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MAP CREATED BY TOM CARROLL



A map of Europe during Vermigli's life

## Introduction



When he grew up, Peter Martyr Vermigli (pronounced Vayr-MEEL-ye) wanted to be a teacher of God's Word. Finally, after many years of diligent study, he became one of the most respected leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, the only type of church in Europe at that time. He taught and preached so well that people came from other cities to hear him.

In spite of his popularity, he felt more and more uncomfortable in his position, because he was forced to do, say, and teach things that he found contrary to the Bible. At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church became increasingly hostile against those who raised questions. His only option was to leave his position, his country, and his friends.



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Peter Martyr Vermigli

## CHAPTER ONE

## A Desire to Teach the Scriptures



Peter Vermigli was born on September 8, 1499, in the city of Florence, Italy, one of the most important European centers for art, literature, and business at that time. His father, Stefano, had a profitable job making and selling shoes. Stefano and his wife, Maria, had been praying for a child for a long time. When Peter was born, Stefano was forty-three years old. Peter's birth filled his parents with

joy. They gave him the middle name Mariano, probably in honor of Mary, the mother of Jesus. After Peter, the Vermiglis had two more children—Felicitia and Antonio.

Peter's mother taught him to read and write both Italian and Latin, the language of ancient



Woodcut of sixteenth-century Florence. During Peter Vermigli's life, Florence was one of the richest and most prestigious cities in Europe and an important artistic center.

FROM THE NUREMBERG CHRONICLE, MICHEL WOLGEMUT, WILHELM PLEYDENWURFF (TEXT HARTMANN SCHEDEL), LICENSED UNDER PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.



Peter's mother taught him to read and write both Italian and Latin.

Rome that was still used in schools and churches all over Europe. When Peter grew a little older, his father sent him to a tutor who taught daily lessons to young people. Sadly, Maria died when Peter was twelve. It must have been very painful for him.

Peter was a bright student. He also enjoyed attending worship at the local church, where he assisted the priest and helped to keep the church clean. In the meantime, he tried to learn as much as possible about the Bible. His dream was to study the Scriptures and teach them to others.

Stefano was not happy with Peter's wishes. He probably wanted his son to earn a lot of money,

marry, and raise a family to continue the Vermigli name, but Peter never changed his mind. After Peter turned fifteen, his father finally gave him permission to enter a monastery in the small town of Fiesole, five miles north-east of Florence. A monastery is a place where churchmen called monks, or friars, live together to devote their life to good works and prayer.



MATTEO BIMONTE, FLICKR

The monastery of Fiesole (Badia Fiesolana), where Peter Martyr started his religious life. Some of the buildings were added later.



Peter assisted the priest and helped to keep the local church clean.

Usually when people joined a monastery, they changed their names to mark their new life. Peter changed his middle name from Mariano to Martyr, after another Peter who had died a martyr. He used this name until he died, and many of his friends simply called him Martyr, so we will use this name for the rest of the story.

Martyr continued to study hard and took full advantage of the monastery's library—the best in the territory of Florence. After two years, his superiors, impressed by his intelligence, sent him to the University of Padua in the north of Italy, one of the most ancient and prestigious schools in Europe. There, he studied for eight years, perfecting old subjects and learning new ones, including Greek and the works of early Christian writers.



PIETRO BELLINI, FLICKR

La Specula Tower over the Bacchiglione River in Padua. In Vermigli's time, it was part of a castle. It later became an astronomical observatory. Today, it is a museum.