



St Zita
1218-1278
Giving Food to the Poor

Twelve Gardens of Stewardship

Garden of Relationships

St. Zita

St. Zita was like Cinderella. But instead of an evil step-mother, Zita had a bad tempered master and instead of evil step-sisters, she had to work with other servants who were mean to her.

However, Zita was patient and kind to everyone, even to the people who were cruel to her. Because she obeyed God by being kind and forgiving, people who did mean things to her ended up admiring her and even became her friends.

They also had stronger faith in God when they saw what He did for Zita!

Zita came from a poor family that had strong faith in God. At the age of 12, to help support her family, she became a maid in the Fatinelli household. The Fatinellis were a wealthy family in the Tuscan city of Lucca, Italy.

Though she was a poor servant, Zita did her job as though she were doing everything for God. She woke up extra early to spend time with God by praying. Then she would work hard all day and into the evening doing her chores. Sometimes she even finished the chores that other servants left undone. All the time Zita was cheerful and treated everyone with kindness. But the other servants were jealous of her. They thought that Zita being such a hard worker and doing her job so well made them look bad, so they were mean to Zita. They called her names and even hit her. But Zita was never mean back to them. She was gentle and kind no matter what they did. To make things even worse, Zita's master, Mr. Fatinelli, was a man who had a bad temper. When he got angry, he would yell and scare all of the servants. Zita loved helping the very poor people who lived nearby, but this made Mr. Fatinelli angry. He thought that if she spent any time with the poor that that she might not finish her chores. But Zita always did finish her chores and after a while, Mr. Fatinelli noticed this. He also noticed how kind Zita was to everyone, even when they were not kind to her.

Mr. Fatinelli decided that he would put Zita in charge of the household. Now Zita was in charge of the same servants who were so mean to her. But Zita did not want revenge. She wanted to have good relationships with her fellow servants and she treated them with respect. And if Mr. Fatinelli ever got upset at any of the servants, Zita would defend them and convince her master to not be angry. No matter what happened, Zita was kind to everyone.

Then one day, something very extraordinary happened. As usual, Zita got up extra early to go to church before starting her work for the day. She prayed and worshiped God so much that the Holy Spirit came into her, filling her with happiness. Zita was so full of joy that she lost track of time and just kept on praying. Then suddenly, she realized that she was late for her maid duties! What would she do? She was supposed to be in the kitchen baking bread and now the family wouldn't have any bread and her master would be very angry! In the mean time, some of the other servants who were still jealous of Zita noticed that she was gone and they decided to tell on her. When someone from the Fatinelli family went to the kitchen to investigate, what they saw surprised everyone. Zita was not there, but instead there were four angels! And they were baking bread! God sent angels to help Zita.

God did other miracles for Zita so that she could help the poor. One day during a famine when the townsfolk were starving, Zita gave away all of the Fatinelli family's beans, their entire supply. The family suspected that Zita did this and they wanted to scold her, so they went to the cupboard expecting to find it empty. But instead, the cupboard was completely full! God had miraculously replaced all of the beans that Zita had given away. Another miracle happened on Christmas Eve. Zita saw someone shivering in the cold at the doorway of her church and gave him a treasured family cloak. This really made her master angry! The cloak was very valuable and a prized family heirloom. While Mr. Fatinelli was having a furious fit, an elderly gentleman came to the door. He had the cloak and gave it to Mr. Fatinelli. When the townsfolk heard about this, they knew that this man was an angel.

Eventually Zita's prayers, hard work and kindness had an effect on everyone in the Fatinelli household. Everyone respected her and she had many friends. Zita's master allowed her to be generous and share the family's food with the poor. In return, God blessed the entire household.

Zita served the Fatinelli family for the rest of her life, until she died at the age of 60. At the moment of her death, many people saw a bright star appear above the attic where she slept. They knew that God was giving His sign that Zita was with Him in heaven.

