GUGLIELMA DI BOEMIA – A Saint or a Witch?
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(AI-generated translation)

Milan is more than a city of the future. It is a city of mysteries — and few are more compelling than the story of Guglielma of Bohemia.

In 1260, a woman arrived at the Abbey of Chiaravalle with a five-year-old child whose name she would never reveal. She claimed to be the daughter of the King of Bohemia. The monks received her as an oblate. The people came to love her for her works of charity, and the faithful began filling the abbey's services in ever greater numbers.

In her lifetime she was regarded as a saint. But she also preached something radical for the thirteenth century: that the Holy Spirit had become incarnate in a woman — that God, in this age, was feminine.

Her following grew. Among her closest disciples were Maifreda da Pirovano, related to the powerful Visconti family, and Andrea Saramita. When Guglielma died at the end of the 1200s, they carried her teachings forward.

It could not last. On April 10, 1300, witnesses swore they had seen Maifreda celebrate Mass and administer the consecrated host. The Inquisition moved quickly. Under torture, confessions were extracted. The sentence was swift: Andrea, Maifreda, and Guglielma's followers were condemned for heresy and burned in the public square of the Broletto on April 20, 1300.

Still not satisfied, the Inquisition exhumed Guglielma's body, condemned her posthumously as a heretic, burned her remains at the Broletto, and scattered her ashes in the Lambro River.

Saint or witch? History never decided. But she was not forgotten. Even today, a small religious community in Milan traces its roots to her followers — the Guglielmites.