

In the Rule of Saint Albert, the Rule followed by Carmelites, Chapter 19 speaks of spiritual armor. Nuno gave up the armor of war and took on the spiritual armor of Carmel. In his years as a Carmelite lay brother, he dedicated his life to serving the poor, and organized a program for dispensing food to the poor and needy.

Nuno had a brilliant military career, was a member of nobility and was a friend of kings. On his deathbed he was visited by King John, who considered Brother Nuno to be his best friend. That was no wonder since it was Nuno who helped to establish the King in the Royal House of Brançaça.

As Brother Nuno was dying, he asked that the Passion from John's Gospel be read to him. As the reader spoke "Behold thy Mother!", Nuno Alvares, Constable of Portugal and Carmelite Brother, died on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1431.

Nuno's Popularity

Upon his death, Nuno was immediately considered a saint by the people who called him "O Holy Constable!" Even before his death, statues dedicated to his heroism were throughout Portugal.



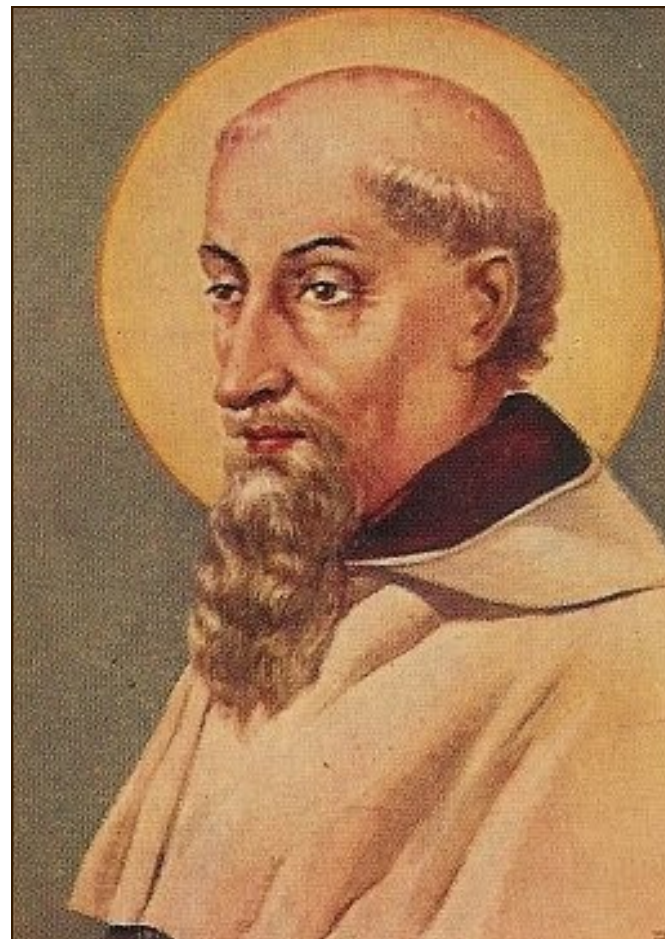
The fame of his holiness continued to grow as did the amount of time required to process a canonization. The process was initiated immediately by the Portuguese sovereigns and then by the Carmelite Order. Obstacles were many, but in 1894 the Postulator General for the Carmelites introduced the process again. In 1918 Dom Nuno was Beatified by Pope Benedict XV.

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Sources of information used for this brochure included the Vatican Archives, news notices and Carmelite informational biographies, and the Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Portugal.

Prayer to Saint Nuno of Saint Mary Álvares Pereira (adapted from the Carmelite Proper, 1993)

Lord God, you called St. Nuno of Saint Mary Álvares Pereira
to put aside his sword and follow Christ
under the patronage of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
Through his prayers may we too deny ourselves,
and devote ourselves to you with all our hearts.
We ask this through our Lord. Amen.

Carmelite Vocation Office
PO Box 3079
Middletown, NY 10940
(845) 344-2225
ocarmvoc@frontiernet.net



Saint Nuno of Saint Mary Álvares Pereira
(1360-1431)
Beatified January 23, 1918
Solemn Canonization Ceremony April 26, 2009

Nuno Álvares Pereira was born in the Village of Bomjardin near Lisbon, Portugal on June 24, 1360.

He was born the illegitimate son of Brother Alvaro Gonçalves Pereira, who was a professed member of the Order of Hospitalier Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Nuno's parents never married since his father was a professed member of a religious organization. Alvaro Gonçalves Pereira had a total of 32 illegitimate children. Nuno's grandfather was the 97th Archbishop of Braga.

About one year after his birth, Nuno's birth was legitimized by royal decree. This action enabled Nuno to receive a knightly education that was the expectation for children born of the nobility.

At 13 years of age he became page to the queen, and he was created a knight. At the insistence of his father, Nuno, then 16, was married to a rich, young widow, Doña Leonor de Alvim. The couple had three children, but two children died in early childhood. His daughter, Beatrice, married Alfonso, first Duke of Bragança, son of King João I (John).



Nuno, the Soldier

In 1383, the then king, Fernando, died without an heir. His brother, John, struggled for the throne with the King of Castile, who was married to John's sister. Nuno supported John because he did not want Portugal to be incorporated into Castile. Several of his brothers supported the King of Castile.

Throughout the war, Nuno displayed great valor. He was also acknowledged as a great military strategist. In 1384 he overcame the Castilians at the Battle of Atoleiros. As a result, at 25 years of age, he was declared Constable, or supreme commander of the Portuguese army.

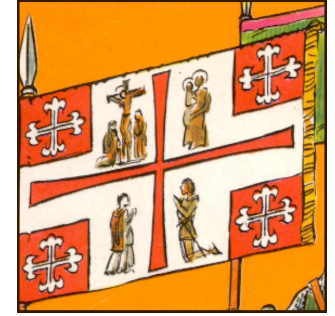
The Constable's courage and valor continued, when later in 1385, he won the battle of Aljubarrota and brought the war to an end. Dom Nuno Álvares Pereira became the National Hero of Portugal. As a member of the nobility, and as a soldier, gained great wealth during his first 60+ years. Throughout his long military career,

he put the interests of his nation above his own, and served his people in spite of any risk.

Nuno, a Man of Prayer

Throughout the years as a soldier, Nuno lived a life of deep spirituality. On the field of Battle he would kneel and pray. He encouraged his soldiers to receive the sacraments as often as they could. He discouraged them from participating in immoral activities so common among the soldiers of the day.

His life of piety included an intense devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Virgin Mary. He was totally dedicated to Marian prayer, and fasted in Mary's honor on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.



What remains of the Carmelite Church in Lisbon, Portugal

His personal banner/standard was divided into four quadrants divided by a cross. In the quadrants was a depiction of Mary standing at the foot of the cross, Mary, Mother of God, and his two knightly role models, Saint George and Saint James.

He did not keep his wealth to himself. He was generous to the poor and generous to the Church. He built multiple churches dedicated to Our Lady throughout Portugal, including the Carmelite Church and monastery in Lisbon.

After peace finally came to Portugal, Nuno gave away most of his wealth to the war veterans.

Nuno, the Carmelite

Dom Nuno's wife died in 1387, when he was 27 years old. He chose not to re-marry, and lived a celibate lifestyle. This was a radical choice, but one built on his already acknowledged spiritual path. He dedicated himself to practices of chivalry, prayer, benevolence, and living a life in the Gospels. Years later, at 63, on August 15, 1423, Nuno entered the Carmel in Lisbon, a monastery that he had constructed years before.



Painting of Nuno at St. Albert's International Center, Rome

He wanted no special treatment because of his highly respected position amongst the nobility of Portugal or his brilliant, victorious military career. He entered Carmel as a lay brother, and took the name Brother Nuno of Saint Mary. He only wanted to serve his Lord, and Mary his Patroness.