

#### PRAYER

O God, in the humble and the small you wonderfully made manifest the  
great works of your grace. Humbly we ask you:  
through the intercession of Blessed Artemides,  
grant that day by day we may see ever more clearly the face of Christ  
in our suffering brothers and sisters.  
We ask you to glorify this servant of yours and through his intercession to grant us  
the grace we now ask for ...  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Note: This biography is for all desiring to grow in holiness and follow His Holiness Pope Pius XI address to 2000 nurses assembled at Castel Gondolfo on August 27, 1935 for the II World Congress of Catholic Nurses ([www.ciciams.org](http://www.ciciams.org) / [www.nacn-usa.org](http://www.nacn-usa.org)): to first and foremost bring the Christian supernatural, Christ to our patients, bring salvation to souls. May it also help nursing students with your Nursing History course. Source: Diana L. Ruzicka (2022). *The Book of Nurse Saints*. Available at [www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka)