

# FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine  
of Saint Rita of Cascia

BIMONTHLY  
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN  
MONASTERY  
OF SAINT RITA  
OF CASCIA

NO. 1 JAN-FEB 2018

CLOSE-UP

**A hospital for Valnerina**

FEATURE

**80 years of the Beehive**

LIFE FROM THE SANCTUARY

**The holy beauty of marriage**



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**W**e wish to inform all our readers that the IBAN of the Monastery has changed. For those who want to support us, here are the new bank details:

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*Executive Director*

Pasquale Grossi

*Editorial Committee*

Sr. M. Giacomina Stuani (editorial director)

Monica Guarriello (editor-in-chief)

Fr. Bernardino Pinciarioli, Fr. Giuseppe Caruso, Roger Bergonzoli

*Registered office*

Monastery of Saint Rita, viale Santa Rita 13 - 06043 Cascia (PG)

tel. + 39 0743 76221 - fax + 39 0743 76786

*Operational headquarters*

via delle Fornaci 38 - 00165 Rome

tel. + 39 06 39674099 - fax + 39 06 39637399

[www.santaritadacascia.org/dalleapiallorose](http://www.santaritadacascia.org/dalleapiallorose)

[redazione@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:redazione@santaritadacascia.org)

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*Graphic Design and Layout*

Bruno Apostoli graphic designer - [www.brunoapostoli.it](http://www.brunoapostoli.it)



MONASTERO  
SANTA RITA  
DA CASCIA  
Comunità agostiniana

[monastero@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:monastero@santaritadacascia.org)

[www.santaritadacascia.org](http://www.santaritadacascia.org)

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Look out of the window and see the ice-coloured sky, typical of the most intense winter days. It is freezing in Cascia, but this seems the best time for reflection and, although the landscape now seems still and inanimate, everything around us celebrates life. Lord, how much you have given us this past year and how much you still promise us for 2018! I wonder how last year went for you who have been reading about and following us. How are you? For us, it was really challenging, because an entire population got back on the road to start living again, after the destruction caused by the terrible earthquakes of 2016 in central Italy. This people has made it, believing in itself and entrusting itself to Saint Rita, who always puts our prayer intentions into the hands of the Lord. Our people of Cascia have made it above all because we could count on the powerful force of solidarity set in motion by all of you, devotees of Rita in Italy and every corner of the world. Now after a 2017 full of grace dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Blessed Mother Maria Teresa Fasce, this year we have another memorable anniversary to celebrate with you: the 80th anniversary of the Beehive of Saint Rita, the reception and accommodation project for girls in family difficulties which is the precious fruit of the work of our great Mother Fasce. For this reason, the central theme of our maga-

# Whole life



zine will be dedicated to the history and topicality of the charity project. In addition, shows, seminars and liturgical moments throughout the year will help us pay tribute to the special anniversary and the goal achieved thanks to those who support the Beehive (which exists only thanks to the generosity of benefactors). But this is not all that's new because, starting with this issue, From the Bees to the Roses will host a special "Life from the Sanctuary" section curated by our Father Bernardino Pinciaroli, Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita, who will open a window on testimonies of life brought to the Sanctuary by numerous pilgrims. So, turn to pages 24 and 25 of this issue, to find out how to see your history of pilgrimage here at the Sanctuary of Cascia published. And, while it is true

that this is the season when nature slumbers, it is certain that life never ceases to gravitate around the beloved Saint Rita, sister and friend for many of us. The message of Saint Rita also guides the path of the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation, which we wanted so much six years ago to make our interventions as Augustinian nuns more effective and efficient for the weakest and most in need. The path of the Foundation is allowing us to accept new challenges which we will recount from time to time.

It will be this, and much more, it will be the whole life we are living and which we hope that you too will participate in, that we will tell you about and that will see us united, hand in hand. Stay with us. Come and visit us. Let's write. Let's speak. Let's talk about ourselves. And let's rejoice together in this life.

# A hospital for Valnerina

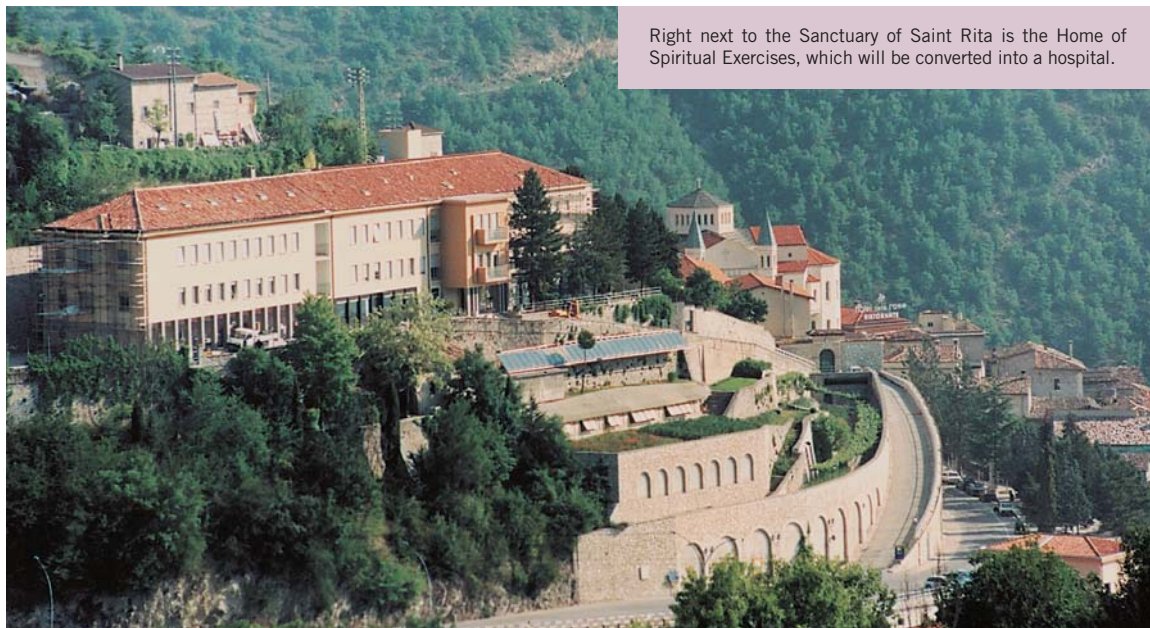
## The Monastery of Saint Rita project to protect the right to health is underway

by Monica Guarriello

“Can you imagine? The life story of these people changes. Ours is the most beautiful work that exists”. Mario De Carolis, 50 years old in August, is currently the mayor of Cascia but he speaks of his job as a physiotherapist as if it were the added value to his existence. I'm speaking with him because the nuns of the Monastery of Saint Rita have started a great social project, which involves the whole town and much more.

The project is called “A hospital for Valnerina” and involves converting the structure of the nuns known as the “Saint Rita” Home of Spiritual Exercises into a hospital. “Because of the earthquakes of 2016,” explains the mayor, “the inhabitants of Valnerina have lost the local reference centre for receiving medical care and assistance

and now they are forced to travel miles and miles of mountain roads to reach the nearest hospital.” The aim of the project is therefore to restore adequate health care to Cascia and to the whole of Valnerina. Specifically, it will be a specialised centre with 20 beds for the rehabilitation of people, generally from 18 years upwards, who are suffering from neurodegenerative diseases (from multiple sclerosis to strokes), orthopaedic problems (such as accident traumas) and rheumatic diseases (which may involve joints, bones, muscles, but also organs and tissues). In addition, the centre will have a pool of 20 more beds dedicated to all those elderly who need residential healthcare which, in practice, includes all cases of people who are discharged from hospital but are not ready, in terms of skill and autonomy, to return home be-



Right next to the Sanctuary of Saint Rita is the Home of Spiritual Exercises, which will be converted into a hospital.

## SUPPORT THE NEW HOSPITAL

**Help us to give back a hospital** to the town of Cascia and the entire Valnerina. Today, the nearest hospital is about an hour away, along narrow roads and mountain bends.

The **nuns of the Monastery of Saint Rita** have placed a building at the disposal of the local area, but we have to convert it into the hospital, with specific renovations and equipment. The project is big and important, but with the help of everyone, even the smallest, we can do it.

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specifying “Nuovo Ospedale” (New Hospital) as the reason.

cause they need a period of rehabilitation.

Not least, making sure of a hospital in Valnerina also means bringing back some of the jobs lost in the area as a result of the earthquakes. In fact, it is estimated that between 35 and 40 professional figures - including doctors, nurses, social and health workers, physiotherapists and speech therapists - will be required for the new hospital, and spin-off activities will be generated.

“The commitment that the nuns have undertaken for the common good” says Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis, Mother Prioress of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia “is to offer a suitable structure for accommodating the new hospital. Once the “Home for Spiritual Exercise” conversion project has been completed, the hospital will be managed by the USL Umbria 2 health authority, and we have already signed the agreement at the end of 2017, so that the public body can continue to guarantee the right to health throughout the area.”

According to the mayor, “the new hospital will then allow us to restore the centre dedicated to patients affected by multiple sclerosis, which was a pole of inter-regional excellence in Cascia before the earthquake rendered the city's hospital structure unusable. This specificity was a feather in the cap of Cascia, so much so that patients from all over Italy came here

to receive treatment”. Patients who often, just because there is Saint Rita, decide to come and cure themselves in the village of hope. “You have to consider that when patients arrive,” continues De Carolis, “they are often in a very serious condition and our task is, first of all, to understand the person. Sometimes you have to be strict, sometimes not ... you have to be careful of the most fragile souls. And here the spiritual assistance guaranteed by the Augustinian fathers has always been precious. And then when they go away, and maybe they do so standing up or helping themselves with crutches ... knowing that they have been helped to improve their lives is also a gift for us.” A gift for those who do it, but above all for those who receive it. A gift that the Augustinian Family and the Municipality of Cascia want to continue to provide to those in need. But to do so, the nuns have made a commitment to find the funds necessary to realise their project. Meanwhile, the start of work was made possible at the beginning of the year through an important first loan obtained thanks to the Francesca Rava Foundation - NPH Italia Onlus for supporting the first four modules, namely: installation of a bed/stretchers lift, an X-ray room, agnostic room (RX), a room for occupational therapy (TO) and a gym for recovery activities and functional rehabilitation.

# Italian President visits Cascia: diary of a historic day

by Alessia Nicoletti

**N**ovember 8, 2017 was a historic day for Cascia, a day that no one will ever forget - the day that the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella, visited the town and the Basilica of Saint Rita. For the first time, Cascia welcomed a Head of State and the Sanctuary had the honour of hosting such a special devotee of

cascia" all-inclusive institute Rosella Tonti. It started at the primary and schools in the new educational complex made possible due to the Francesca Rava Foundation and the donations of many, given the unavailability of

to what they were before, that Cascia will resume his life as it has always been, loved by the whole of all Italy". At the end of the visit, the students gave the President the banner of Saint Rita made by the children of the

## *The President of the Republic visited the Basilica of Saint Rita*

Rita. The visit of President Mattarella was welcomed by mayor Mario De Carolis, extraordinary commissioner for reconstruction Paola De Micheli, head of the Department of Civil Protection Angelo Borrelli, President of the Umbria Region Catiuscia Marini, President of the Province of Perugia Nando Mismetti and head of the "Beato Simone Fidati di Cas-



Mattarella visits the Monastery of Saint Rita, accompanied by Rector Fr. Bernardino and Prioress Sr. Maria Rosa.

the old buildings. "You are the vanguard of the reconstruction and normality of Cascia," President Mattarella told students, "and this is an important task, it is important that the signal you give to all those coming to the town that normality is possible, that things will go back

primary school, the same banner that is carried during the historical procession of the Banner which has taken place every year since 1731 on the Sunday before 22 May to thank the saint for her protection from earthquakes. The visit to the Sanctuary of Saint Rita con-

tinued among the young people of Cascia - those from the nursery and secondary schools, the Little Bees of the Beehive and the reception home of the Monastery for young people in difficulty, where many citizens and faithful were waiting for him. On the avenue of the Basilica, the President was welcomed by the Rector, Father Bernardino Pinciaroli, by the Prior of the Augustinian Province of Italy, Father Luciano De Michieli, and by the Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, Renato Boccardo. The visit then ended inside the Basilica, where the President received a special gift from Sara, one of the girls of the Beehive, who gave him a bee of cotton and lace, one of the "Made for Love" solidarity craft products handmade by the Little Bees of the Beehive. "I showed the President the Basilica in its reality," the Rector recalls, "in particular the reconstruction that has taken place with a certain speed, thanks to the funding of MSC Crociere, which allowed us to reopen the church completely from the end of April. I pointed out that instead the Monastery has still to be put right and that only half of it

can be visited. In the Basilica the President met all of us Augustinians and stopped alone to pray before the body of Saint Rita, and then signed and wrote a message

gin soon and that everything can return to its place." "What is important," said Father Luciano De Michieli, Prior Provincial of the Augustinians of Italy, "is to see



The Italian President in reflection before the urn of the saint.

on the Sanctuary's visitor's book. In the Monastery, in addition to meeting Prioress Mother Maria Rosa Bernardinis and the nuns of the cloister, I showed the President the ancient wooden chest that initially housed the body of Saint Rita, which, due to the partial closure of the Monastery, is placed in a corner and I expressed the hope that restoration work can be

that we are receiving attention. The President represents all Italians and so it is great that he can come to be aware of the situation and meet people. It is a pleasure that the Head of State is also coming to places like Cascia, a small periphery in the heart of a great valley, which nevertheless attracts a multitude of faithful from all over the world." ■

## IN A WORD

edited by  
Fr. Vittorino Grossi OSA

**If you, Lord, cut through the skies and came down,  
the mountains would quake**

*Isaiah 63: 19*

This prayer of the prophet Isaiah has been the constant prayer of the Jewish people throughout the centuries. They asked the Lord to send the Messiah for a more human world. Today, the prophet's prayer has become confident hope that the love of the Son of God will reach all peoples to make them feel brothers of the same family. It is our prayer.



**P**armacists, volunteers, foundations and donors united in a great gesture of love which held out its hand to the Beehive of Saint Rita. Over one hundred and seventy packs, including medicines, hygiene and medical products, baby food and baby products, is the fruitful collection in favour of the welcoming house of the Monastery of Saint Rita in Cascia, which has offered a family for children in difficult situations for eighty years. This was all part of a true solidarity operation that took place on the occasion of the “In the pharmacy for children” initiative, on November 20, 2017, World Day for the Rights of Children and Adolescents.

The fifth edition of project - an important example of practical help which the Beehive was able to benefit from thanks to the request made by the Saint Rita of Cascia Onlus Foundation - was launched throughout Italy by the Francesca Rava Foundation - NPH Italia Onlus: this is an entity reality that had already established a bond with the areas of Cascia and surroundings in the post-earthquake period. Thanks to the commitment of the Foundation itself and the donations of many, both Cascia and Norcia have seen the construction of new schools in earthquake-proof and safe structures, allowing students to attend lessons while awaiting reconstruction. The relationship between the Foundation and the towns of Cascia and Norcia has been strengthened and continues to generate good results, again serving children. In fact, the more than 1400 participating pharmacies include the Saint Rita Pharmacy run by Dr. Morena Antonini in Cascia and the San Benedetto Pharmacy run by

# In the pharmacy for children

## Concrete help for the Beehive, thanks to the Francesca Rava Foundation

by Alessia Nicoletti





In Cascia, the Saint Rita Pharmacy run by Dr. Morena Antonini (photo), and the St. Benedict Pharmacy run by Dr. Gianfranco Rossi in Norcia have generously offered their support, collecting pharmaceutical products for the Beehive.

Dr. Gianfranco Rossi, both of which wanted to be an active part of this network of love and both have collected products for the Beehive. A great team has thus moved into action for an equally large social activity, from the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation to the Rava Foundation, from pharmacies to customers, through volunteers who have collected products and emphasising the importance of donating. Marcella Pie Rantoni and Marisa Fiorucci, the volunteers made available by the Beehive for Cascia, were enthusiastic, along with all the staff of the pharmacy, which in turn also gave donors gadgets and colours for children. "The Beehive in the heart of Cascia," stressed Marcella, explaining the motivation that led her to dedicate herself to the collection, "and this initiative is yet another demonstration". Dr. Antonini said he was "very happy to have joined and my customers were willing to participate, especially since



Some volunteers (also in the photo on page 8) at work for the "In the pharmacy for children" campaign and for the Beehive of Saint Rita.

donations were given to the charitable work of the Monastery." Director Violanda of the Beehive expressed great recognition to the pharmacists thanks to the numerous benefactors of the Beehive all over the world.

# Solidarity is also born in the workplace

Testimony of Mariella Antona, supporter of the Beehive of Saint Rita

*Every little gesture can make the lives of many people better. Also at work. It all began in 2016, when the "Giacomo Leopardi" comprehensive school in Licata and the Beehive of Saint Rita joined in a twinning of friendship and hope. The idea behind construction of a solid link between the young people of the two entities came to Mariella Antona, a teacher at the Sicilian school, who has long supported the welcoming house of the Augustinian nuns of Cascia with dedication ...*

**M**y name is Mariella and I want to tell you how, through the testimony of life, the workplace can become a privileged place for proclaiming Christ.

I am a teacher in the kindergarten of the "Giacomo Leopardi" comprehensive school in Licata (Agrigento) and head of the Saint Rita Pious Union in my town. It all started in 2016, during the Christmas season. Together with a group of my colleagues, we decide to make a gesture of solidarity with our students on the occasion of the religious event. Without hesitation, I pro-

posed helping the Little Bees and the Wildflowers at the Beehive of Saint Rita of Cascia which had been hit by the earthquake a few months earlier. My proposal was shared by everyone and, within a few days, the twinning project was born to promote solidarity, friendship, knowledge of the territory of belonging and cultural ex-

change between the pupils of two schools in Licata and Cascia. All this was to be realised with activities for telling each other about themselves, such as sharing drawings, photos and letters. The director of the Beehive, Violanda Lleshaj, also supported the project enthusiastically. In this way, correspondence between the chil-



The school of Licata gives a plaque to the director of the Beehive in memory of the solidarity twinning.

*In this way,  
correspondence  
between the  
children started*

dren started, in a sort of mutual empathy and sympathy which has helped them overcome stereotypes and stimulated them to widen the boundaries of the territory of belonging.



Mariella (centre) and some members of the Licata delegations, together with the Prioress (left) and Sister Silvia.

## *The long-awaited day finally arrives: we leave for Cascia*

The arrival in Licata, in April, of Saint Rita's nun's habit belt (the relic that travels round Italy through the association of the Saint Rita of Cascia Primary Pious Union, ed.), also became an opportunity to make it known to the community of Licata how the school can become a privileged place for promoting the culture of solidarity. Finally, when we received the invitation from the Mother Prioress of the Monastery of Saint Rita, Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis, to participate in the "Open Doors at the Beehive" event (9 and 10 September 2017 at the Beehive of Saint Rita, ed.),

a real competition was triggered within the classes involved in the project to convince parents to accompany them to Cascia and, with great joy, I managed to bring together a small group of children, two of whom were in need of special attention. The group was also joined by the health professional who, during the school year, takes care of the aforementioned children: this was a sign that the project had borne fruit. The long awaited day finally arrived and, together, we left for Cascia.

In an affectionate atmosphere of true hospitality, our children and the Little

Bees of the Beehive gave life to a verbal and playful exchange that only young people can create.

At the end of the project, in verifying the goals, what is most evident is that geographical distances can be overcome, sharing a motivated path in this direction. As an educator, I managed to seal this friendship. As a believer, I sought to concretise the warning of the Second Vatican Council, when it urged Christians to rejoice following the example of Christ, explicating him in earthly activities, unifying human efforts, in this case, professional, in a single synthesis together in the faith to the glory of God. All this to allow others to see Jesus at work in this, in my opinion, powerful form of testimonies that attracts others. ■

# FEST OF SAINT RITA 2018

WE AWAIT YOU  
AT THE SANCTUARY  
OF CASCIA,  
FROM MAY 20  
TO 22

## MAY 20

### Hall of Peace

**21:00 - Presentation of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2018**, conferred on the "women of Rita": those women whose life is close in concrete experience to that of the saint of Cascia.

## MAY 21

### Basilica of Saint Rita

**16:30 - Solemn Eucharistic Concelebration of the Augustinian Family**, presided over by Father Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Augustinian Order.

**17:30 - Conferral of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2018.** Father Moral hands over the parchment symbol of the prestigious award to the chosen women of Rita.

**18:30 - Solemn Celebration of the Transit of Saint Rita.**

**Basilica of Saint Rita at 20:45 - Musical entertainment** with the "Giovanni e Donato da Cascia" band, the mediaeval Flag-wavers and Drummers of Cascia, who will parade on the churchyard framed by lights lit throughout the town.

**21:30 - Arrival of the Torch of Peace**, symbol of the 60th **Twinning of Faith**

and Peace that this year unites Cascia and Kosice (Slovakia) in the name of Saint Rita.

## MAY 22, SOLEMNITY OF SAINT RITA OF CASCIA

### Hall of Peace

**5:00 - Morning Holy Mass.** Masses will also be celebrated at 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 and 9:00.

### Churchyard of the Basilica of Saint Rita

**at 10:00 - Arrival of the Historical Parade** in fifteenth-century costumes and the **Procession** bearing the statue of Saint Rita. Leaving at 8:30 from Roccaporena, Rita's hometown, the two parades come together at the feet of Cascia's feet (9:30 am). **11:00 - Supplication to Saint Rita** followed by the **Solemn Pontifical**. In closure, the traditional ritual of the **Blessing of the Roses** will take place at 12:30.

### Basilica of Saint Rita

**18:00 - Eucharistic Concelebration for the Benefactors of the Sanctuary**, presided over by the Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita, Fr. Bernardino Pinciarioli, and animated by the choir of the Augustinian nuns.

# Mother Teresa Fasce, all courage and affection

by Msgr. Giovanni Scanavino, OSA

**S**he had decided to come to Cascia in order to imitate Saint Rita. It was not easy to get there. Her own brothers thought that "one monastery is as good as another", so there was no need to do so many miles to arrive at Cascia which was lost in the mountains: Genoa or Savona could have done. But Marietta's thoughts were specifically on Cascia, where Rita had become a saint. It was a

**She had decided to come to Cascia in order to imitate Saint Rita**

question of holiness and imitation, and the model was right in Cascia.

The beginnings were not easy and the dream was far from reality. The community had to be rebuilt, the heart redone and it was the most difficult of undertakings. Then came the war and everything became complicated. It was no longer enough just to pray; it was necessary to help many people, to write to those who left for the front and to comfort those who remained. Here, faith and truth had to become industrious through charity (cf. Gal 5: 6).

Imitating Rita also concretely concerned her motherhood. However, in a cloistered monastery how was it possible to welcome so many children, orphans of war, in need of af-

troubles would put paid to peace.

Here, however, Mother Teresa has clear ideas: it is the Gospel that reassures her and gives her the necessary courage. It is also the occa-



Mother Fasce among the Little Bees of Saint Rita

fection and of everything? Now it was them who were the most immediate "neighbours" in Cascia. You not only had to have the courage to break secular schemes, you had to obtain the approval of the competent authority, otherwise internal

**It was a question of imitation, and the model was right in Cascia**

## THE BEEHIVE TODAY

assures its young guests (Little Bees and Wildflowers) all that is necessary to make them grow serenely, ensuring their education, health and psychological assistance, adequate nourishment and a home full of love.

## MUSIC THERAPY FOR THE YOUNGEST

Two years ago, we undertook a new music therapy project in the Beehive for all our guests. The idea of proposing a path like this stems from our need to experiment with alternative techniques that promote cognitive and affective development, and therefore communication, relationship and learning. We found great enthusiasm among participants and, after the year of stoppage due to the earthquake, we started up again with a new structured project led by music therapist Maria Delle Grotti. This year's beneficiaries are the 22 Wildflower children, aged 7 to 12, who participate in the after-school project in the Beehive home. Using music therapy, we aim to develop the potential functions of the children, so that they can better achieve intra and interpersonal integration and, consequently, improve the quality of life. In other words, the purpose is to help the children find a voice to express their feelings and emotions, thus maturing other aspects, such as self-esteem, motivation and relationships that they establish with peers or with caregivers. The course is semi-structured precisely to give children the opportunity to create, propose and strengthen existing relationships or experiment with new ones. The music therapy laboratory is held every Wednesday and the children have been divided into two groups to facilitate communication. Each group works for about an hour. The activities proposed include musical movement games, guided listening, singing, instrument construction, musical practice with conventional and non-conventional instruments and dancing. At the end of the course, the children will have a space where they can share their experience with music therapy with their families.

*(Violanda Lleshaj, director of the Beehive of Saint Rita)*



## FEATURE: 80 YEARS OF THE BEEHIVE



sion for a new creative fantasy that gives birth to a new figure of the nun inside the Monastery: that external figure that can go out without violating enclosure and in this way can help new mouths to feed.

This is how the new Beehive came into being, built in Ritian

the flesh". But this time it was just exaggerated. Only when it was seen that some Little Bees (as the nuns called the girls in need, ed.) had become so fond of the monastery and the community, to the point of asking to "pass to the other side of the barricade" and become nuns and

girls must not be a stopgap; they had to be welcomed with the affection of a mother, as Saint Rita would have done. Thus, the affective aspect, patience and joy grew in the whole community and the

Photo from the historical archive of the Beehive of Saint Rita.



## Cascia could not turn its back on the experience of Rita's motherhood

memory, offering affection and sustenance, seasoned with much faith and charity. Even this beginning was not easy. Not all the nuns accepted this innovation.

It's nice to deal with "dolls in

then assistants of the Little Bees, only then did the majority agree, while praying fervently that the war would end soon.

Mother Teresa showed herself to be decided. The welcoming of the

enterprise became a real school of love, and also a beautiful initiation into family life and the religious vocation itself.

Mother Teresa gave the example, as mother and teacher. Other sisters practically graduated in the exercise of patience and in transmission of love: they became true assistants in preparing the Little

## The flowers and the bees

### WHO I AM...

My name is Michael, I am 10 years old and I live in Cascia. I'm in primary 5 and I'm part of the Wildflower project. I attend the Beehive 5 days a week, from 12:30 to 18:00, when mum finishes work and picks me up.



**Michael,**  
Wildflower

### WHAT I LIKE MOST ABOUT THE BEEHIVE

I feel good here. I have made good friends, I find myself with companions and, with the help of a very good teacher, I do my homework. After studying, there you can play, even if sometimes I'd

rather gain an advantage with homework. My favourite subject is mathematics and I'd like to be an engineer when I grow up. I also like the food in the Beehive and I'm happy when there are chips, toasted snacks and frankfurters on the menu. Here there's everything, a bit like at my aunt's house. You eat, study and have fun. I was lucky to find the place, otherwise I would have stayed alone at home.



**Valeriia,**  
Little Bee

### WHO I AM...

My name is Valeriia, I'm 18 and I'm Ukrainian. I am a Little Bee of the Beehive. My family lives in a small village in the province of Macerata. I attend the scientific high school in Cascia; it is a school that directs me towards a better future.

### WHAT I LIKE MOST ABOUT THE BEEHIVE

We are much more than a family and I will explain why. A family made up of parents and children is often not united: parents are at work and children are at school or out with friends. A family does not always have the opportunity to perform various activities like sports or other things. We are much more than a family because we have the opportunity to meet at any time to talk or to discuss; we have the opportunity to laugh, joke and sometimes even to fight, but all this we need to be able to live in a community. This is what I like.

Bees for life, work and fatigue.

Through faith and prayer, they made their assistance beautiful, just as St. Augustine says in the Rule (VIII), "as lovers of spiritual beauty" that made them capable

of boundless love. Born out of necessity (in 1938, ed.), the Beehive became a true maternal experience for all the sisters who followed the example of Mother Teresa. They began to feel more

women and richer inwardly.

Cascia could not turn its back on the experience of Rita's motherhood, and for this reason Mother Teresa realised that the Beehive was a providential occasion.

# APPOINTMENTS

## **Cascia (PG), from February 8 to May 17 Fifteen Thursdays of Saint Rita**

Every Thursday, starting from February 8, we meet in the Basilica of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita to celebrate the Fifteen Thursdays that precede May 22, the Feast of Saint Rita. The celebrations call for the Morning Holy Masses at 7:30, 10:30 and 12:00. In the afternoon, the Solemn Celebration will take place at 17:00 (from February to March) and at 19:00 pm (from April to May). At the end of each Holy Mass, there will be the transfer to the urn to pray before the body of the saint.

Those who cannot be present can follow the afternoon ceremony in live streaming on the YouTube channel of Augustinian Saint Rita of Cascia: [www.youtube.com/monasterosantarita](http://www.youtube.com/monasterosantarita)

## **Cascia (PG), from February 13 to 16 Triduum and Feast of Blessed Simon of Cascia**

Every day from February 13 to 15, at 16:30, we await you in the Basilica of Saint Rita for the Triduum to prepare for the celebration of Blessed Simon of Cascia, a celebration that will be celebrated on February 16 at 16:30.

## **Cascia (Perugia), from March 28 to 31 Conference of the Friends of Saint Augustine**

In Holy Week, the "Friends of Saint Augustine" association awaits you at the Hotel delle Rose in Cascia, for the Conference dedicated to those who wish to deepen Augustinian spirituality. Everyone can participate. Info and reservations: Antonio Franceschi, mob. 3358079828 - email [info@amicidisan-tagostino.com](mailto:info@amicidisan-tagostino.com)

## **Cascia (Perugia), March 21 and 22 Meeting of Augustinian Laity**

On March 21 and 22, appointment at Ho-

tel delle Rose in Cascia for all those who wish to know and live the Augustine life.

## **Cascia (PG), from March 25 to April 1 Easter events**

The Basilica of Saint Rita prepares to celebrate Easter for all pilgrims arriving in Cascia:

### *Palm Sunday, March 25*

7:30, 9:30, 12:00 and 16:30: Holy Masses.

10:30: Solemn Mass with Procession of the Palms (people meet at 10:15 at the beginning of Avenue of the Sanctuary).

### *Holy Tuesday, March 27*

7:30, 10:30, 12:00 and 18:00: Holy Masses (Today we anticipate the 8th Thursday of Saint Rita).

### *Holy Wednesday, March 28*

7:30, 10:30 and 12:00: Holy Masses. 18:00: Chrismal Celebration in the Cathedral of Spoleto.

### *Holy Thursday, March 29*

18:00: Solemn Eucharistic Concelebration "Lord's Supper". 21:00: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (until 24:00).

### *Good Friday, March 30*

17:00: Solemn Celebration of the Adoration of the Cross. 21:00: Town procession of the Dead Christ.

### *Holy Saturday, March 31*

21:30: Easter Vigil.

### *Resurrection Sunday, April 1*

7:30, 9:30, 10:30, 12:00, 16:00 and 18:00: Holy Easter Masses.

17:30: Second Vespers.

18:00: Solemn Mass animated by the "Saint Rita" Choir of Cascia.



by Marta Ferraro

# An act of love a month

## The PPU of Reggio Calabria recounted

In July 2017, the Pious Primary Union association of Reggio Calabria celebrated its ten years of affiliation to the prayer group dedicated to Saint Rita. Many years had passed since Carlo, founder and head of the PPU of Reggio Calabria, found a number of our From the Bees to the Roses magazine by chance. That day, like every day, Carlo had accompanied his children to school and had gone to open the family shop, but something told him to shut everything up and go home. Not being able to resist that urge, he closed the shop and headed back home, but on foot, completely contrary

to his normal habits. On the way home, Carlo almost tripped over our magazine and that number suggested beginning the practice of the Fifteen Thursdays of Saint Rita: the weekly meditations that prepare for the festivities of May 22. Carlo is not a stranger to Cascia, because his family has al-

ways been devoted to the saint of roses and, as a result, he also received his First Communion in the Monastery of Saint Rita as a child. And so, dazed by this unexpected encounter, once home he called Sister Imelde in Cascia to try to understand the reason for these coincidences. Sister Imelde said: "Saint Rita

***Sister Imelde said: "Saint Rita will certainly want something from you"***



Carlo together with Fr. Ludovico Centra.



The PPU group of Reggio Calabria.

will certainly want something from you." Only through time and praying, Carlo came to the conclusion that Saint Rita wanted him to found the PPU in his town. Initially fifteen members joined the association, today they are about fifty. Ten years is a considerable achievement. After ten years of attendance and prayers, we now have a strong and stable group, which may suggest fulfilling bolder challenges. The most

convinced about this is Carlo: "After ten years, I believe we are ready, together as a group, to begin an act of love and charity a month. These ten years have served us to get to know each other and understand each other, essential moments in order to be able to then take steps forward, always guided by the Word of the Lord. I think that our next step forward on the path of charity will be the organisation of a monthly solidarity spending to help the needy". During these ten years of life, the PPU of

Reggio Calabria has met every second or third Sunday of the month for moments of prayer and sharing. For the important anniversary, it had the privilege of celebrating with the presence of the relic of Saint Rita, the belt of the saint exposed in the new reliquary. There have been many events of commemoration, prayer and celebration, but certainly the most touching moments were those in which the relic paid visit to the forgotten.

Besides in the parish for community prayer, the relic has, in fact, been taken to a prison, where the prisoners were able to live moments of prayer and "repentance for what they had done," recalls Carlo, and also to the town hospital where terminally ill are hospitalised. The experience of the PUP of Reggio Calabria is the portrait of a personal devotion that has been enriched by opening up to the other and creating an opportunity of growth for the community. ■

TAKE PART  
IN PPU  
MEETINGS

### PPU GENERAL MEETING: MARCH 17 AND 18, 2018

The next General Meeting in Cascia will be dedicated to the theme "Love with the measure of Divine Love: Mother Teresa Fasce", on the special occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Beehive of Saint Rita. Info: Information Office of the Sanctuary,  
tel. 074375091

email [infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org)

#### **Saturday, March 17**

9:00 - Via della Spina (from Avenue of the Sanctuary to Saint Augustine)

11:00 - Meeting of leaders with the nuns

15:00 - Visit to the urn

16:30 - Conference: "Mother Teresa Fasce" curated by Sister M. Giacomina Stuari

17:00 - Adoration with the Nuns (in the Basilica) and new affiliations

#### **Sunday, March 18**

8:00 - Confessions

9:00 - Hall of Peace (each with its own uniform and banner)

10:00 - Holy Mass

11:00 am - Procession

Photos and Greetings

### ZONAL MEETINGS

We invite you to participate in the zonal meetings organised by representatives of local PPU groups, which are very useful for deepening knowledge and sharing the journey in the footsteps of Saint Rita.

#### **SOUTH:**

September 9, Conversano (BA)  
referent: Domenica Sidella,  
mob. 3926157591

#### **NORTH:**

June 17, Abbiategrasso (MI)  
referent: Francesco Roccio,  
mob. 3393353309

#### **CENTRAL ITALY:**

May 1, Sant'Agata Irpina (AV)  
referent: Carmela De Stefano,  
mob. 3297220218

#### **ISLANDS:**

May 27, Campofranco (CL)  
referent: Giuseppe Favata,  
mob. 3383942809

# Why exactly Cascia?

by Mauro Papalini, historian of Augustine

**S**ooner or later we all go to Cascia. Why exactly Cascia? It is not a big town, there are no famous monuments; there is a beautiful landscape and the gastronomic products are top notch, but only those who have been there can know it. So why do we go there?

Not to meet a famous person: an emperor, a leader, a great queen, but a small humble woman, "Ritae Antonii Lottii", as we read in a co-eval (contemporary, ed.) document.

In her life, Rita lived a troubled existence, but no more than many other women of her time: forced to marry, and which woman was not? Violent husband (it is said) and today we are sadly accustomed to vi-



Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia, The religious habit (XVIII century).

## THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

*To you, Lord, we humbly recommend these our dead because, as in their mortal life they have always been loved by you of immense love, so now, freed from all evil, may they enter by Your grace into eternal rest. Amen*

Alfio Cristaldi (Ingham - Australia)  
Amarilide Filippi (Carpineto Romano RM - Italy)  
Angela Mulas (Bortigali NU - Italy)  
Angela Tornatore (Calamonaci AG - Italy)  
Angelina Mattioni Aries (Besozzo VA - Italy)  
Bartolomeo Russo (Rome - Italy)  
Bruno Confente (Vicenza - Italy)  
Chiara Marchese (Orago VA - Italy)  
Elio Segarizzi (Avio TN - Italy)  
Esterina Mattei (Castelliri FR - Italy)  
Francesca Pitrelli (Noicattaro BA - Italy)  
Giuseppe Volpi (Pisa - Italy)  
Laura Valli (Rivalta sul Mincio di Rodigo MN - Italy)  
Liana Rosanna Bellandi (Santa Lucia di Uzzano PT - Italy)  
Lucia Calabrese (San Severo FG - Italy)

Luigina Bagogi (Gallignano di Soncino CR - Italy)  
Marcello Carignani (Lucca - Italy)  
Margherita Marchesi (Gambolò PV - Italy)  
Maria Cristaldi (Ingham - Australia)  
Maria De Luca (Ortona CH- Italy)  
Maria Evangelisti (Fabriano AN - Italy)  
Maria Felisoni (Cremona - Italy)  
Mariuccia Villani (Trecate NO - Italy)  
Michel Cotton (Ath - Belgium)  
Mimma Pagano (Nicotera Marina VV - Italy)  
Mimmo Cavallaro (Nicotera Marina VV - Italy)  
Nada Bulletti (Arezzo - Italy)  
Nicolina Chierichetti (Cascia PG - Italy)  
Palomba Ascienzo (Rome - Italy)  
Pietro Lazzerini (Santa Lucia di Uzzano PT - Italy)  
Raffaele Vergata (Settignano CZ - Italy)  
Salvatore Crisafulli (Sydney - Australia)  
Silvana Boccali (Ponte San Lorenzo di Narni TR - Italy)  
Terenzio Battaini (Italy)  
Teresa Rabissi Signorini (Rosia di Sovicille SI - Italy)  
Valter Ovan (Udine - Italy)  
Vittoria Carniello Rezzin (Brugnera PN - Italy)  
Vittorio Trentin (Gallarate VA - Italy)

TESTIMONY OF ROMINA, GUBBIO (PG) - ITALY

Dear nuns, do you remember when you gave me the image of Blessed Mother Fasce? You told me that if I prayed to her assiduously that she be invoked in case of cancer (she had been ill), she would certainly have listened to my voice. Since then, I have recited prayers for the healing of my father every day. On November 10, he received the diagnosis: type III infiltrating gastric adenocarcinoma (stomach cancer, ed.), partly extended to the pancreas and the spleen. I don't know how to explain it to you ... These months have been intense for us but it is as if someone had come down from us to lighten our pains. When dad finished the first six cycles of chemotherapy, and underwent the first control CT scan, the chances were very high that he would not respond to the chemotherapy. Instead, not only did dad respond to the initial chemotherapy, but the mass was decidedly reduced, so much so that, after reading the report, the oncologist jumped in disbelief, because she had been the first to give us no hope ... She told my father, "This changes everything Fausto, you can certainly have the operation." The professor who operated told us that there could be high post-operative risks. But dad was hospitalised for 25 days and ran any risk. He underwent other cycles of post-operative chemotherapy and, even then, the oncologist told us that his physique was very weak and could have been affected by the side effects ... Despite all this, dad had no problems. On October 17, a control CT scan was carried out and the result was absence of the disease! For me what happened was a miracle.

olent men who kill women they say they love. Widow as there were so many; finally, religious like many widows.

Yet that humble woman had something strange: on the death of her murdered husband she refused revenge and offered forgiveness, something unusual then. In the monastery she never held any important position: she was not abbess, teacher of the novices, treasurer, and so on; she lived the daily life of penance, of prayer that united her ever more closely with Jesus, obedient and virtuous.

But she had something special if Jesus wounded her on the forehead with a thorn of his crown making her so extraordinarily participant in his Passion.

This humble woman, canonised by the Church, has become famous all over the world bringing also her homeland in her name: we all invoke Saint Rita of Cascia, from Italy to South America, from Africa to Asia. Cascia has become a symbol of graces and mercies worked by the Lord, precisely for that woman so insignificant in her earthly life: what jokes God plays!

PRAYER

Prayer of the airborne soldier

Lord God, Father of life and of all Creation, bless our service that we carry out our duty for the good of our homeland.

Follow us with your gaze when we airborne soldiers hover in the skies and work on the ground to fulfil the oath taken by Italian soldiers.

Make our undertaking shine with peace.

Make the toil of our work and our duty be an example for all people and support those who work for the progress and well-being of peoples.

Ensure that the Virgin Mary, lady of every exile,

Mother of pain and flame of peace, assists our mission.

Ensure that our families feel Your presence in times of suffering and pain and, Lord, bless those who in the fulfilment of their duty can no longer live earthly harmony.

Grant, O Lord, that our Homeland, respected and beloved in the world, and our young ability have the blessing of Mary and the love of your children. Amen

*(This prayer was given to the Monastery of Saint Rita by the 1st Cobra Company of the 66th Airborne Infantry Regiment "Trieste")*

# «Be well and pray»

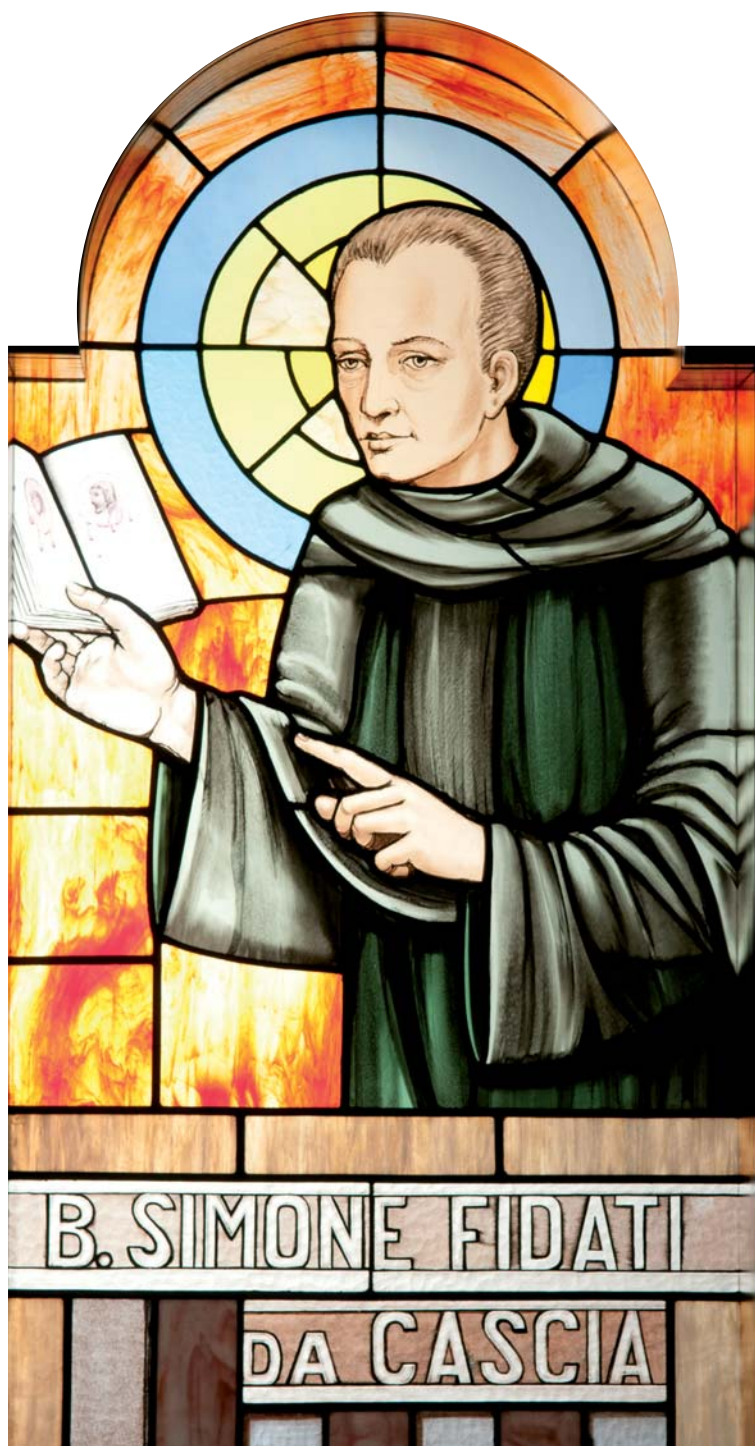
## Simon of Cascia's message for us

by Sister M. Giacomina Stuani OSA, Monastery of Saint Rita

**T**he writings of Blessed Simon of Cascia, whom we remember on February 16, the day of his Solemnity, are a real mine. Together with the gifts of nature, as a living intelligence, enlightened “by a light of truth” (as he himself says) on his vocation, after giving himself totally to God, he also received great gifts of grace: profound humility, contemplative soul, sensitivity to true and deep friendship, aroused by the passion to bring creatures to Christ, prudence and balance.

Prayer knocks on Simon's door: “Receiving from God the grace of prayer, we pray to him, we ask him, from him, in him and for him and the things that are fitting to him together with him, that there be a prayer of God. It is from him that comes the grace [to pray], we ask him, he is the good that is asked for. This is an ineffable and invisible mystery: that whoever is prayed to wants to give himself to those who pray” (De Gestis Domini Salvatoris, book IV, chap. VII).

For Simon, obedience is obtained: “If in planning our life we want to follow our will while remaining in honesty and virtue, we will encounter insurmountable obstacles ... It is impossible for our will



that what is desired in realised ... I have not learned to look for divisions; nothing abhors more than separating myself from the obedience of the Order [Augustine], even for reasons of good. I have always feared, by changing my life so that everything does not appear done according to the rules, that I scandalise the simple people" (*Letter to Fr. Giovanni da Salerno*).

Simon is certain, love receives: "Those who have offered their hearts to the Lord must not live for themselves, but for him who gave his life for all. You cannot think of anything more beautiful than giving back the heart to the one who wanted to die for you to live. In fact, the just person, waking early in the morning, turns his heart to the Lord who created him" (cf. Sir 39, 6) (Letters).

For Blessed Simon, not only those called to ministry and religious life have to imitate Christ, but also every baptised individual must ori-

## *The Lord considers important what is secondary for us*

ent himself decisively and radically towards him: either choose Christ, together with what is built on the Rock, or the world, with its mediocrity and its empty vanities that do not satisfy the human soul.

Simon, like his Spiritual Father St. Augustine, was a contemplative soul, a lover of quiet and silence, of friendship and of common life as an enthusiastic search for God. And, like Augustine, through love of Christ and his Church, he found himself in the struggle of having to choose between "the love of truth" and the "necessities of love", that is, contemplation and action. He would have liked to be

like John and Maria, lean his head on the chest of Jesus to listen to His heart and sit at His feet to savour His words. Instead, always through "fateful" obedience, he found himself more Martha and Peter, tireless worker of the vineyard of the Lord, preacher of the Church and spiritual guide of a large flock. Nowadays this would mean that, in his message, Blessed Simon would say to each one of us: "Live with serenity where you are, if these days you do not have the opportunity to live better in another place. The Lord of all knows what he has planned for us. We consider important many things that for him are secondary. And in general he considers important what is secondary for us. It is a good thing to want the best, even if we can never make it happen. Be strong and do not want to judge the facts of others, think of yours. Be well and pray." (*Letter to Fr. Giovanni da Salerno*). ■

### THE COBRA COMPANY SALUTES SAINT RITA

On Saturday, November 25, 2017, in the chapel of the nuns inside the Basilica of Saint Rita, we greeted the 1st Cobra Company of the 66th Airborne Infantry Regiment "Trieste" at the conclusion of its mandate in Cascia as a task force for "safe roads". Father Rector Bernardino Pinciario concelebrated the Mass of farewell, together with the ecclesiastical assistant of the Saint Rita Primary Pious Union, Father Ludovico Maria Centra. Symbolically sealing the bond created between the military and the saint of impossible cases, the 1st Cobra Company received the characteristic foulards that distinguish the friends of Saint Rita all over the world as a gift from the Pious Union.



# The holy beauty of marriage

by Father Bernardino Pinciaroli OSA, Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita



Pilgrims from Venegono, together with Rector Fr. Bernardino, in the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia.

Every group of pilgrims, every family, every person who comes to Cascia has its own history and reason, and everyone brings the richness and anguish of their lives. Each with their own, personal experience.

In this new space dedicated to the testimonies of pilgrims who come here to the Sanctuary of Saint Rita, I like recalling a not particularly large group of pilgrims from Venegono (Varese) that has been coming to Cascia every year since 1986. They were also here last year in May. They seemed family, so close they were together.

The group is made up of various families. They are friends. They arrived here in Cascia by coach “to pray, praise and pay homage to the saint of the impossible, to thank her for her continuous intercessions with the Father”, as they wrote in the beau-

*Coming to Cascia  
together to thank God  
for their conjugal  
love story*

## *Send us your story of pilgrimage*

Send Father Bernardino photos of your pilgrimage to Cascia, along with a brief account of your experience. Write to [padreettore@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:padreettore@santaritadacascia.org), specifying that you consent to us publishing it in the "From the Bees to the Roses" magazine.

tiful letter we received. "During the four-day stay we took part in the various functions that are celebrated every day in the Sanctuary ...". Talk about religious tourism! Here are great desires! I think of the spouses with the most disparate ages who have

### *They seemed family, so close they were together*

come here to the Sanctuary of Saint Rita with one intention: to ask for help for their families and their marriage and to celebrate together the 50th and a 60th wedding anniversaries of two couples who are part of

the Varese group. Coming to Cascia together, to be true friends, to thank God for their conjugal love story, putting themselves under the gaze of Saint Rita, is indeed a sign of their great friendship, devotion and trust in her, the saint of the family.

I increasingly realise that for spouses the story of Saint Rita is really too important! Great is her example as bride, mother and also strong widow: this is precisely why many come here to Cascia, and it is for this very reason that the group of devotees from Venegono have been coming to Cascia for 30 years. Rita has also been sanctified in her marriage, so she can become the saint of spouses, even those who have been hurt; the saint of the beauty of marriage. ■

## FEAST OF SPOUSES IN CASCIA

The **Feast of Spouses** takes place on **Sunday May 6** at the **Sanctuary in Cascia**. In memory of Rita's family life, lived in a Christian manner with simplicity and hard work, many families from all over the world take part in the Eucharistic celebration dedicated to the celebration of all wedding anniversaries. Spouses who celebrate their anniversary at the Sanctuary will receive a parchment, booklet and a rose, the symbol of Saint Rita.

To take part in the Feast of Spouses, just contact the Information Office of the Sanctuary: tel. +39 0743 75091  
e-mail [infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org)



# My daughters do not seek me, where did I go wrong?

*Dearest Mother Maria Rosa, we are two pensioners, we have two married daughters aged 50 and 46. We are always alone, they rarely call ... If I call, nobody answers. They're always in a hurry, they have to go ... 10 minutes and they're off ... Where did I go wrong?*



*You can't talk ... I'm old, we are old, we are abandoned ... The dog is looked after and cuddled. We are alone at Christmas, at Easter and on Sundays. This is the modern world, that's how it is. Help me to not suffer. I have been devoted to Saint Rita for many years. Thanks to the little girls (the Little Bees of the Beehive, ed.) who sent me a nice postcard, they are all beautiful. A kiss, Paola.*

Dearest Paola,  
your drama is that of many people, mostly elderly, who often tell me about this. I try to make a suggestion and I can assure my prayer to always feel in any case the proximity of the Lord and of Saint Rita when the pain is strongest. You must not feel guilty, as if the teaching you gave to your daughters was a failure or the cause of their distance. It is precisely the modern lifestyle that leaves no space to the person to think, it is so hectic that it makes relationships within the family group difficult. But here is where the freedom of people to choose good or evil, and your freedom, comes into play: that of finding yourself in a condition to do good anyway, as the Lord does in our regard. Loneliness can be positive, if it is filled by a presence that lives in it: that of the love of God, which expands the heart

and directs it to the outside, not allowing it to fall back on itself. It is possible for you to not be alone, because your husband is there too. This could be an opportunity, by being attentive to each other in the little things of every day, to expand the spaces of the heart (as St. Augustine says), both with your husband and with your daughters. It couldn't take much to make people feel close and dear (I use the conditional because I understand that this is not always the case). You also give me testimony of this by thanking the Little Bees for having sent a postcard from their "seafaring" holidays. What I suggest is to continue calling your daughters, especially when there are dates that are important for them, trying to understand what is the most appropriate time, in the hope that they will answer. If they do answer, don't make them feel guilty, with a reproach, but ask them how they are, or if this silence is due to some problem (this was my father's expedient when some of us had not been heard from for days). Send them a postcard at Christmas and Easter so that they will also remember these strong liturgical moments of the year. Saint Paul tells us that "charity is patient, it knows how to excuse", but in the end it always wins. Want to try?

A hug from me, my sisters and the Little Bees.

## THE ABBESS RESPONDS

If you wish to share your fears, your questions or your happiness, write to [monastero@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:monastero@santaritadacascia.org), specifying that you give us permission to publish your letter. Mother Maria Rosa will respond to everyone in the *From the Bees to the Roses* magazine.



# *A bequest, a gift of love*

Remembering  
who is most vulnerable  
in your will can change someone's life  
for ever

Allocating even a small bequest to the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia means leaving a sign of your generosity in time.

Thanks to bequests, we can support the Beehive of Saint Rita, a hope for all Little Bees, the children who will inherit your love.

Write to us at [monastero@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:monastero@santaritadacascia.org) and you will receive information on how to help the children in difficulty that need you.



Let's give  
a nest to  
those that  
have none.

estrogeni

**SUPPORT THE INITIATIVES OF SAINT RITA'S BEEHIVE WITH A DONATION.**

Here, every day, the nuns and educators lovingly take care of our Little Bees. They are girls from 6-18 years of age with a difficult past behind them for whom, thanks also to your help, we ensure the warmth of a home and the education needed to build a better future.

**POSTAL BANK ACCOUNT NO. 1010759072  
INDICATING "ALVEARE" (BEEHIVE) AS THE REASON  
BANK ACCOUNT IBAN IT2710200821703000102136901  
BIC/SWIFT: UNCRITM1J35  
INDICATING "ALVEARE" (BEEHIVE) AS THE REASON**



TEL. +39 0743 76201  
alveare@santaritadacascia.org  
[www.santaritadacascia.org/alveare](http://www.santaritadacascia.org/alveare)