



Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang

No 1 Tingkat Besi Satu, Island Park, 11600 Penang

Saint Flena Guerra

Apostle of the Holy Spirit

Canonized on 20 October 2024 by Pope Francis.



EARLY LIFE OF SAINT ELENA GUERRA

Born into a noble family in Lucca, Italy in 1835, Guerra was well-educated and formed in her faith.

For much of her 20s, Guerra was bedridden with a serious illness, a challenge that turned out to be transformational for her as she dedicated herself to meditating on Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers.

Guerra felt the call to consecrate herself to God during a pilgrimage to Rome with her father after her recovery. She attended the third public session of Vatican I in St. Peter's Basilica in April 1870 and later met Pope Pius IX on June 23, 1870.

"At the sight of Pope Pius IX she was so moved that, upon returning to Lucca, she vowed to offer her life for the pope," according to the Vatican Dicastery for the Causes of Saints.



OBLATES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Against the wishes of her family, in the year 1882 during her mid-30s Saint Elena Guerra formed a religious community dedicated to education, which eventually became the **Oblates of the Holy Spirit**.

One of her students, St. Gemma Galgani, wrote in her autobiography about the strong spiritual impact of her education by the Oblate sisters.

Guerra personally taught Galgani French and Church history and exempted Galgani from the monthly school fee when her father fell into bankruptcy.

During her correspondence with Pope Leo XIII, Guerra also composed prayers to the Holy Spirit, including a Holy Spirit Chaplet, asking the Lord to **“send forth your spirit and renew the world.”**



Saint Elena Guerra died on **Holy Saturday on April 11, 1914**. Her tomb is located in Lucca in the Church of Sant'Agostino.

The Oblate sisters whom Guerra founded continue her mission today in Italy, Cameroon, Canada, Philippines, and Rwanda.

Saint Elena Guerra was canonized on **20th October 2024 by Pope Francis**.



Our parish is deeply privileged and profoundly honoured to be entrusted with a **First-Class Relic of Saint Elena Guerra (her bones)**. Through her witness and intercession, may the Holy Spirit inflame our hearts with love and draw us ever more deeply into the mystery of Christ.



HER LOVE FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

Saint Elena Guerra was confirmed at the age of eight. She later wrote in her diary: **“From then on, every time I went to church for the Pentecost novena, I felt like I was in heaven”**. As she grew up, and with no one to help her, she came to understand more and more that it was she who had to invoke the Holy Spirit.

At one point, inspired by the Lord, she decided to embark on an enterprise that went beyond her congregation, beyond Lucca and the whole of Italy, into the whole Church. She writes: **“We must bring all the faithful back to the knowledge and love of the Holy Spirit, of whom Christ said to us: ‘He will guide you into all truth’” (Jn 16:13).**



SAINT ELENA GUERRA, A GIFT TO THE CHURCH

It was time to act, and no one was going to stop her. She wrote to Pope Leo XIII, insisted, wrote again and even went to see him in audience. She called for strong impulses for a **"return to the Spirit"** which, in the following century, would be so vividly announced by numerous movements and groups.

Increasingly convinced that the whole Church must return to invoking the Holy Spirit, she writes to the Pope, asking him to encourage all the Church's bishops to recommend that parish priests prepare their faithful for the feast of Pentecost with a novena, possibly preached. Her wish was granted. On May 5, 1895, the Pope sent the bishops of the world a brief **Provida Matris** on devotion to the Holy Spirit, recommending the Pentecost novena to all Catholics for the return of dissidents to the Church.

"Pentecost is not over," Guerra wrote. **"In fact, it is continually going on in every time and in every place, because the Holy Spirit desired to give himself to all men and all who want him can always receive him, so we do not have to envy the apostles and the first believers; we only have to dispose ourselves like them to receive him well, and he will come to us as he did to them."**



THE HOLY SPIRIT CHAPLET BY SAINT ELENA GUERRA

Leader: O God, come to my assistance.

Response: O Lord, make haste to help me.

Leader: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

Response: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen

Each Mystery, ask for a gift of the Holy Spirit and then repeat seven times on seven beads.

"Father in the name of Jesus, send forth Your Spirit and renew the world"

Conclude with:

"O Mary, who by the work of the Holy Spirit, conceived the Saviour, pray for us."

THE SEVEN MYSTERIES INVOKING THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Come, O Spirit of Wisdom, detach us from earthly things and infuse in us a love and taste of heavenly things.
2. Come, O Spirit of Understanding, enlighten our minds with the light of Your eternal truth and the riches of holy thoughts.
3. Come, O Spirit of Counsel, make us docile to Your inspirations and guide us in the way of salvation.
4. Come, O Spirit of Fortitude, and give us strength, constancy and victory in the battle against our spiritual enemies.
5. Come, O Spirit of Knowledge, be the Master of our souls and help us to put into practice Your teachings.
6. Come, O Spirit of Piety, come to live in our hearts to possess and sanctify all of our affections.
7. Come, O Spirit of the Fear of the Lord, reign over our wills and make us always disposed to suffer every evil rather than to sin.

Invocation to Mary:

O most pure Virgin Mary, by your Immaculate Conception you were constituted by the Holy Spirit a chosen tabernacle of Divinity. Pray for us. May the Divine Paraclete come soon to renew the face of the earth. Hail Mary, full of grace..

O most pure Virgin Mary, by the Mystery of the Incarnation you were constituted by the Holy Spirit true Mother of God. Pray for us. May the Divine Paraclete come soon to renew the face of the earth. Hail Mary, full of grace..

O most pure Virgin Mary, persevering in prayer with the Apostles in the Upper Room, you were abundantly inflamed by the Holy Spirit. Pray for us. May the Divine Paraclete come soon to renew the face of the earth. Hail Mary, full of grace..

Let us pray:

Send Your Spirit, Lord, and transform us interiorly with Your gifts. Create in us a new heart that we may please You and be conformed to Your will. We ask this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

AUTHENTICATION CERTIFICATE EX OSSIBUS OF SAINT ELENA GUERRA



PAOLO VILOTTA, POSTULATOR OF THE CAUSES OF SAINTS

To all and singular who shall inspect these present letters, we make known and testify that, for the greater glory of Almighty God and the veneration of His Saints, we have donated a sacred particle from the **bones of Saint Elena Guerra**, Foundress of the Oblates of the Holy Spirit, taken from an authentic place.

This relic we have reverently placed in a round metal theca, sealed with crystal, tied with red silk thread and sealed with our seal.

In witness whereof, we have issued these present letters, strengthened with our seal.

Given at Rome, on the day of canonization, the 20th October, in the year of our Lord 2024.

Signed by **Dr Paolo Vilotta, Postulator**