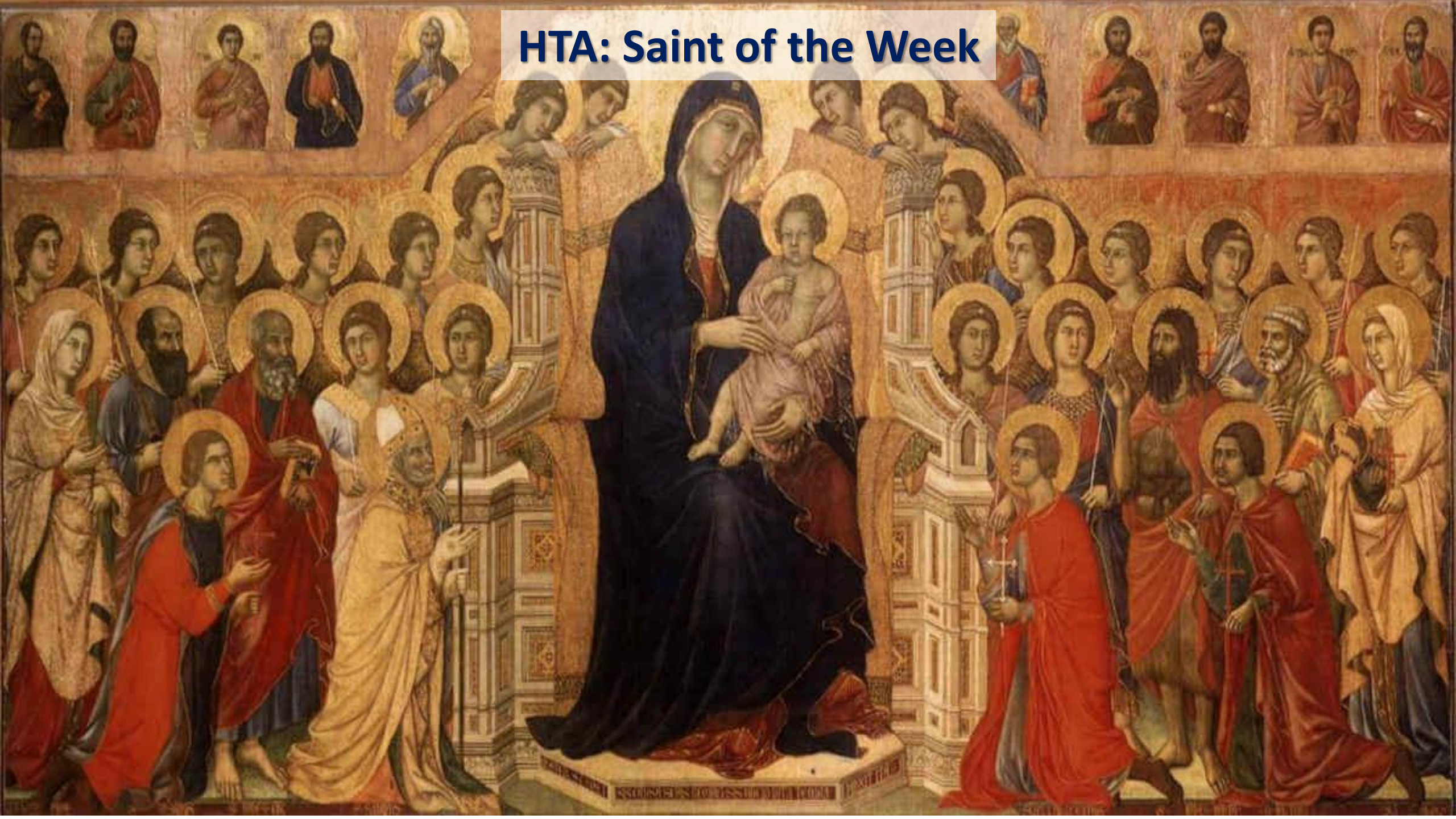


HTA: Saint of the Week





St Agnes of Assisi

Born Caterina Offreducia, Agnes was the younger sister of Saint Clare, and her first follower. When Caterina left home two weeks after Clare's departure, their family attempted to bring her back by force. They tried to drag her out of the monastery, but her body suddenly became so heavy that several knights could not budge it. Her uncle Monaldo tried to strike her but was temporarily paralyzed. The knights then left Caterina and Clare in peace. Saint Francis himself gave Clare's sister the name Agnes, because she was gentle like a young lamb.

Agnes matched her sister in devotion to prayer and in willingness to endure the strict penances that characterized the Poor Ladies' lives at San Damiano. In 1221, a group of Benedictine nuns in Monticelli near Florence asked to become Poor Ladies. Saint Clare sent Agnes to become abbess of that monastery. Agnes soon wrote a rather sad letter about how much she missed Clare and the other nuns at San Damiano. After establishing other monasteries of Poor Ladies in northern Italy, Agnes was recalled to San Damiano in 1253, as Clare lay dying.

Three months later Agnes followed Clare in death, and was canonized in 1753.