

NO. 1 JAN-FEB 2019

BIMONTHLY
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
MONASTERY
OF SAINT RITA
OF CASCIA

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine
of Saint Rita of Cascia

WALKING TOGETHER
**Interview with Father Michele,
the cybermonk who talks to young people**

TRACES OF RITA
The salvation of children

AROUND THE WORLD
Brazilian Saint Rita

THE CHURCH FOR THE YOUNG

SUMMARY

- 3 *Editorial*
Instruments of God
- 4 *The church for the young*
Walking together
- 8 *Saint Rita Foundation*
Sunday, May 5, the Roses of Saint Rita return to the streets
- 10 *Traces of Rita*
The salvation of children
- 12 *Primary Pious Union*
Devotion and solidarity, in the footsteps of Rita
- 14 *Augustinians*
Embracing the cross
An affectionate and patient welcome
- 18 *Around the world*
Brazilian Saint Rita
- 20 *Cascia Events*
Appointments
- 22 *Dialogue with the Monastery*
A hospital for the Valnerina
Letter to Sister Bernadette
Goodbye, Father Remo

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FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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On the cover: Youth meeting of the Augustinians 2017 in Cascia. Photo by Massimo Chiappini.

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Instruments of God

Dear friends, we start the year with a deeply felt testimony from Roberta, a young woman from Palermo, about her family, in particular her sister, but above all about profound devotion for Saint Rita of Cascia. As we go to print, we have learned that the health problem of Roberta's sister has returned, but the story that our friend recounts is a wonderful testimony of the strength that comes from faith in the Lord and the awareness that each of us can be an instrument for spreading the hope and love of God. Our most heartfelt prayers go to Roberta, her sister, their loved ones and all those who are sick and in need.

In 2015, my sister, 30 and who has always been my reason for living, was diagnosed with a rare disease. We fell into utter despair because it was not curable, it could only be blocked by trying several attempts at medical treatment. It is a disease that did not allow her, among other things, to be able to conceive a baby in a healthy way, together with her life partner. I began to pray to Saint Rita, because I had just been told of her power in impossible cases. I went to the Church of Saint Augustine, now called "Church of Saint Rita", a few steps from my house. I also sent my father and my mother there with tenacious insistence (my father an atheist, my mother a non-practising Catholic) and I received the conversion of my father as the first miracle, also thanks to Fra Massimo (Augustinian today in Cascia, ed.) who he met there in church by chance (there is no chance), and with whom he had the opportunity to establish a wonderful relationship. Only when I went to see her in church, imploring her with heart and tears wrapped in her arms, my soul found peace and consolation, hope. In 2016, my sister did the usual analysis check-up and there was no trace of the disease. Inexplicable (not for me, but for science). In August 2017, my sister and her partner Enrico conceived Gaia, my only reason for living. Again two years ago, my mother was operated on for a malignant thyroid tumour. A month after surgery, there was no metastasis. According to the passage read in the prayer to Saint Rita, "ensure that my sufferings may benefit all my loved ones and that we all may be saved for eternity. Amen". I am writing so that more people may come to know of the great intercession of Rita in the hardest moments of their lives and be confident and sure that she always listens to us and with the times of God will console us by fulfilling our prayers and saving us above all from the torments of our spirit. Before invoking her, I humbly recommend studying her life well, visiting Cascia and Roccaporena, imitating her in her meekness, in the spirit of sacrifice, in devotion to Jesus, in heroic strength in difficult trials, and at the end praying to her daily with the heart. I am happy to have been useful to other people ... because each of us is an instrument of God, we just have to understand it and put ourselves to work as He wants according to His Word. ■



Walking together

Interview with Father Michele,
the *cybermonk* who talks to young people

by Alessia Nicoletti

His Twitter account is cyberfrate (cyber-monk), which says a lot about his propensity for modernity that also passes through the use of technology. He is 40, but his face is still that of a boy. Father Michele Falcone is the Augustinian in Italy who today has the task of organising the most important event for the catechesis of adolescents: the annual meeting dedicated to boys and girls who circle around the various Augustinian communities of Italy. In the wake of the Youth Synod concluded at the end of last year and of World Youth Day in Panama (22-27 January 2019), Alessia Nicoletti interviewed Father Michele to understand the progress made by the Church for the men and women of tomorrow.

The Youth Synod in October 2018 spoke of sharing and “walking together”. As a young Augustinian, how do you think this has gone?

The result has been very positive. Talking confidentially about it with some Synodal Fathers, I have had the occasion to express my initial scepticism and, after reading the final document, my enthusiasm: in terms of content and form. The increase in the awareness of a Synod is an absolute novelty: finally we are witnessing a dialogue and the Church of the Second Vatican Council is taking shape. I fully agree with walking together, but these processes need time. Nobody has the perfect methodology. A bit like parents with adolescent children: the experience they have, which is of enor-



Father Michele Falcone during the youth meeting of the Augustinians, held in Cascia last summer.



Souvenir photo in front of the Basilica of Saint Rita (Cascia, Youth Meeting of the Augustinians 2018).

mous value, cannot be transmitted as they have lived it, but must be reworked because it is incomprehensible, sometimes even to themselves. In this sense, the figure chosen by the Synodal Fathers for expressing this concept is wonderful: Peter and John running to the now empty tomb. John is faster, but he lets Peter go in first. This implies a relationship of friendship, acceptance and mutual respect so profound that it is almost a mystery. And it is the key to interpretation: learning to know each other, bringing each other into play, because only by walking together is one able to enter into the Mystery of Christ. It is a revolutionary passage.

What is the Church's youth education project? Attention to the human being as an individual, but also in relation to a community. Every young person - each one of us - must take a personal path that must lead him or her to express himself/herself fully:

My greatest joy is being able to make the young people feel good

being happy. How is this done? Recognising that we are unique and unrepeatable and carry within us a message of God for ourselves and others. We just have to find it and live in the logic of the gift. When we make this pilgrimage into our being, we discover ourselves as children of God: it is the experience of Moses who recognises himself in that burning bush, but is not consumed. The Grace of God, which passes through our neighbour, helps us to restore the wounds we carry and then pushes us to give our lives. God does not throw anything away from the experiences we have had, but transforms them into opportunities for



Young people talking with the nuns of the Saint Rita monastery (Cascia, Youth Meeting of the Augustinians 2018).

We should rediscover the figure of St. Philip, of whom I am a fan

helping others and understanding how God himself works over time. Here then that holiness also becomes more accessible: it is not a question of perfection, but of authenticity and testimony. We are all capable of holiness.

Let's go back to the concept of sharing. Sharing is the fashion of the moment: we share cars, offices, posts on social media, and so on. It is the era of sharing goods, emotions, relationships and values ... I am enthusiastic about it. In this Saint Augustine enlightens us and I think he would be proud. We, as Augustinians, have the mission to succeed in transmitting the value: namely the vertical plane, the significance,

the transcendence. There is a project I am working on, which starts from this intuition and finds inspiration in Jacob's Well, when Jesus meets the Samaritan woman. The well is a symbol of all our structures, and we are used to living it in one way: in the well mode. But Jesus exploits that well in a new way, giving it a new meaning, which is transformed into salvation, not only for the Samaritan woman, but also for his people. The soil is fertile and the Spirit is acting, and here is our challenge: how can we get involved in order to help reinterpret the meaning of all these wells? Naturally, everything must begin with our own personal and community experiences.

IN A WORD

edited by
Fr. Vittorino Grossi OSA

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said: "... Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven". *Gospel of Matthew 18, 1-5*

To enter the Christian community, Jesus tells us that we must become children. This does not mean being childish, but to stand before God as children before the father, in a condition of humility (understood as service to one's neighbour and, therefore, to God). Growing up also means walking courageously towards the cross, as Jesus did.

YOUTH MEETING OF THE AUGUSTINIANS

The camp for young people attending the various Augustinian structures in Italy, organised in Cascia by Father Michele Falcone, is also scheduled for this year and will be held in July 2019, in the week from Monday 22 to Sunday 28. The theme to be addressed and which will be the common denominator of the various activities that are taking shape, will be the relationship between Jesus and Peter: *the story of a glance*. Last year the meeting brought over two hundred young people linked to the Augustinian world, aged between 12 and 18 years, and seventy animators to Cascia. The programme will be better defined in March 2019.

World Youth Day was held in Panama from January 22 to 27, 2019. What do you think is its value?

I have participated in several of these experiences and I always find them of a certain interest. It goes without saying that they have a value, but that it must still be refined. The common path, meeting together, the ability to communicate overcoming the barriers of language, space, social status, etc. It's very important for young people. The limit that I see and experience is the human temptation to create a group identity, a niche that protects my being someone in a context and that gives value to my person, which otherwise would be lost among many, probably insignificant. Let me give you an example: if we want the dough to ferment, the yeast must be mixed with all the flour and, once the process has been completed, one will be unrecognisable from the other. If the yeast persists in saying I am yeast and do not mix, you will have partial results. Naturally, this cannot be resolved in a general context, but in the personal and local community journey. It is a theme that the Synod has given an answer to, but perhaps deserves a more in-depth reflection.

You organise the youth meeting of the Augustinians which, in recent years, has been taking place in Cascia. What does it represent? With my brothers we organise this camp that has become a driving force for youth ministry in every community. My greatest joy is being able to make young people feel good, make them have fun and reflect. It is transmitting a simple message: God is among us and walks with us. They await this week precisely for this. We involve everyone, especially those who are far away.

If a camp is organised thinking of them, the result is guaranteed and the numbers confirm it. What I find most exciting are the friendships that are formed: the young people help themselves, they host involving families. A wonderful network. These camps



Every young person, says Father Michele, who is engaged in youth promotion in the context of Augustinian structures, must express himself or herself to be happy.

Holiness is a question of authenticity

are not just the camp in itself, but rather the most important aspect is all the rest and we religious men and women should allow ourselves to be involved in this network. We are still on the threshold, perhaps a bit frightened by sharing, which we spoke about before but perhaps it is the evangelical way that God urges us to rediscover, as in the early Christian communities. We should rediscover the figure of St. Philip, of whom I am a fan, as the Synod suggests.



More than 1,200 volunteers took to the streets in 2018 for the "Roses of Saint Rita" initiative, setting up 320 solidarity stalls throughout Italy, 61% more than the 2017 edition, raising a total of 300,000 euro in favour of the "Beehive of Saint Rita" reception house.

With surprise and enthusiasm, the Mother Prioress of the Saint Rita Monastery - who is also president of the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation which organises the event - shared the results achieved with the community of nuns and volunteers, sending them a letter of thanks.

In 2018, the potted plants of the Roses of Saint Rita were present in all Italian regions. A surprising result for an event that celebrates its third edition in 2019 on Sunday, May 5 with a crescendo of aspiring volunteers who had already booked at the end of last year.

So, on May 5 the solidarity plants will be in squares and parishes across the

Sunday, May 5, the Roses of Saint Rita return to the streets

country, complete with easy-carry bags for carrying the roses; however, the absolute novelty is the attention to the environment which the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation will be focusing on to add value to the initiative. In fact, every single bag will be obtained by recycling 3 half-litre plastic bottles. And for those who want to, they can bring that same rose plant to church on the occasion of the Ritian Solemnity of May 22 for the traditional blessing.





IN PHARMACY FOR CHILDREN

*Numerous medicines collected
for the Beehive of Saint Rita*

Great success for the “In pharmacy for children” initiative organised by the Francesca Rava Foundation - NPFI Italia Onlus. A true operation of solidarity that stimulated many people who wanted to be an active part of this network of love for collecting products for the Beehive of Saint Rita. In fact, cough syrups, sticking plasters, shampoos and many other products were donated for a value of over 700 euro. The pharmacies that joined are: in the city of Norcia, Farmacia di San Benedetto, while in Cascia Farmacia Saint Rita and Parafarmacia Salute e Benessere. Our thanks go to all the volunteers who collaborated on this day. *(Michele Messina)*

The proceeds of the solidarity event support the Beehive of Saint Rita project, the reception house that hosts children

and young girls in difficulty that the Augustinian nuns of Cascia look after, taking care of all their needs and assuring the young people of hope for the future.

To find out in which cities and squares the rose stalls will be located, just visit the www.rosedisantarita.org site.

Symbol of the patron saint of impossible cases, the Rose of Saint Rita is cultivated in a pot. A floral thought to give to yourself or be given to those you love, making a gesture of solidarity. ■



Little Bees from the Beehive of Saint Rita

The salvation of children

by Mauro Papalini, Augustinian historian

In past centuries young people were considered only containers to be filled, with no specific features.

Leo XIII was the first to make children a particular subject, in need of specific pastoral care. Saint Rita was no exception: she was educated by her parents according to the customs of her time; religion certainly had first place in her upbringing, as in general for everyone, but in her it was a true sowing that yielded copious fruits. She became a mother herself and behaved equally with her children, Giangiacomo and Paolo Maria. We can imagine with how much passion and commitment she



PRAYER

Pray for your children, / that they learn goodness
 Pray for suffering, / that they teach the cross
 Pray for the malevolent, / that they change their hearts
 Pray for love, / that it be the key to existence
 Pray for a smile, / for being in company
 Pray for your thoughts, / that they fly higher
 Pray for your conscience, / that you always find yourself
 Pray for others, / that they discover the light
 Pray for illusions, / that they push you forward
 Pray for weaknesses, / that they become resurrections
 Pray for faith, / for reaching goals
 Pray for a song, / that it makes you feel like a child
 Pray for death again, / that it smiles at you in your last hour

*(Excerpt from the prayer sent to us
 by devotee Giovanni Vasco)*

taught them faith, prayer and exercise of virtues, but with what results?

As is known, Rita lost her husband, the victim of an assassination; she forgave the killers of Paolo, but it appears her children did not. Here tradition tells us that Rita, in order not to see them stained with the sin of vengeance, prayed to God that he would rather let them die. In truth, it does not seem very likely that such a holy and loving mother would desire the death of her children, even if for noble reasons. Rather, it is legitimate to think that in those moments she would have offered her life to God

GRACE RECEIVED

TESTIMONY OF LEO (SAN FELICIANO DI MAGIONE PG - ITALY)

It was June 16, 1979, when my first son Matteo was born. It was a very cold night for the time of year and Matteo, born about 15 days earlier than expected, was not put immediately in the warmth of an incubator, but suffered a neonatal cold syndrome that caused him a cerebral hypoxia (reduced oxygen supply to the brain). The baby breathed heavily and the body temperature was thirty-five degrees. The doctors told me that if he survived he would have had a serious physical or mental handicap. One evening, I went into the chapel in front of the hospital's maternity ward and saw the statue of Saint Rita. I began to pray in tears before this saint, even though I did not know her story. I went home and fell asleep. I had a dream: Saint Rita telling me not to cry, to be happy, because Matteo was healed. At 3:30 in the morning, I got in the car to go to the hospital, to see my son. The nurse was astounded to see him breathing normally. Matteo underwent every kind of examination, because this was inexplicable for the doctors. The doctors continued to keep him on the danger list, not believing that the miracle of healing may have taken place. At that point, my wife and I signed the medical record under our responsibility, sure and certain that Saint Rita had worked the miracle. The doctors continued to bombard us with phone calls to bring him back to the hospital, at which point we took him for a private visit to a well-known professor in Perugia, who confirmed that Matteo was perfectly healthy, actually stronger than other children, because he had overcome a great test of existence in life.

as immolation for the salvation of her children. Then they died and so we might think that Rita thanked the Lord not for their death, but because they would not be stained by any crime.

In the monastery, Rita had constant relations with the young religious, and for them she was certainly a model to be imitated every day: even if she was never a teacher of the novices nor did any man-

agerial duties, her discreet presence was nevertheless a formidable point of reference for those who were beginning the religious life because they could only imitate the older religious. ■

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 Raiti (Linguaglossa CT - Italy)
 Alverino Nicoletti (Ocosce di Cascia PG - Italy)
 Angelina Zocco (Canino VT - Italy)
 Annalisa Appolloni (Rome - Italy)
 Biagio Nigita (Comiso RG - Italy)
 Bruno Russo (Rochester NY - USA)
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 Tatiana Forti (Piano di Coreglia LU - Italy)
 Vincenzo, Crocifissa and Maria Grisaffi (Sommatino CL - Italy)



by Marta Ferraro

Devotion and solidarity, in the footsteps of Rita

Testimony of the PPU group of Cirò Marina

The group of the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita of Cirò Marina (in the province of Crotone) is among the first to have joined the only prayer association dedicated to the saint of Cascia and recognised by the Monastery that guards the message. The affiliation is due to Don Antonio Mazzone, parish priest of the Calabrian town since September 1991.

Don Antonio and his community, always fervent devoted Ritians, decided to buy a statue of the miracle worker of Cascia for the parish, in order to create moments of prayer in her

honour. Since then, every Thursday, the community meets to invoke Saint Rita of Cascia.

In this same period, Don Antonio set out to find a national Ritian prayer group recognised by the Saint Rita Monastery, with the intention of being able to grow in devotion to the saint with other brothers. However, in 1994, the year in which Don Antonio began to look, the Primary Pious Union of Saint

Rita of Cascia as we know it today did not yet exist. Despite this, the tenacious Don Antonio made contact with the Augustinian Monastery and managed to obtain a relic of the saint from Cascia, to celebrate his 25th anniversary of priesthood. That was a moment that helped the Calabrian community to strengthen devotion to the saint of roses and thorns, and prepare to become part of the PPU as soon as the opportunity arose.

Today the PPU in Cirò Marina has over 50 members and at least once a year goes to the land of Rita to breathe the air of Valnerina and visit its places, certainly a worthy way of feeling clos-

Every Thursday, the community meets to invoke Saint Rita



The PPU group of Cirò Marina on pilgrimage to Cascia.



**PARTICIPATE
IN PPU
MEETINGS**

PPU GENERAL MEETING: APRIL 6 AND 7, 2019

The next General Meeting in Cascia will be dedicated to the theme “Holiness is Young” and is open to everyone, to members but also to those who are interested in getting to know the PPU more closely. For hotel accommodation, everyone makes their own arrangements.

Info: Information Office of the Sanctuary, tel. 074375091 - e-mail infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org

Saturday, April 6

09:30 - Via della Spina (from Viale del Santuario to the church of Saint Augustine).

11:00 - Meeting of leaders with the nuns (large Visiting Room).

15:00 - Visit and prayer at the urn of Saint Rita.

16:30 - “Holiness is Young” conference. Speaker: Msgr. Domenico Pompili, Bishop of Rieti (Hall of Peace).

21:00 - Adoration with the nuns and new affiliations (Basilica of Saint Rita).

Sunday, April 7

09:30 - Rosary to Saint Rita, each with their own uniform and banner (Hall of Peace).

10:00 - Holy Mass (Hall of Peace).

11:00 - Procession (Viale del Santuario - Piazzale

San Francesco - going up from the roundabout in front of Monte Meraviglia - Basilica).

Photos and Greetings

LOCAL MEETINGS

Everyone is invited to participate in local meetings organised by PUP structures throughout Italy. For deepening knowledge and sharing the journey in the footsteps of Saint Rita.

CALABRIA

Sunday, July 7, Reggio Calabria

contact person: Carlo Cacurri, mobile 3423691971.

CENTRAL ITALY

Sunday September 1, Celano (AQ)

contact person: Nino Fegatini, mobile 3396416994.

NORTHERN ITALY

Sunday, September 22, Coccaglio (BS)

contact person: Cirillo Olmi, mobile 3495253095.

PUGLIA

Sunday, May 26, San Ferdinando (FG)

contact person: Rita Di Staso, mobile 3441281840.

SICILY

Sunday, June 9, Licata (AG)

contact person: Mariella Antona, mobile 3804604301.

er to the patron saint of impossible cases and strengthening the link with the Monastery and with other PPU structures scattered throughout Italy.

Following the example of the nuns’ “Beehive of Saint Rita” project, under the careful supervision of Don Antonio, the PPU of Cirò Marina has been offering its support since January 2004 in the management of a reception house that welcomes children in difficulty. There are about 20 children, between residential and day care, who find assistance at the structure desired and launched by Don Antonio to-

gether with a group of collaborators. In the family-house, the little guests not only live in a welcoming environment where they are helped to grow up in the community, study and face up to the small and big difficulties of life, but also meet and discover the fascinating story of Saint Rita.

Through example and great devotion, Don Antonio and “his” PPU have succeeded in making children passionate about the story of Saint Rita to the point that some years ago some of them took part in a dramatisation of the life of the saint on the occasion of the Ritian

festivities in May. Referring to the small guests of the family-house, Don Antonio recounts: “Every year I bring them to Cascia, they get to know the places of Saint Rita and her story. On one of our trips to Cascia, one of them - the smallest at the time, who was in primary one - was intrigued by the state of seclusion of the nuns and began to ask one of them why she could not go out and many other curiosities. In a friendly tone, the nun willingly responded to the curiosity of the child and that moment has remained one of the nicest memories of our trips”.

Embracing the cross

Story of the servant of God Sister Maria Felicita Baseggio

by Father Josef Sciberras OSA, Postulator General *

donned the habit and assumed the name of Sister Maria Felicita Fortunata, before professing her religious vows in 1785. Twenty years later in Europe came the impact with Napoleon. The first suppression involved the monastery of the Tertiaries and Baseggio, together with other religious, was welcomed among the Eremitani nuns of Saint Augustine, in

Anna Clara Giovanna Baseggio was born in Ferrara on May 5, 1752. From an early age she showed a strong artistic inclination that allowed her parents to imagine a promising future, but the encounter with God led her to desire a different path and sacramental communication was the place of this knowledge. The family did not welcome this “distraction”. By 1782 the intention to consecrate herself to God had become irrepressible and she expressed this to her loved ones. Their reaction was hos-

She showed a strong artistic inclination

tile but the servant of God did not lose faith and hope. Finally, as had been anticipated in a celestial vision, in October 1783 she left home to enter the desired cloister, among the Tertiaries of San Francesco di Rovigo. Here, the following year, she



We thank Sister M. F. Baseggio Association for the kind concession of the image.

the convent of the Holy Trinity in Rovigo. With the subsequent Napoleonic decree of 1810, this convent was also suppressed and the religious

Despite the hostility of the family, she did not lose hope

were forced into exclaustation (that is, leaving the Community, ed.). Sister Maria Felicita moved to live in her brother's house and, later, in a house she rented. In the world she continued to live as if she were still in the monastery. In the last years of her life, in need of care, she moved to the house of a nephew, where she died in the odour of sanctity on February 11, 1829. Despite the hostility of the family, the first and not easy obstacle to overcome along the vocational path, the Servant of God did not lose hope, finding solace in prayer addressed to the Crucifix, enduring with resignation, humility and obedience the denigrations inflicted, not refusing the most humble jobs and effort in serv-

ing promptly, always showing charity. Suffering for the love of God and sharing the weight of suffering was her desire, so much so as to receive the mystical gift of the stigmata in the form of a cross on the chest, manifested several times in the course of her life. Like Saint Rita, Sister Maria Felicita embraced Christ crucified, taking from his heart the strength to accept all suffering, to forgive evil received, to transform pain into gift, to love according to the logic of the Gospel. The whole life of the Servant of God was lived in the name of love for the Cross and her existence was a

Like Saint Rita, she embraced Christ crucified

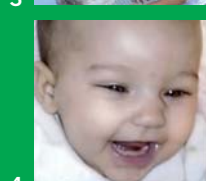
positive response to God's call to holiness. The cause of beatification and canonisation of the Servant of God Sister Maria Felicita Fortunata Baseggio is now in the Roman Phase and awaits study by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. ■



* The Postulator General of the General Curia of the Order of St. Augustine deals with promoting the causes of canonisation of members of the Augustinian Family and at the same time fostering knowledge and devotion for the servants of God, venerables, blessed and saints that are part of it.

SMILING AT LIFE

Send photos of your children to monastero@saintritadecascia.org with the consent of both parents for publication. Photos with incomplete or illegible consent will not be considered.



1. Germana, Joshua and Xavier Di Scala (Cabramatta NSW - Australia)
2. Letizia Librandi Ilari (Matelica MC - Italy)
3. Lucamaria, Vincenzo, Gabriele and Rita Del li Carri (Orta Nova FG - Italy)
4. Margherita Cambiotti (Italy)
5. Margherita Masala (Oristano - Italy)
6. Matteo Rampin (Vicenza - Italy)

An affectionate and patient welcome

The Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita
at the 1st International Convention of the Rectors
and Pastoral Workers of Shrines

by Marta Ferraro

From November 26 to 30, 2018, the 1st International Convention of the Rectors and Pastoral Workers of Shrines took place in Rome, which coincided with the 53rd Convention of the Na-

tional Shrines Connection. The reflection of the study sessions started from the *Motu Proprio* of the Supreme Pontiff of February 2017 on Promotion of the New Evangelisation which inspired the title of the conference: *The*

mission of evangelisation. 600 people among rectors and collaborators from all over the world attended: from France to Mexico, from Brazil to Korea, from Spain to Italy. Father Bernardino Pinciaroli, Rector of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita in Cascia, also took part in the meeting. The doors open to believers and non-believers led speakers and participants to discuss the different aspects that make up the life of a sanctuary and the common theme was welcoming, the first and fundamental moment for those who arrive. A welcoming that must be: affectionate, festive, cordial and patient. In short, the sanctuary is seen as a place for meeting and prayer, in which to free yourself from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and immerse yourself in a place where dialogue and confrontation with responsible figures can be transformed into silence. A silence that in turn leaves room for listening to the Word of God and therefore becomes prayer. The sanctuary as a



Father Bernardino Pinciaroli (centre)
during the convention.

**Doors open to
believers and
non-believers**

Shrine: open door for new evangelisation. In this way, the Pope himself gave great importance to the role of sanctuaries in the difficult



600 people among rectors and collaborators from all over the world attended.

place in which to purify yourself with the Sacrament of Reconciliation for returning to your own life. The conference was intended as an opportunity to allow the rectors of the whole world to experiment new forms of evangelisation. At the end of the event, the participants were received by the Holy Father in the suggestive Sala Regia of the Apostolic Palace, a hall located between the Sistine Chapel and the Pauline Chapel. Also Pope Francis, in his speech to those who intervened on the subject of welcoming, said: "How much we need Shrines in the daily

journey of the Church! It is sad when it happens that, on their arrival, there is no one to give them a word of welcome and to receive them as

pilgrims who have made a journey, often long, to reach the Sanctuary. And worse still is when they find the door closed!".

YOUNG PEOPLE FOR SANCTUARIES

Among the experiences on display particularly deserving is that of Pietre Vive, a youth volunteer project that deals with welcoming in sanctuaries, originally launched in Bologna and then spread to other areas of the world. The philosophy of the group sees welcoming as accompaniment. For pilgrims who so desire, volunteer work becomes a sort of companion concerned with listening and addressing the faithful during their pilgrimage: the final aim of this meeting that becomes coexistence is the evangelisation of those who go to the sanctuary for different reasons. (MF)

Brazilian Saint Rita

by Rita Gentili

Our journey on the discovery of devotion to Saint Rita in the world takes us to Brazil, a country so large that we find a plurality of testimonies of how faith in the saint of impossible cases takes shape. From the day nurseries operated by the Parish of Saint Rita in the municipality of Campinas, to the localities, at least two, called “Santa

the sick, elderly, poor and children. We organise various fund-raising activities. The main one is the Saint Rita Fair, now in its 36th edition: this is a big “market” that allows us to raise money for buying food, clothes and basic necessities. In addition, we make visits to nursing homes, kindergartens and hospitals, bringing comfort and spreading the cult of Saint Rita. More than 1,000 women work with us.

Is there much devotion in your city?

Yes, a lot. In Curitiba there is also a Sanctuary dedicated to Saint Rita, where



In September the first relic of Saint Rita arrived from Italy

Rita”. From the Parish, active since 1720 in Rio de Janeiro, which offers about 150 families the cesta básica, a pack containing basic food items such as rice, beans, flour, sugar and coffee, to fundraising through a typical local craft fair, in the city of Curitiba, in central southern Brazil, about which we speak with Sandra Regina Zanette, one of the last presidents of the organising association.

Sandra, when was the association born and what does it about? The “Saint Rita of Cascia” Charity Association was founded 60 years ago to provide assistance to

RITA IS ALSO HERE



Country: Brazil.

City: Curitiba.

To know: Brazil is a federal republic of 26 states, plus a federal district in which the capital is based, Brasilia. It is the 6th largest country in the world and is also the one with the highest density of Catholic population in the world. A destination for colonialism and immigration, Brazil has a multi-ethnic population: the Italian community represents 15% of the population.

*The Saint Rita Fair,
a big “market”
that allows us to
raise money for
buying food*

What does Saint Rita mean to all of you? And to you? For us, Saint Rita is an example of life, faith, obedience and love for God. As for me, three years ago, I discovered I had cancer. I asked Saint Rita for the courage and the strength to face the therapies and I promised her that if I recovered my health, I would return to Cascia - I had already been there



thousands of devotees go, men and women who seek comfort and solutions to various problems, especially related to the family, drug addiction and health. Every Thursday and the 22nd of every month, we pay homage to the saint but the big feast is May 22, with the procession, mass and blessing of the roses. In September the first relic of Saint Rita arrived from Italy. Our Association is not connected with the Sanctuary, but we also celebrate Saint Rita in May, with the novena, procession, mass and distribution of devotional material. Moreover, for us, May 22 is also the day when new members join the Association, receiving the Saint Rita medal, sign of belonging to the group.

*It was very emotional
being all together
next to the body of
the saint*

twice - to thank her, together with my whole family. After many difficulties, I'm now well thanks to her, so in September I returned to Cascia with my husband, our three sons, two daughters-in-law and four grandchildren. It was very emotional being all together next to the body of the saint. ■

APPOINTMENTS

Cascia (PG), from February 7 to May 16 Fifteen Thursdays of Saint Rita

Every Thursday, starting from February 7, 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 envisage morning Masses at 07:30, 10:30 and 12:00. In the afternoon, the Solemn Celebration will take place at 17:00 (from February to March) and at 18:00 (from April to May). At the end of each Mass, there will be the passage 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

Cascia (PG), from February 13 to 16 Triduum and Feast of Blessed Fidati

Every day from February 13 to 15, at 16:30, we await you in the Basilica of Saint Rita for the Triduum of preparation for the Solemnity of Blessed Simon Fidati, which we will celebrate together on Saturday, February 16, again at 16:30.

Cascia and Spoleto (PG), from March 6 to April 21 Easter events

The Basilica of Saint Rita prepares to celebrate Easter for all pilgrims already arriving in Cascia with the beginning of **Lent** on **March 6, Ash Wednesday**.

After spending five weeks of Lent we will come to **April 14, Palm Sunday**.

At 11:00, there will be a Solemn Mass with a procession of the Palms (meeting of people at 10:45 at the beginning of Viale del Santuario). Here are the times of the other liturgical celebrations: 07:30, 09:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 16:00, 18:00.

The appointments of the Holy Week, to follow, will all take place in the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia, except that of April 17 at 18:00 in Spoleto.

Holy Tuesday, April 16

07:30, 10:30, 12:00, 16:00, 18:00: Holy Mass (the 11th Thursday of Saint Rita is brought forward to this date)

Holy Wednesday, April 17

07:30, 10:30, 12:00: Holy Mass

18:00: Chrismal Celebration in Spoleto Cathedral

Maundy Thursday, April 18

18:00: Solemn Eucharistic Concelebration "Lord's Supper"

21:00: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (until 24:00)

Good Friday, April 19

18:00: Solemn Celebration of the Adoration of the Cross

21:00: City procession of the dead Christ

Holy Saturday, April 20

21:30: Easter Vigil

Resurrection Sunday (Easter Sunday), April 21

07:30, 09:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 16:00, 18:00: Easter Masses

17:30: Second Vespers

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

Cascia (PG), June 9 Feast for Children

On the second Sunday of June, all parents with children from 0 to 10 years are invited to participate in the 1st edition of the "Feast for Children", which will be held in Cascia at the Basilica of Saint Rita. There will be Mass at 16:00, followed by a special moment dedicated to the little ones, with the blessing of God on them through the intercession of Saint Rita. Please notify your attendance to the Information Office of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita: tel. +39 074375091 - e-mail infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS TWINNING

This year again, as part of the Ritian celebrations, the Twinning of Peace and Faith will take place with a city in the world that has stood out for its devotion to Saint Rita. For the 61st edition, Cascia will be twinned with Matera, European Capital of Culture for 2019. The Cascian Delegation and the Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia will be welcomed by the Municipality and the Church of Matera from March 14 to 17, 2019.

FEAST OF SAINT RITA 2019

CASCIA, SANCTUARY
OF SAINT RITA
FROM MAY 20 TO 22



► MONDAY, MAY 20

Hall of Peace

21:00 - Presentation of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2019, conferred on the "Women of Rita": women, that is, whose life is close in actual experience to that of the saint of Cascia.

► TUESDAY, MAY 21

Basilica of Saint Rita

16:30 - Solemn Eucharistic Concelebration of the Augustinian Famil, presided over by Father Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Augustinian Order, **17:30 - Presentation of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2019**. Father Moral presents the parchment symbol of the prestigious award to the chosen women of Rita.

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

Churchyard of the 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, which will parade on the churchyard framed by the lights lit throughout the town.

21:30 - Arrival of the Torch of Peace, symbol of the **Twinning of Faith and Peace** in the name of Saint Rita.

► WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

SOLEMNITY OF SAINT RITA OF CASCIA

Hall of Peace

05:00 - Morning Mass.

Masses will also be celebrated at: 06:00, 07:00, 08:00, 09:00.

Churchyard of the Basilica of Saint Rita

10:00 - Arrival of the Historical Parade in fifteenth-century costumes and the **Procession** bearing the statue of Saint Rita. Leaving at 08:30 from Roccapiorena, Rita's home town, the two parades meet up at the feet of Cascia (09:30).

11:00 - Supplication to Saint Rita followed by the **Solemn Pontifical**. Closure with the traditional ritual of the **Blessing of the Roses** (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.

A HOSPITAL FOR THE VALNERINA

Thank you
everyone, from the
nuns of the
Monastery of Saint
Rita of Cascia



On November 1, 2018 the Rehabilitation Centre opened in Cascia, thanks to the support of the numerous benefactors of the Saint Rita Monastery, the Francesca Rava Foundation - NPH Italia Onlus and the Vodafone Italia Foundation, which financially supported the work necessary for the birth of the structure.





Over fifty workers, entrepreneurs, technicians and professionals made reconversion of the former House of Spiritual Exercises of the Saint Rita Monastery into a real hospital in record time - less than eight months.



The Centre is the result of the "A hospital for the Valnerina" project, born from the synergy between the Municipality, USL Umbria 2 and the Saint Rita Monastery. It is the first health facility to reopen in the whole of central Italy after the 2016 earthquakes.



Letter to Sister Bernardetta

In memory of Sister M. Bernardetta Di Flavio, Augustinian of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia, who suddenly rose to heaven on December 4, 2018

Dearest Sister Bernardetta, your so sudden departure from the Community surprised us initially and left us a little disconcerted, because we are used to accompanying Sisters with prayer as their life fades away.

Unanimously, we then said: "She died as she lived".

Discretion, in fact, was your standard of life. You have transformed your physical limitation, with the help of the Spirit, into grace, into an offering for us, for the Church and for humanity.

Discretion was your standard of life

Your humble, discreet and "punctual" service now begins to be felt. In the first recreation without you, we said to ourselves: "Now who will say, 'Mother, it's time!', when we lingered in going to prayers!?!". Not even the occasional incomprehension undermined your inner peace; because this happens when the heart has reached intimacy with God. Thank you.

Looking at your sudden death with the eyes of faith, I can only bless the Lord.



You were ready to meet the Spouse. Your waiting has reached the goal, the safe harbour.

The prayer of the Church: "Come, Lord Jesus!" has

been achieved for you. Your name then reminds us of the revelation that Our Lady made to Saint Bernadette: "I am the Immaculate Conception", you were called during



You were ready to meet the Spouse

your Novena! Is it perhaps a sign of Mary's predilection? I like to think so.

Dearest, now that you have reached full communion with the Lord and he has made himself visible to you, continue to distribute it also to us and to those who remember you with affection, hoping to meet together to sing the Divine Liturgy in Heaven.

*The Mother Prioress together
with your Community*

AS IF SEEING THE INVISIBLE

Dearest friend,
*"it is only with the heart that one can see rightly;
what is essential is invisible to the eye"*, writes Saint-Exupery in the book *"The Little Prince"*.

"How could I understand if no one guides me?" could be your question. It is a journey towards oneself and Truth, the path is that of the Spirit. Here are some steps: turn on the search and thirst for God, tell us that we are His children and this is our true identity, remember our history, let the desires of the heart emerge in search of the truest ones ...

We offer you a few days for listening, praying, discerning, living at the school of Jesus, the inner Master ...

FEMALE VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION COURSE
from August 5 (dinner) to 10 (breakfast) 2019

For information: Monastery of Saint Rita - 06043 Cascia PG
tel.: 0743 76221 - e-mail: monastero@santaritadacascia.org



Goodbye, Father Remo

On January 4 in our Convent in Cascia, comforted by the presence of the brothers who supported him in reciting the Rosary, Father Remo Piccolomini reached peace without end. Until the end, even though physically consumed, he preserved the clarity and desire to prepare for the final encounter in faith and prayer.

In his religious life and in the priestly



ministry, Father Remo always represented his great love for Augustine. With enthusiasm and tenacity, he spent all his energy on spreading his thoughts and his works, also promoting publications aimed at encouraging widespread knowledge.

Together with the late Father Franco

Monteverde and other brothers, he cultivated and completed the dream of Father Agostino Trapé for the translation and printing of the Opera Omnia of Saint Augustine in the bilingual edition of the Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana, of which he was director for many years.

Father Remo was also very engaged in conferences and training opportunities for male and female Augustinians, priests and lay people in which, with his proverbial temperament and passion, he offered everyone the great gift for the Church of our Holy Father.

His pastoral commitment was exercised mainly at the Community of Cascia and the Basilica of Saint Rita, in the ministry of welcome and dispensation of the sacraments for the many pilgrims

He completed the translation of the Opera Omnia of Saint Augustine

who come here. Father Remo also served as Prior Provincial of the Augustinian Umbra Province.

The whole Augustinian community is grateful to the Lord for the charisms and gifts that he offered through dear Father Remo during these long years.

We imagine him in the company of the Saints of our Order and of the many brothers which takes us back to his memory, first of all Father Luigi Giuliani. We pray that the Lord grant him this reward and continue to offer, to our Order and to each one, the benefits of his caring commitment and his vehement passion for Augustinian life. *(Excerpt from the article published on January 5, 2019 on the agostiniani.it website)* ■

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 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
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