

90
YEARS

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES ¹

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INTERVIEW WITH
SR. ELVIRA PETROZZI
A school of life

FEATURE ON MOTHER FASCE
Charity as antidote to the crisis

SAINT RITA FOUNDATION
**Little Bee yesterday,
today mum and wife**

CHARITY IN ACTION

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SUPPORT FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

In 2011, postal charges increased considerably and this has led us to ask for a small contribution to support our magazine.

To continue spreading Rita's message of hope, help sustain "From the Bees to the Roses", the voice of Saint Rita throughout the world.

By writing "subscription" as the reason, your small contribution will help us maintain contact with you.

Thank you all!

Sr. M. Giacomina Stuani,
Editor-in-Chief

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FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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Sr. Elvira Petrozzi, an example of present-day charity

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Called on to be vigilant

One morning in May, ninety years ago, the then Abbess Mother Teresa Fasce gave a young altar boy some copies of the first issue of “From the Bees to the Roses” asking him to send them out. As a sign of gratitude, she gave him a tray of pastries along with the copies. This was the beginning of the magazine of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia and the start of spreading the message of Saint Rita, which now reaches hundreds of thousands of devotees all over the world. To remind us of that morning in May 1923 and to celebrate the birthday of one of the works of St. Rita carried out by the Blessed Fasce along with our dear readers, the six issues of our bimonthly this year will carry a small logo. We Nuns are certain that we will be united with all of you in celebrating 90 years of “From the Bees to the Roses”. We hope that this magazine is also for you a familiar place for meeting and talking about her, our friend Rita, in an attempt to understand and follow Rita’s example carried forward to our days: an example of love for Christ, dialogue, peace and forgiveness that Blessed Mother Fasce lived in her life through charity or, rather, in concrete and constant charity for the good of the weakest. We can also imitate those



same values in our daily lives, with small gestures of love and deep faith that leads us to Him. Yes, I realise it’s not easy to find a friendly word for those who have just insulted us or treated us with little respect. It is not at all obvious to be able to listen to God, when our ears echo with screams, fights, stress, disappointments, dashed hopes. But it can be done.

The road starts within us and reaches others. If we love each other, we love God and in loving Him, we take care of ourselves. This is the instrument for travelling the road that links us to others and to prayer; what we invoke in our hearts and what passes through our acts of charity, day after day. Without letting ourselves be blocked by obstacles, let us dedicate ourselves body and soul to charity, which is the love of the Christian. Pope Benedict XVI says: “As Christians we can never be pessimists; we know well that along life’s journey we often encounter violence, falsehood, hate and persecution, but this does not discourage us. Above all, prayer teaches us to see the signs of God, of his presence and action” (*General Audience with the Holy Father on 12 September 2012*).

For us also to be “charity in action”, my friends, we are called on to be vigilant, like every Christian: let us be careful, listen to what surrounds us and intervene today, acting out of love so that, as the Pope reminds us, the Church “walks throughout history”. It can be done as history shows: Santa Rita, Blessed Fasce, Sr. Elvira Petrozzi (whom we interview on page 4 of this issue) and many others, religious and laity. Being vigilant, then, we can be good Christians. Mother Alessandra Macajone (1931-2005), whose ascent to heaven we celebrate on 27 January, wrote: “Each day we can be reborn, we can start over again, we can live longer, because we can and we must love more”.

Sr. M. Giacomina Stuani

She relies totally on God, is determined, energetic and enterprising. Mother Teresa Fasce? No, but she is a woman who is very similar, showing that the extraordinary works performed by the Blessed Cascia can be replicated, even today, by all of us. Her name is Sister Elvira Petrozzi, born in 1937. Like Mother Fasce, Sister Elvira brings together charity and action: thirty years ago, in Saluzzo (Cuneo), she founded the Comunità Cenacolo, an association of the faithful active in helping young drug addicts. Today, the community is scattered in 17 countries around the world, with 56 fraternities composed of lay and religious persons who work every day to save thousands of drug addicts through the Holy Rosary.

A School of Life

Sr. Elvira Petrozzi, founder of the Comunità Cenacolo, interviewed by Marta Ferraro

Like the Blessed Fasce, you also combine prayer with concrete help for young people, especially drug addicts. How do you make them understand that prayer can save them? At the beginning, along with the first collaborators, we recited the Rosary before the wake-up call, while the boys went to work after breakfast. It was a great surprise when one of them asked me to pray with us. At that point, I realised that he was not only seeking hospitality but an encounter with God. Thus, the offer of prayer has become a key part of the process of rebirth. Our days begin with recitation of the Rosary. When they enter the Community, many of them tell me they are not be-

lievers. And I tell them: "You came here to be free, not only from drugs, but from your fears and your past. I do not care if you believe or not, I care about your life".

How have "your boys" dealt with the return to the same society from which they fled, based on appearance, superficiality and consumerism? Is there not the risk of a new disappointment? What we offer young people is not a therapy or a

I do not care if you believe or not, I am interested in your life



Sr. Elvira Petrozzi.

drug, I call it "school of life". The problem is that many young people are disappointed, they feel betrayed. Drugs are the result of an escape from life, from the cross, from pain. So the real problem is not drugs, but life! Drugs don't interest me: I did not open the Community to combat drugs, but for love of life. It is always a joy to see that young people who have passed through the Community stay "linked" to this family; that they are

WHAT AUGUSTINE THINKS by Fr. Remo Piccolomini OSA

Act in faith. My brothers, you too, we beseech you that you receive not the grace of God in vain. Render fruitful our ministry: *You are God's field*; outside, accept who plants and who waters, within, who gives growth.

The turbulent have to be corrected, the faint-hearted cheered up, the weak supported; the gospel's opponents need to be refuted, its insidious enemies guarded against; the unlearned need to be taught, the indolent stirred up, the argumentative checked; the proud must be put in their place, the desperate set on their feet, those engaged in quarrels reconciled; the needy have to be helped, the oppressed to be liberated, the good to be given your backing, the bad to be tolerated; all must be loved..

In this challenging and so varied and differentiated activity in diverse matters, help us with prayer and obedience, so that we shall have the joy of not so much ruling as of being useful. (*St. Augustine, Sermon 340, 3*)

In collaboration with "A Sua Immagine", the programme hosted by Rosario Carello and broadcast by Rai Uno on Saturdays at 17.10 and Sundays at 10.30.

THE WORK OF GOD

"I have seen powerful men crying in front of her". Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, founder of the religious community of the Missionaries of Charity, was the protagonist of the double appointment of "A Sua Immagine" that Rosario Carello presented to the public on 27 October and 10 November 2012. Guest in the studio, one of the witnesses of her work, was missionary Father Sebastian, who said of the 'Mother of the Poor', "Mother Teresa wanted the people she met not to see her, but only Jesus". Friend and close associate of Mother Teresa, Father Sebastian and the Blessed founded the male branch of the Missionaries of Charity dedicated to a life of contemplation. "Prayer prepares us to do the work of God," says the Indian priest.



"A Sua Immagine" offered an exciting journey through the spirituality of Mother Teresa, using interviews and documents, most notably the handwritten letters of the Blessed shown to viewers by Father Sebastian, who approached her on 30 November 1966: "In Calcutta, I went to Mother Teresa in the locutory of the home of the nuns and told her, 'I love to help the poor and do humanitarian assistance work'. But she said: 'We do not do humanitarian assistance, but our work is always the work of God'. I did not understand the difference between God's work and humanitarian work. She explained to me that every time you do work of this kind, you do it to Jesus."



La Comunità Cenacolo.

STORY OF A RESURRECTION

Nicola had a difficult childhood, marked by suffering, by violence in a family struggling on the road to hope. Since the age of 14, left to himself, he had wandered with friends in search of happiness, but instead he came across drugs. First, joints, then heroin, the harrowing experience of addiction, loneliness, imprisonment. Years spent in the dark, thinking only of how to find money for his “doses”.

Then, the “Resurrection”. Nicola often said how it was in Sister Elvira Petrozzi’s Comunità Cenacolo that he found what he had always needed as a child: love.

Then, disease and death: fourteen years of HIV lived in enormous confidence in that God that he had known in the community as a Merciful Father. Years of suffering and hope, in the laborious but trusting search for Truth. His “difficult childhood” led him to love children; his dream was to spend himself for them, especially for the *meninos de rua* (street children, *ed.*) of Brazil. On the eve of his death, to the question, “Do you think we should pray for your healing?”, he smiled and replied: “For me, God is more important than healing. I am sure that He has prepared something great for me”. (MF)

committed to spreading the Gospel; that build Christian families. Society may still disappoint, but God does not. And to those who return to the old ways, I say: “Come back, and we’ll take the journey together”.

Your work in the Comunità Cenacolo has become a point of reference point for the youth of the world. What difficulties did you face along the way? When we started, I did not think of anything: I had so much to live that I just did not have time to think about the many difficulties that we were facing. In life I have always experienced a greater

The problem of many young people is that they feel betrayed

force than me, than us, than any difficulty: the power of faith. I don’t remember having planned anything, nor having been in a hurry to realise my plans.

You, like the Blessed of Cascia, have also realised the importance of communication, creating the quarterly

magazine “Resurrection.” What added value does this give your work? The Community has always felt its duty to bear witness. The magazine was born from the desire of young people to sow the announcement of the hope, of Resurrection. In addition to the magazine, in various parts of Italy and throughout the world, we have been invited to proclaim our resurrection through meetings, testimonies and musicals that take place in churches, in schools, on the streets, and become moments of education for life. Going on stage,

THE WORD

edited by
Fr. Vittorino Grossi osa

**Pay attention to one another,
to stimulate each other to charity and good works.**

(Heb 10:24)

TAKE THIS
AND READ IT

Man was created in a state of perennial dissatisfaction, but it should be stressed that dissatisfaction is not a negative note on his nature, it is not negativity nor the lack of something, but a "gift", a privilege, a dynamic force that pushes him to become drunk with an Infinity capable of satisfying his "insatiable satiety".

St. Augustine can be simple, straightforward, accessible to all. Through the style and language of Augustinian scholar Father Remo Piccolomini, we can all come closer to the thinking of the Bishop of Hippo and let ourselves be surprised by its modernity.

Desire for God and the meaning of life. Augustine of Hippo

Remo Piccolomini,
Città Nuova Editrice, 13 €



"What we offer young people," says Sr. Elvira, "is a school of life".

tron saint of impossible

causes? Rita is the saint of impossible causes and, in a certain sense, God called on me to live in these situations. In addition, I see in Saint Rita a great example of a woman: I have always believed in the greatness of the woman who is able to live every situation in life with dignity. No one wants to suffer, but I realised how important it is to learn to live the cross. I wanted young people not only to hear about God, but to see his paternity. I said to Him: "I welcome them, and show them the Father that You are". And I can testify that we have never been disappointed!

talking about oneself, overcoming the fear of failure is a great gift that strengthens their journey and testifies to their strength.

Your baptism name is Rita and, thanks to your concrete help for others, you received the Saint Rita International Award in 2004. Were you inspired by the pa-



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If you wish to receive the prayers of St. Rita or know more in real time about the charitable works of the St. Rita Monastery, send an e-mail with your name and surname to newsletter@santaritadacascia.org

Charity as antidote to the crisis

by Cristina Siccardi

Christian charity is the true antidote to economic crises. Where there is evangelisation, where there is the Church of Christ, even poverty is healed: these are not just words but concrete reality, because we are not talking about politics, but about Faith, that from which comes not only solidarity, but pragmatic Charity, full of love for God and, therefore, for one's neighbour. This is shown by the history of the world, this is shown by blessed Mother Teresa Fasce. The Mother wanted to build a citadel in honour of St. Rita. If Cascia today is the living



Blessed Mother M. Teresa Fasce
(1881-1947).

GRACES RECEIVED

I want to publicly thank Mother Teresa Fasce, as promised, for the help she gave me. I had a severe depression that kept me from leaving the house, so I asked her and, bit by bit, she helped me to overcome it. She also came to my aid when, at the age of 50, I lost my job and she gave me the grace to find another job until retirement. Thank you, Mother Teresa Fasce. (*Devoted*)

On 5 February 2007, I was worried about my sister, who suspected a third pregnancy. My anxiety came from the fact that when she was pregnant with her second child, the doctor had suspected that she could give birth to a Down baby, but then, thanks to grace received, all went well. (My sister) had come to the village and stayed the night with me. During the night, I had a dream: I looked into a room where there was a stout woman with short hair, like nuns wear. She was at the door saying goodbye to a woman and she said, "Do not worry you'll be fine." Then she closed the door and knelt at the foot of her bed to pray. As she prayed, the woman died and I saw her soul leave her body as if it was shaped like a host. The soul was complaining: "A little while longer!" as if it had something to do and did not want to go away without leaving a message. Then God allowed it to return to her body for a while. The woman stood up and headed for the wall where she traced a path. At that point, I woke up. In my dream, I knew that the woman's name was Teresa Fasce. I had never heard the name and I've never been (to the Sanctuary of) Saint Rita. My sister had a beautiful baby. Since then, every year, I have tried to come to thank her. (*Filomena*)

heart of spirituality and attracts millions and millions of pilgrims, if Cascia is known all over the world and has become a necessary “stop-off” for many believers, if Santa Rita is a model for many mothers and many nuns scattered everywhere, the reason lies in the initiatives undertaken and carried out by the Mother.

Construction of the Basilica of St. Rita, consecrated in 1947



Mother Fasce brought work, brought benefits

What does the resolution of economic problems have to do with this? To give glory to God and to hold high the name of Saint Rita, Mother Fasce saw to the construction of the Sanctuary, the Beehive, the Pilgrims' House-Hotel of the Roses, a seminary, a spiritual retreat and a hospital; building all of this brought the Charity of love (the only thing that stands the test of time because it is not dictated by selfish interest or pride, but comes from Faith), brought work and brought benefits. The period is the 1930s and Cascia is full of unemployed. Mother Fasce does not ask for State support, she calls on Catholics and the benefactors arrive and expand, each according to their own possibilities, knowing that, by thinking of the Lord (and not of “mama”), they will receive spiritual and material graces, and sometimes miracles. Thus the construction sites of the Citadel of Cascia open and people can work, eat and live in the presence of God and under the protection of the Saint of the Impossible.

SMILING AT LIFE

Send photos of your children to monastero@santaritadacascia.org with the consent of both parents for publication



1. Agostino Rita De Filippis, Novara - Italy
2. Alessio and Rita Preziosi, Avellino - Italy
3. Alessio Gorgoglione, San Giovanni Rotondo (FG) - Italy
4. Angela, Emma and Marco Morao, Veduggio (TV) - Italy
5. Centis Wetzel, Woippy - France
6. Cristina, Maria Grazia Pia and Chiara Vitale, Castellammare di Stabia (NA) - Italy
7. Caterina and Ferdinando Verdecchi, Usili (SS) - Italy
8. Kevin Simionov Todorov, Borgo di Trevi (PG) - Italy
9. Mikela Lioundris, Vereeniging – South Africa
10. Natalia Tassone, Revesby - Australia
11. Rita Pasquini, Tolfa (RM) - Italy
12. Valentino Sedda, Orotelli (NU) – Italy



FONDAZIONE
SANTA RITA
DA CASCIA onlus
Fiore di carità

Little Bee yesterday, today mum and wife

Ilaria Salvatori, former Little Bee of the Saint Rita Beehive

It was Mother Fasce who gave the large structure that is the Beehive for the Little Bees its proper definition: "small" like a house, intimate like a family. In fact, inside me I felt like a bee in a hive, where everyone worked together, all for one ultimate goal, to go towards the future in the best way, with wisdom, kindness, education and faith. Sooner or later, all Little Bees, girls like me who have lived in the Beehive, take flight towards the future.

Thanks to this structure and the people who live there, I had a variety of experiences; I met girls from far-off places

Dear readers of "From the Bees to the Roses", I would like to tell you about my five years in the Beehive of Saint Rita. I became a Little Bee in 1992; I had to attend the first year of high school, but in my town there was no public transport that allowed me to reach the school I had chosen. So, my parents asked the nuns if I could enter the Beehive, where, apart from anything else, there were already other girls from my town. Initially, I was not very happy because I had never been away from home alone. I was a very shy girl. I still have a vivid memory of that day in September. When I arrived at the entrance to the Beehive, the institute seemed so big! Used to a small town and a small house, I suddenly felt small and alone. But I soon realised that this was not the case, thanks to the unique welcome I received from Sr. Melania, the teachers and all those involved ...



Ilaria, a young Little Bee in 1992, has now realised her dream of having a family.

Through this experience, I was able to overcome shyness

with problems or experiences that were different from mine, but, more importantly, I was able to continue my studies. As I write, many memories come to mind and I would like to describe them all! For example, when the feast of the Mother Abbess was coming closer, months beforehand we began to prepare songs and dances to celebrate her, and we invited all the nuns of the Monastery of Saint Rita to our show. One day, two assistants, Marcellina and Laura, asked me if I wanted to take part in the show. Being so shy, I categorically said no. But, with a lot of patience, the two assistants convinced me. I still remember what they told me: "You have what it takes". Encouraged by their words, I agreed. What fun! After school, I hurried to do my homework, then, in the evening, everyone was off to the little theatre to rehearse! What laughter and emotions on the day of the show! We were really good, you could tell

Today, I am a wife and the mother of Melissa

that the nuns were also amused by our gags. Thanks to Laura and Marcella, and to this experience, I was able to overcome my shyness in part. Another recollection that comes to mind is when the feast of St. Rita was approaching, there was a special atmosphere in the air in the institute and in the Beehive in Cascia! During those days, a lady benefactress of the Beehive always came to visit us and we all welcomed her with so much pleasure and so much sympathy. Thanks for everything, to everyone; to Sister Melania, who was and is the backbone of the Beehive, a nun who lives with the Little Bees and knows their needs, which are many, their flaws and their strengths. I cannot not give a special thank

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buy a textbook for a girl in need.



provide one hour of educational support to youngsters taking after-hour schooling.



is the cost of one week's meals for girls in difficulty.



provide professional medical care to a youngster in need.



allow us to buy a complete kit of teaching materials for a girl.

The Beehive is a structure that lives solely through the donations of people who make their devotion concrete, through aid to the weakest.

A donation, however small, is enough to support the Little Bees and Wildflowers, through:

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indicating "Alveare" as the reason.

you to Saint Rita, who has helped me so much in my life. Today, I am a wife and mother of a beautiful baby girl named Melissa, and thanks to Santa Rita and the nuns, my husband and I both work at the Monastery of Saint Rita. Best wishes to all readers, with a "small pinch" from a former Little Bee. ■

Year of Faith in the city of Saint Rita

by Roger Bergonzoli

With the Apostolic Letter *Porta fidei*, the Holy Father Benedict XVI proclaimed the Year of Faith, which began on 11 October 2012 and will end on 24 November 2013, Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King. For the occasion, a calendar of events sponsored by the Augustinian Community and the Municipality of Cascia began with the testimony of Claudia Koll on 25 October. In the

of Christian charity". Without forgetting the young people who may come closer to faith through prayer and, at the same time, entering their world. Art, for example, according to Claudia Koll, can convey messages of faith, as happens in the Academy of Entertainment of the Ursuline Sisters of the Holy Family of Rome, directed by the actress, which welcomes aspiring young artists in search of an enrichment that is also spiritual.



Claudia Koll talks about her conversion in the Sala della Pace, St. Rita Sanctuary.

The Year of Faith, for understanding the basis of Christian faith

Sala della Pace packed with people, the actress talked about her experience of conversion to Catholicism: "My dad and my mum prayed a lot for my conversion. A humble, simple prayer, every night, crying," said Koll in answer to questions from the audience, "There cannot be a conversion if God does not intervene ... You cannot convert yourself, we need God," the actress told the meeting on 'Faith and Entertainment'. Koll talked about the journey from her artistic beginnings to the discovery of God, "who has shown the world a 'new' woman "who lives the present by taking the path that leads to true life, spiritual life, through the pure and noble sense

The second appointment, on 8 December, heard testimonies of faith from singer Nek and Don Davide Banzato, responsible for evangelisation of the "Nuovi Orizzonti" Community, founded by Chiara Amirante. This Year of Faith gives us all an opportunity to fully understand that the foundation of the Christian faith is "the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (*Benedict XVI, Enc. Deus Caritas Est, 25 December 2005, No. 1*). The encounter with Jesus Christ *risen*. "In our days too faith is a gift to rediscover, to cultivate and to bear witness to" because the Lord "grants each one of us to live *the beauty and joy of being Christians*" (*Benedict XVI, Homily on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, January 10, 2010*).

APPOINTMENTS

edited by Fra Paolo Zecca OSA

▶ Cascia (PG), 7 February

Fifteen Thursdays of Saint Rita

On 7 February, we will start the usual Piety practice of the Fifteen Thursdays of Santa Rita, in memory of the stigma that Saint Rita bore on her face for fifteen years. In this way we will prepare together for the feast of our Saint on 22 May. The programme includes Holy Mass at 17.00 until the end of March. From April at 18.00.

▶ Cascia (PG), 10 to 13 March

Solemn Forty Hours

This year again, starting on the fourth Sunday of Lent, we will begin the Solemn Forty Hours of Eucharistic Adoration. The Sacred Sacrament will be solemnly exposed to the prayer of the faithful in the Basilica from 8.30 to 16.30 every day from 10 until 13 March.

▶ Cascia (Perugia), 16-17 March

National Meeting of the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita

"That I know myself, to know you" : inspired by a quote from St. Augustine, this is the theme and guiding thread of the next national meeting of the PPU, the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita, to be held in Cascia on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 March 2013. The meeting is open to all: to members of the Primary Pious Union, but also to those who are not members and are simply interested in learning about this great family dedicated to Augustine and Rita, to spend a day of intense spirituality along with the many devotees of the saint of Cascia. Here is the programme:

Saturday, 16 March

8.30 - "Via della Spina" procession, leaving from the avenue of the Sanctuary

11.00 - Meeting of local PPU with the nuns (voting of the Board)

15:00 - Visit to the urn of Saint Rita of Cascia, in the Basilica of the Sanctuary

16:30 - Conference in the Sala della Pace

18.15 - Vespers in the Basilica with the nuns

21.00 - Adoration (New Members)

Sunday, 17 March

9.15 - Conference in the Sala della Pace held by Augustinian scholar Father Remo Piccolomini

11.00 - Pious Union procession

12.00 - Holy Mass in the Basilica of Saint Rita. Group photos and greetings to follow

To participate, simply book by calling the Information Office of the Basilica at tel. + 39 0743 75091 by 10 March 2013.

▶ **Italy, from 17 February to 29 September**

Regional Meetings of Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita

Members of the Primary Pious Union are part of the great family dedicated to Augustine and Rita and live the Gospel following the example of Saint Rita in an atmosphere of brotherhood and faith. For those who are already members of the PPU or those who want to know more, the regional meetings are an excellent opportunity. Here are the dates:

• **Augusta (Siracusa), Sunday 17 February.**

Sicily Regional Meeting

Infoline: P. Orazio Greco,
mobile + 39 3408570701 -

orazio.greco@alice.it;

Mario Leonardi, mobile + 39 3387502322
marioplus67@alice.it

• **Abbiategrosso (Milan), Sunday 21 April.**

Lombardy Regional Meeting

Infoline: Francesco Roccio,
mobile + 39 3393353309 -

roccio.f@alice.it

• **Reggio Calabria, Sunday 9 June.**

Calabria Regional Meeting

Infoline: Don Paolo Raimondi,
mobile + 39 3202249899 -

paolorai79@libero.it;

Carlo Cacurri, mobile + 39 3464772635
cuzzocrea.domenica@libero.it

• **Cascia (Perugia), Saturday 7 September.**

Lazio-Umbria-Campania Interregional Meeting

Infoline: Claudia Di Curzio,

mobile + 39 3479191651 - gfurlani1@alice.it

• **Trani (Barletta-Andria-Trani), Sunday 29 September.**

Puglia Regional Meeting

Infoline: Don Francesco Lanotte,

mobile 349 7563 007 - xcicciox@libero.it;
Canaletti Giovanna, tel. 0883 583 997.

Saint Rita on the 22nd of each month

the Editorial Committee

The cult of Saint Rita of Cascia has grown with great enthusiasm in Krakow. The annual ceremony of 22 May is without a doubt one of the most important religious events in the city. But the influx of devotees does not stop at the feast in her honour.

Each 22nd of the month, in fact, thousands of believers flock to Holy Mass in the Parish of Saint Catherine of Alexandria. With hearts turned towards the patroness of impossible causes, they pray fervently, seeking grace and addressing their intentions to Saint Rita. And, as happens on 22

*Pilgrims come
from all over
Poland*

RITA IS HERE TOO



Country. Poland

City. Krakow

Worth knowing. Poland is a country with a Catholic majority. The cult of Saint Rita spread slowly through the apostolate of Augustinians present in the country for centuries. In the seventeenth century, 19 monasteries linked to churches for worship and the apostolate exercised by the Augustinians were reviewed. In Krakow, in the chapel of the cloister of the convent of Saint Catherine, there is a fresco of Our Lady of Consolation (XV cent.). At the beginning of the 16th century, the figures of St. Augustine and St. Nicholas of Tolentino were added to the image, reflecting the influence that the Augustinians had acquired at that time.



The Feast of Saint Rita in the church of St. Catherine of Alexandria in Krakow (pictured above and on the opposite page).

THE OTHER FACE

POLAND AND THE HOLOCAUST

On 1 September 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland and World War II broke out, during which the Holocaust – or the extermination of between 5 and 6 million Jews and other minorities, of both genders and of all ages – was perpetrated. Polish Jews were immediately humiliated by being forced to carry the sign of the Star of David. Deported to specially created ghettos, they were led into forced labour, up to the creation of concentration and extermination camps, including Auschwitz, Birkenau and Treblinka.

In 1941, one of those deported to Auschwitz was Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe, a Polish Franciscan from Zdunska-Wola. There he was forced into the most humiliating work, such as transporting corpses to the crematorium. In the extermination camp, Kolbe offered his life as a priest in exchange for that of the father of a family, his fellow prisoner. He died reciting the “Hail Mary” on 14 August 1941. On 10 October 1982, Pope John Paul II proclaimed his holiness.

Every 22nd of the month, thousands of people flock



May, the feast of Saint Rita of Cascia, the pilgrims bring with them one or more roses, the symbol par excellence for devotees of Rita.

Here, Rita is felt to be close to the people in an extraordinary manner, so much so that pilgrims come from all over Poland. This phenomenon is also due to the parish priests who carry with them the spirituality of Saint Augustine, spreading his message and example of life lived throughout their parishes.

Because of this strong devotion, the priests reserve a special moment after the Holy Mass of the 22nd of the month for the congregation to read and share, if they wish, their prayer intentions with the community. There are so many! The abandoned, the sick, all those who, grievously affected by the vicissitudes of life, find shelter and listening from such a simple and human Saint. ■

SEND US YOUR TESTIMONY

If, like us, you love Saint Rita and want to tell us about popular devotion involving your community, describe how you celebrate the feast of the Saint or other initiatives in her honour by sending an article with photos to redazione@santaritadacascia.org

On devotion

by Fr. Giuseppe Caruso OSA

Devotion to the saints is a hallmark of our experience of faith. From an early age, we have been taught to turn with confidence to the saint whose name we bear, or to the patron of the place in which we live or, in some cases, to a saint that someone, for the most varied reasons, made us love. The saints are often thought of as family members, with whom we learn to speak in many moments and on different occasions: for many devotees, Rita is the person of confidence to turn to for help or to share the joy of thanksgiving for a problem that has been overcome. We speak with the saints, but sometimes we forget that the saints also speak with us, and dis-

PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a divine mystery is happening in our lives, mystery of transparency and communion, interpenetration, that the spirit of childhood fills with pure joy and peace. We give thanks and worship ...! That the strength of our dedication to Thee and our brothers be multiplied and help us to keep our eyes open on the miracle of Thy permanent Divine Presence in every moment of our existence, so that we may sing its beauty and grace with all of our life, Amen..

Prayer written by Mother Alessandra Macajone OSA (1931-2005), that we remember on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of her ascent to heaven on 27 January.



tracted by many things, we forget to listen to their wise words, those that give us a valuable lesson in life. What can Saint Rita teach us? What does she say to us when we start listening to her voice, sweet and strong at the same time? I think that, first of all,

The saints are often thought of as members of the family

her message is an invitation to rethink our lives in search of what, in each of them, constitutes the central point, the pivot around which everything revolves. In the life of Rita, this highlight was Christ, the crucified Christ, the living image of the love of God the Father who, for the salvation of men, sent his Son into the world, and of the love of Christ, he who, through love for each

one of us, offered his own life. Rita teaches us to believe in the love of God, to trust it always and in spite of everything and never doubt that God really loves us. Rita teaches us to imitate this love that is given to us, loving our neighbour, developing the ability to make ourselves attentive to the needs of others and to bring them, as far as possible (but a possible expanded by charity!) succour and relief. This is what Rita would say and this is what Mother Teresa Fasce learned from her. Just to listen to Rita, to be near her physically, Teresa moved from Genoa to Cascia and there, in the monastery, she began her mystical adventure: she gave herself completely to God, but this did not distance her from the needs of the people; indeed, it made her even more careful and solicitous, to the point of becoming imaginative in the exercise of a working charity that comes from contemplation and leads to contemplation. ■

THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

To you, O Lord, we humbly recommend these our dead, because as in their mortal life they were always loved by You with immense love, so now, freed from all evil, they may enter by Your grace in eternal rest. Carry them to your Paradise, where there is no more grief, nor pain, nor tears, but peace and joy with Your Son and with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen

Ada Renda (Udine - Italy)
Adele Serino (Terni - Italy)
Andrea Viero (Florence - Italy)
Angela Di Liddo (Bisceglie, BT - Italy)
Angela Vallone (Italy)
Anna Stella (Troia, FG - Italy)
Benito Franchi (Teramo - Italy)
Biagino Siddi (Cagliari - Italy)
Bruna Spaccino (Civitella dei Conti di San Venanzo, TR - Italy)
Carmine Seccia (Cerignola, FG - Italy)
Caterina Mariani Franciosini (Orvieto, TR - Italy)
Sr. Cristina Boldi OSA. (Radicondoli, SI - Italy)
Daniela Curiello (Cerignola, FG - Italy)

Emilia Di Pasquale (Cascia, PG - Italy)
Gina Paoletti (Ocosce di Cascia, PG - Italy)
Gino Billi (Rome - Italy)
Gino Campanari (Rome - Italy)
Giovanni Viero (Florence - Italy)
Lucia Narduzzo (Toronto - Canada)
Luigi Cacurri (Reggio Calabria - Italy)
Margherita Cielo (Montecchio Precalcino, VI - Italy)
Maria Grisaffi (Rome - Italy)
Sr. M. Antonietta Piaggio OSA, Monastery of St. Filippo Neri (Varese Ligure, SP - Italy)
Sr. Maria Margherita Scaroni OSA (Locarno - Switzerland)
Sr. M. Michelina Della Gatta OSA., Monastery of St. Maria di Betlem (Foligno, PG - Italy)
Maria Teresa Spallina (Bompietro, PA - Italy)
Mario Liverotti (Fermo - Italy)
Maurino Liberati (Italy)
Raffaella Sacchitella (Orta Nova, FG - Italy)
Fr. Renzo Travaglia, Sacred Heart Fathers (Congo)
Roberto D'Agostini (Fumone, FR - Italy)
Tamara Billi (Rome - Italy)
Tonino Di Porzio (Norcia, PG - Italy)
Valentina Patruno (Cerignola, FG - Italy)
Vincenzina Marino (Modena - Italy)



Not only groups but also individuals can become part of the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita of Cascia. Marta Ferraro joined the Association recently and had some questions to ask Alessandra Paoloni, national coordinator of the PPU, to know something more about why to join when you do not belong to a group.

edited by Natalino Monopoli

Join the PPU, even by yourself

Alessandra Paoloni, National PPU Coordinator,
interviewed by Marta Ferraro

Alessandra, tell us briefly what the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita is, who it is aimed at and what its main aims are. The PPU is a Public Association of the Faithful who wish to participate in the Charisma of the Order of St. Augustine, and its main purposes are imitation of the life of Saint Rita and the promotion of her devotion.

Not only prayer groups, but also individual devotees can join the PPU. What is the added value? Why should a devotee of Saint Rita join? The individual with faith who joins becomes part of the great Augustinian Family, and shares the spiritual benefits obtained by the prayers of the

Nuns and the Fathers; these spiritual benefits can also be extended to the dead through the Holy Mass that is celebrated every May 22 according to the intentions of all members and benefactors. In general, membership takes place at the national meeting of the PPU, which is held annually in Cascia, with a solemn celebration attended by all the associations, individuals and nuns who, in the person of the Mother Abbess, place a "rosette" on the new banners affiliated with the PPU.

What can individual members do in their own situation or, in any case, in the PPU? In order to imitate our Santa Rita to the best, we should undertake to deepen our Christian life, working



towards helping and supporting families in need. All we affiliates, and our families, are placed under the special protection of Saint Rita, so that she protects us from evil and strengthens our journey on an increasingly committed search for the common good.

How can you join? You can join by making a written request to the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia by letter or e-mail. Every single member will receive a personal record card with prayers to Saint Rita, the scarf of the PUP and the chance to stay in touch with the activities of the association. ■

SUBSCRIBE TO PPU

Whether you are an individual or member of a group, subscribe to PPU! In this way you will take part in our regional and national meetings, getting to know people like you devoted to the beloved St. Rita. For information, please contact the national coordinator, Alessandra Paoloni: piaunione@santaritadacascia.org

A ticket to Cascia

Bonifacio found a ticket. He paid it and the Saint “repaid” it with the joy of meeting her for the first time in Cascia, where Bonifacio had never been.

My name is Bonifacio, I'm 25 and I'm from Calabria. For years, I had dreamed of coming to Cascia, to visit the Basilica and pray before the body of Saint Rita. In October 2011, a friend told me about a pilgrimage but there were no more places ... then I prayed to Saint Rita that a place would become vacant and that's what happened. I and my mother Eleanora set out. I did not think that everything I had imagined until then about Saint Rita and her places could come true; indeed, what I experienced there was more than I could have ever imagined. The adjective that can match the life of Saint Rita and her entire existence: simplicity, that simplicity made of humble values and rich in such generosity. Who in the world today would repeat the life of dear Rita? For us, this Saint is an example of the woman, mother and saint and we should imitate her in loving, suffering, forgiving.

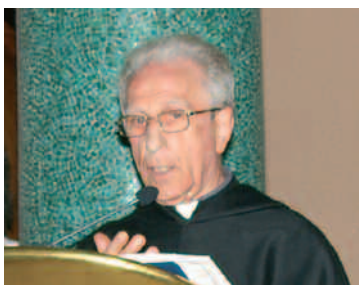
Dear Bonifacio, you are quite right! Simplicity is the feature that most excels and enriches the life of Saint Rita. In fact, in her existence, there were no extraordinary and prodigious events. Her greatness is in the sign of the first Evangelical Beatitude that Evangelist Matthew hands down to us



For years I had dreamed of coming to Cascia to pray to Saint Rita

in Chapter 5 and goes like this: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* And Saint Rita now has heaven as her eternal home.

*Father Mario De Santis OSA,
Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita*



WRITE TO FATHER MARIO

Every pilgrim who comes to the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia undertakes a journey on the right track of Rita's values. Send testimony of your pilgrimage to Fr. Mario De Santis at padrerettore@santaritadacascia.org, giving us your consent to publish so that we can reflect together on the values that Rita transmits to us.

Born on 22 September 1925 in Perugia, Sr. Alipia Vincenti rose to heaven in November last year. Entering the monastery at the age of 35, she dedicated her life as a nun to the Lord with obedience and joy, through a process of research and growth in prayer.

Sr. Alipia and the will of God

the Sisters

In November last year, our sister Sr. Alipia Vincenti joined the heavenly ranks of the nuns who have made the history of this Monastery since its

***Sr. Alipia
always said,
"let us do the
will of God"***



Sr. Alipia Vincenti.

foundation (1250) up to the present day. An immense crowd that sustains us and accompanies us constantly with prayer, without limits of time and space. Sr. Alipia entered the convent in 1960 at the age of 35, with what is today called an adult vocation. Her decision was difficult and troubled, she could not fully understand God's plan. Then, finally, her 'yes' to the call of the Lord, a 'yes' that, in the 52 years of living in the community, she always tried to renew, reinforce, strengthen with joy in prayer, in meditation, in obedience to the will of God, even when tested. For her, the union with the Groom was fundamental and nourished her in every way, especially with reading. She loved to deepen what helped her better respond to the divine call. Having chosen to be an external nun, she was assigned to the Community at the Beehive

of Saint Rita, as an assistant to the Little Bees, the young girls that we welcome in the Beehive home and that come from disadvantaged families. Sr. Alipia always took care of the essen-

***Union with the
Groom has
nourished her
in every way,
especially with
reading***

tial aspects of monastic life, even if various health problems often prevented her being present in common activities with us. She served the Sisters in what she could, despite her physical limitations. The last years of her life were spent mostly in her room. When we went to visit her, she was always happy, smiling, grateful for every little attention and kindness, and always said, "let us do the will of God", serenely accepting illness and old age. She left on tiptoe ... A few days of intense and aggressive disease. She was ready to be received in Heaven to share the glory of the Groom she had so sought and loved on earth.



Plan with God...live in the present!

Dearest friend,
we are living the Year of Faith. Do you want to make a sharp acceleration in your journey as a Christian woman? With God, plan the vocational dimension of your life, giving it a horizon of meaning and significance. If you ask yourself, "Can I be happy?", faith in Jesus will answer that you can as long as thirst is alive in you and you have the burning desire to discover what God wants to accomplish in you. He can revive your heart and give you the courage to try new paths and roads for making you confident again each day. We are waiting for you to live a few days with Friend Jesus, with we nuns, with other girls thirsty like you, in prayer, in friendship, in silence, in joy.

FEMALE VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION COURSE

19 - 24 August 2013

Monastery of Saint Rita - Cascia PG

For information: Tel 0743-76221 - e-mail: monastero@santaritadacascia.org

On 14 December 2012, Father Carlo Vincenti ascended to heaven, bringing to an end his pilgrimage on this earth. A life spent in love, in the greatness of his humility. Love for St. Augustine; love for Saint Rita; love for the Lord. The Mother Abbess, Sr. Natalina Todeschini, together with the whole community of nuns, joins the Augustinian Fathers in prayer for the memory of our dear Father Carlo.

Come, good and faithful servant...

by Fra Paolo Zecca OSA

My starting point is the e-mail that former Prior Father Angelo Lemme sent to the community of monks of Cascia, on the occasion of the funeral of Father Carlo. He quoted a phrase from the Gospel of Matthew, "Come, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord", and I also want to do so to highlight the figure of our dear beloved brother, Fr. Carlo

Vincenti, Augustinian friar of Cascia, who ended his pilgrimage on this earth on 14 December 2012. Fr. Carlo was really good and faithful, in the true sense of

For over fifty years he lived next to Santa Rita

the words, throughout his life spent in the convent. I never heard him complain about something or someone, and the few words that he occasionally uttered were always dictated by wise reflection. For over fifty years, he lived in Cascia, next to Saint Rita, whom he loved so much, and he carried out his duties with humility and simplicity. I lived with him in his last few months tried by illness, and I can testify to the dignity with which he faced this last earthly experience. Great was his suffering but greater still was his faith that helped him cope with all pain. His last few days were an ordeal for him, so much so that he could not resist uttering a lament from time to time, only to ask immediately for pardon for having complained. This was Fr. Carlo and I thank God for having given me the opportunity to have known him and I thank him for having been a living example to imitate. ■



On 13 November 2010, the President of the CEI, Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, presented Father Carlo with the recognition that the Diocese of Spoleto decided to award him for services performed for many years as parish priest of Logna and Sciedi.

Sr. Elvira Petrozzi during a meeting of the Comunità Cenacolo.



Thought

The development of peoples depends, above all, on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side.
(Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 5, 53)

Lets give
a nest to
those that
have none.

SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE HIVE OF ST. RITA WITH A DONATION

It is here that every day the nuns and educators lovingly take care of our young Bees. Girls between the ages of 6 and 18 who have a left difficult past behind them and for whom, thanks also to your help, we can ensure the warmth of a home and a better future.

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