

# FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine  
of Saint Rita of Cascia

BIMONTHLY  
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN  
MONASTERY  
OF SAINT RITA  
OF CASCIA

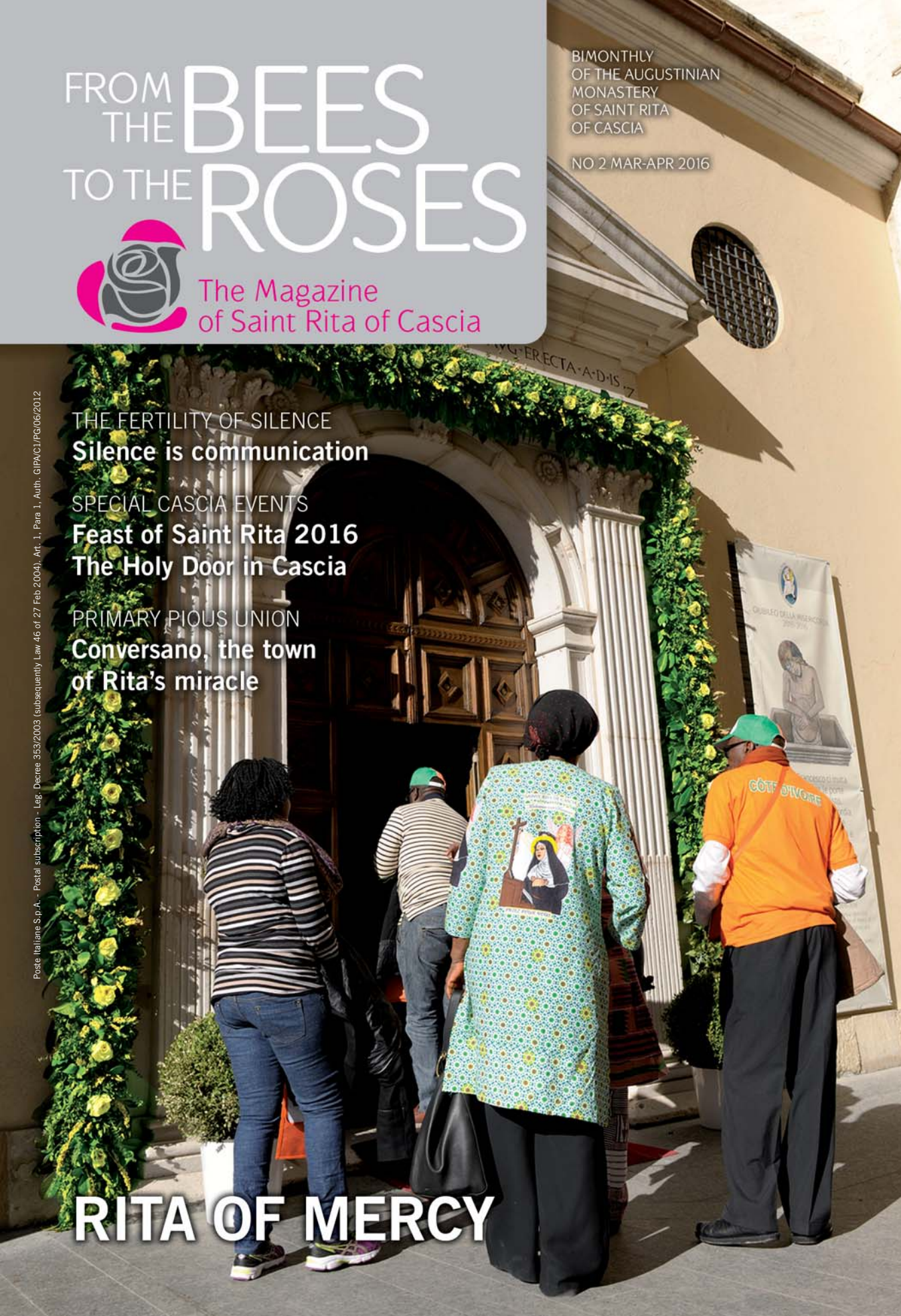
NO 2 MAR-APR 2016

THE FERTILITY OF SILENCE  
**Silence is communication**

SPECIAL CASCIA EVENTS  
**Feast of Saint Rita 2016**  
**The Holy Door in Cascia**

PRIMARY PIOUS UNION  
**Conversano, the town  
of Rita's miracle**

## RITA OF MERCY



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## FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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The test that a student has the next day in front of the teacher requires exercise and patient study. When Saint Rita pilgrims pass through the Holy Door of our Sanctuary, they need to do so in deep meditation. If in the office we must deliver something by a deadline, we activate our maximum capacity of attention.

These seem to be put together without a logical sense. Actually, the moments described above have at least one thing in common: the need for silence – but these are just examples. There are so many occasions that we live every day which would require the absence of “noise” (and I mean everything that distracts, because noise is not necessarily a sound heard, it can also be a perceived presence), but often this is not really possible and we have to produce our result in less than ideal conditions.

Fatigue, distractions, stress and lack of motivation tend to suck us into a vortex from which it seems impossible to get out, which steals our precious time. It may seem strange, but they are situations that we contemplative nuns also experience.

To do things right, you have to “use your head”. And we know, it’s all a question of concentration.

But how can we recover that inner silence that we need?

Sometimes, small details are of great help and, when

we manage to implement them, we realize that it takes less effort than we think. For example, taking short breaks, even when we are convinced of “not being able to afford them”, helps greatly in getting back in touch with ourselves and then with others: stop a moment and close your eyes; take a walk; talk to a friend about this

spect the world around me. The common denominator becomes: “this is time for me, I am doing something, one thing for me” – then everyone interprets it their own way. In our case, the Community is preparing to rejoice in the Risen Christ through prayer and contemplation of the Eucharist, while waiting for the upcoming

## A question of concentration



and that. It might seem strange and contradictory, but the silence of concentration also comes from hearing and speech. Another possibility is doing sport or reading a newspaper article that interests us. Switch off the mobile phone. Take a nap. Sip a coffee. And so on. If I respect myself, I can also re-

ing Easter. And for the occasion, all the sisters are united in the most sincere wishes for a Holy Easter of Resurrection. May it be for you, friends of Saint Rita, a special time of spiritual rebirth, of return to oneself, of silence, which, as I said, is only a question of concentration. It can be done.

# Silence is communication

Sister Maria Agnese Carandente, Abbess of the Augustinian monastery of "Saint Mary of Bethlehem" in Foligno (Perugia), is interviewed by Monica Guarriello

*Born in Quarto (Naples) on 11 April 1931, Sister Maria Agnes Carandente entered the Augustinian monastery of "Saint Mary of Bethlehem" in Foligno (Perugia) on the day of her 16th birthday. Currently, she leads the cloistered community as Mother Superior, always in search of the "light", the one that comes through silence. "Silence," says Mother Agnes, "brings life, illuminates ... becomes communication with God".*

**M**other, you have lived in seclusion for almost 70 years. Why did you make this choice? I'll give a very human example: when two people really love each other, they don't think too much about details, but choose. They choose. I have found the Lord who really lives in me and I have al-

ways talked with him ... For me, seclusion was nothing but my encounter with God to *give myself* to all the brothers of the world. I have understood that prayer is very important for all of humanity. I was already in love with the prayer as a young girl.

In your book **"LA FECONDITÀ DELL'ANIMA CONTEMPLATIVA CLAUSTRALE"** (The Fertility of the Cloistered Contemplative Soul), you claim that the contemplative nun needs to be blind, deaf and dumb. It doesn't make a good impression. Maybe it's like you say (smiles, *ed.*) ... The fact is that the soul which truly loves God acquires its freedom through contradictions. When there is

*Instead of speaking,  
let us listen to God*



The church of the "Saint Mary of Bethlehem" monastery was erected as a Sanctuary two years ago and dedicated to the Mother of Good Counsel.

something that disturbs or disrupts, the contemplative must be blind, deaf and dumb in the sense of not necessarily having to participate. But this applies to everyone, not just for us nuns. This is how you acquire your freedom, because you become



Sr. M. Agnese (second row, third from left) with her Community.

***You can look  
at people as God  
looks at them.  
Silence gives life***

the master of yourself. By offering the Lord in humility not only the good things that lead you "towards the light", but also the negative things that make you feel "in the dark", you make yourself free. The more you offer the Lord, the more you become free. And let us remember that darkness can open up to light. Suffering gives you light, it makes you think.

**What role does silence have in the life of a nun?** If I want, I can remain silent on a

## THE SILENCES OF THE BIBLE

The word of God does not end with the Holy Scriptures, which are only a limited vehicle of the divine mysteries. In this sense, when we read a passage from the Bible, we certainly find ourselves facing the Word, but also its "omission": things unspoken, unwritten, silences that conceal the most "extensive" divine revelation. Even in the Word, there is a space occupied by silences.

These are inevitable silences, given that human language cannot contain the totality of the divine mysteries; but there is also a necessary silence which, by God's will, led the authors to hide those mysteries that can only be revealed to those who choose to accept the Word, wanting to be responsible for his message. Thus, silence becomes a "passage" that leads to the fullness of God, as if it were a bridge, but which I can only cross if I decide to do so freely. (Loosely based on the thinking of Origene analizzato (Origen analysed) by Emmanuel Albano in *I silenzi delle Sacre Scritture* (The Silences of the Holy Scriptures), *Istituto Patristico Augustinianum* 2014)

chaotic day or in the midst of many people, but I can also decide not to remain so on a day that instead should be dedicated to silence. Regardless of the context, when

## THE WORD

Edited by  
Fr. Vittorino Grossi OSA

**"When the Lamb broke the seventh seal,  
there was silence in heaven"**

*Revelation 8: 1*

Under the symbolic form of a seal that is removed, the book of Revelation contains God's revelation about the fate of the disciples of Jesus (the saints who follow the Lamb). The number seven is the top of the ladder that man can reach: in front of the throne of God. When the Lamb breaks the seventh seal, there is silence in heaven: seven angels expect from God the messages to take to men (in the symbol of the trumpets); the eighth angel collects the prayers of God's children to offer them on the altar of the Lord (in the symbol of the golden thurible full of perfumes): "And, together with prayers of the saints, the smoke of the incense went up before God from the angel's hand" (Revelation 8: 4).

"There is a Presence in the soul that is indescribable, incomprehensible and mysterious but real, that you see and do not see: it is light, yet it is revealed in the darkness of silence". Mother M. Agnese Carandente accompanies us through the cloistered world to learn about what she calls the "fertility of the contemplative soul" which, in order to undertake a profitable ascetic path, needs to live in humility, in that state of listening that is born from silence. Only a simple heart can truly embrace the Lord.

To request the book, contact the Monastery of Saint Mary of Bethlehem, Foligno (Perugia): tel. 0742670598 - email [monastero.osa.sm.betlem@gmail.com](mailto:monastero.osa.sm.betlem@gmail.com)

### The Fertility of the Cloistered Contemplative Soul

*Presentation of Msgr.*

*Gualtiero Sigismon*

by Maria Agnese Carandente  
Amicizia Cristiana, 10 €



there is God with you, you can build an "inner cell" where you can remain in silence and from where you can look at people as God looks at them. Silence makes you live. It illuminates. It communicates. Silence becomes communication with God. Why is it important to put aside times for being silent? Because it is in those moments that you are before God and, at the same time, communicating with all of humanity. I also

## Put yourself before God like a little girl

wrote in another book, but I'm sure this is not "my own idea", that as a child I went to school for only two years. It is God who speaks to me and enlightens me. I am reflected only in his light. In short, silence gives you balance. It allows you to see yourself and also see yourself in the other. If, instead of speaking, we listen to God, we will naturally listen to the other.

### So, being silent may mean *listening*?

Yes, but not limited to that: when it is fertile, silence means communication, which implies an exchange. Silence is also prayer: it is one thing to say the rosary, another thing is the contemplation of God.

**But how do you achieve the ability to communicate while being quiet?** Only lis-

tening to God can help us. Putting yourself before God as a child, to see who you are and who he is. Humility is born with hearing and with silence ...It is a "spiritual thing", born in prayer. To really know a person, humility is necessary. If you are humble, I believe you. Humility is a gift of God, it is something great. God is great, and yet God is truly humble, because he is true. A real person is humble and this is the characteristic of saints. What does God tell us? To love others. Silence, positive silence, leads to working. Silence is fertility of the spirit, it is the love that leads you to give yourself to others.



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## FEAST OF SAINT RITA 2016

## MAY 20

## Hall of Peace

**21:00 - Presentation of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2016.** Simona Branchetti, TG5 (Mediaset) journalist, presents the *women of Rita 2016* (women, that is, whose life is close to that in the example of the Saint of Cascia) to the community. **Angela Sorrentino** from Lampedusa, who will receive the parchment that is the symbol of the recognition on behalf of the Caritas group of the Parish of St. Gerlando and of the inhabitants of Lampedusa who, every day, are reaching out to the many refugees in search of hope for the future. **Margaret Karram**, a Catholic Arab of Israeli and Palestinian origin, who has encouraged dialogue among Christians, Jews, Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians, starting "from below", from the everyday of life lived; she is a Delegate of the Focolare Movement for Israel and the Palestinian Territories and a member of the Episcopal Commission for Interreligious Dialogue of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land. **Sister Carolina Iavazzo** who worked against the Mafia and lawlessness alongside Blessed Don Pino Puglisi (the priest murdered by the Mafia in 1993 in Palermo); today, she is part of the "Good Samaritan Fraternity" of Bosco Sant'Ippolito, a district in Bovalino (Reggio Calabria), where she initiated the "Father Puglisi" multi-purpose youth centre. **Elena Maximova**, president in Gomel (in Belarus, which has been brought to its knees following the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986) of the Families Association, who has disabled children. In the family tragedy caused by the illness of her son Maxim, who died last year at the age of 30 years due to the cerebral palsy that afflicted him, Elena has relearned to live in solidarity with the families that have been victims of the same tragic events. **Vincenza Riccetti** from Pigge Trevi (Perugia), a wife and mother of two children who, for years, has been reconciling her dedication to the family with volunteer work at the "Monsignor Pietro Bonilli" welcome house in Trevi, which houses girls with mental-physical and intellectual disabilities.

## MAY 21

## Basilica of Saint Rita

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

**17:30 -** Handing over of the **Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2016**. Father Moral hands over the parchment to the *women of Rita*: Angela Sorrentino, Margaret Karram, Sr. Carolina Iavazzo, Elena Maximova and Vincenza Riccetti.

**18:30 - Solemn Celebration of the Transit of Saint Rita**, presided over by the Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, Msgr. Renato Boccardo.

## Churchyard of the Basilica of Saint Rita

**20:45 - Musical entertainment** with the "Giovanni e Donato da Cascia" Band, the mediaeval flag-throwers and Drummers of Cascia, who will parade in the churchyard framed by the illuminations all over the town.

**21:30 -** Arrival of the **Torch of Peace**, a symbol of the 58th **Twinning of Faith and Peace** which unites Cascia with Buenos Aires, in the name of Saint Rita.

## MAY 22, FEAST OF SAINT RITA OF CASCIA

## Hall of Peace

**05:00 -** Start of **Holy Masses**, with the joyful sound of all the bells of Cascia to honour the day of the Solemnity of Saint Rita. Masses will also be celebrated at 06:00, 07:00, 08:00 and 09:00.

Mass at 08:00 will be presided over by the OSA Prior General, Fr. Alejandro Moral Antón.

## Churchyard of the Basilica of Saint Rita

**10:00 -** Arrival of the **Historical Parade** in 15<sup>th</sup> century costumes and the **Procession** bearing the statue of Saint Rita. Leaving Roccaporena, the birthplace of Rita, at 08:30, the two processions join up with that of Cascia at the foot of the town (09:30).

**11:00 - Solemn Pontifical** presided over by Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, Archbishop of Naples, followed by the **Supplication** to Saint Rita and the **Blessing of the Roses** (12:30). The Mass will be animated by the **Poliphonica Nova Choir** from Parabita (Lecce).

## Basilica of Saint Rita

**18:00 - Mass for Benefactors** of the Sanctuary, presided over by the Rector of the Basilica, Fr Mario De Santis, and animated by the choir of the Nuns of the Monastery of Saint Rita.

WE AWAIT YOU IN CASCIA, AT THE SANCTUARY OF SAINT RITA



# Rita of mercy

The Holy Door at the Sanctuary of Saint Rita in Cascia is open every day until 6 November 2016



In an unprecedented historical event on 20 December last year, the Holy Door of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy was opened at the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia.



*Pope Francis: Rita, a sign of God's mercy.*

*"I invite everyone in the upcoming Jubilee of Mercy to reread her extraordinary human and spiritual experience as a sign of the power of God's mercy".*

*(Pope Francis)*



*Dear Saint Rita ... let a shower of rose petals rain from heaven: petals of true love that reach the hearts of spouses, fathers, mothers and persons consecrated to the Lord.  
(Card. Angelo Comastri)*



In addition to the authorities and people of faith bearing witness to the uniqueness and greatness of the event were the Augustinian nuns, who – having exceptionally left their seclusion – passed through the Gate of Mercy after the opening rite pronounced by the Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia Msgr. Renato Boccardo.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HOTEL OF ROSES! THE HOTEL OF SAINT RITA CELEBRATES 60 YEARS

2016 is an important year for one of the works of Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce: *Hotel delle Rose – Pilgrim's House* turns 60!. This activity of the Monastery of Saint Rita was officially inaugurated on 13 March 1956, as attested by the first guest register, and was strongly desired by Mother Abbess Fasce, who rose to Heaven in January 1947. The inspiration which the Holy Spirit had placed in the heart and mind of this strong woman of faith was really ahead of its time and infected the Mothers and Sisters of the Monastery who came after her. Mother Teresa had thought above all of the “health” of spiritual pilgrims, starting the construction of the new temple, or the Basilica of Saint Rita, but did not stop there. She felt that a larger church would have welcomed more pilgrims and that these people would have to be given an all-round welcome. This was the idea that prompted the idea of the project for the Pilgrim's House, a place for stopping over to *refresh* the body, and for the Hospital, a place for *curing* the body. The Mother could not personally carry



The first register of guests of the Pilgrim's House, officially inaugurated on 13 March 1956.

out these two works, but her Sisters were so irradiated by her “maternal spirit” that they themselves took up her legacy and were responsible for carrying her idea through to conclusion in subsequent years.



The staff of Hotel delle Rose - Pilgrim's House, established to welcome devotees of Rita with courtesy, kindness and love.



Hotel delle Rose was born as Pilgrim's House in order to welcome with courtesy, kindness and love the devotees of Rita who were beginning to arrive at Cascia in those years. It is an extension of the Monastery and the Basilica (and, in fact, is located just 20 metres from the Lower Basilica) but, above all, it seeks to be the continuation of the ministry of welcome and consolation offered by the nuns in the Parlatories and by the Augustinian Fathers throughout the entire Sanctuary complex. Run directly at the beginning by the nuns who performed work outside the monastery, in 1982 the Hotel began to draw on the services of a team of specialised lay persons trained in hotel reception and catering.

Each operates within the structure, conscious of contributing to the body-mind-soul well-being of the pilgrim. In these 60 years, several managers of the Hotel have come and gone, but all have worked over time to improve the quality of services offered and to each one goes a heartfelt thanks for what has been done.

Current manager Peter del Rio retraces the 60 years of the life of the structure: "Today we are the protagonists of a historical event ...," he says with emotion. "The first pilgrims arrived by train and would reach Cascia on foot or in rickety carriages. The paved road for Norcia was built in the early '60s, and came to Cascia later. Along with the quality of life, the needs linked to hospitality have also evolved over time. Keeping alive the spirit of welcome sensed by Blessed Fasce, our task has been to adapt the service to the needs of our guests. I think I can say that the path we are taking is the right one, because many positive re-

views have been left by guests on our site". And the process of renewal continues: "We have completed renovation of a part of the hotel," explains the manager, "following a vision that goes for the linear beauty of the furnishings and comfort at a fair price. Success with the public has been immediate! Soon, we will start work on all the rooms (156 in total – Hotel delle Rose is a 3-star hotel and the largest in the town, also offering three restaurants



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dedicated to groups and a fourth area reserved for à la carte dining; a complete service to offer a comfortable stay to both groups of pilgrims and individual tourists who appreciate local food and wine, *ed.*). The mission that was entrusted to me by the Monastery," recalls manager Del Rio, "is, on the one hand, to provide the best possible welcome to our guests, and on the other, to run the complex with a surplus for reinvesting in works of renovation. The monastery does not expect profits, it expects sound economic management. And that's what we're all trying to do with passion and enthusiasm".

# APPOINTMENTS

## Father De Michieli confirmed Provincial

Second term for Father Luciano De Michieli, who was reappointed as head of the Augustinian Province of Italy in February and will stay in office until 2020. On the day of his 57th birthday, Father De Michieli celebrated the re-election with his confrères. The Augustinian Family of Cascia joins in the joy of this good news with the most sincere wishes!



Father Luciano De Michieli

## Cascia (Perugia), March 22 to 26, Meeting of the Friends of St. Augustine

From March 22 to 26, members of the "Friends of St. Augustine" association will gather at the Hotel delle Rose in Cascia for the conference dedicated to in-depth reflection on the theme "Be Happy: On the Paths of Mercy", chosen in the light of the current Holy Year.

## Cascia (Italy) - Buenos Aires (Argentina), April 22 to May 22

### Twinning of Peace and Faith

For the 58th edition of the Twinning which sees the Town of Cascia unite with another of the towns of the world devoted to Saint Rita, the city of Pope Francis has been chosen. The process starts with the official visit of a Cascia delegation to Buenos Aires, from April 22 to 28. To seal the union of the two peoples in the name of Rita, the Argentine delegation, led by the Oblates of the Virgin Mary of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita in Buenos Aires, will be hosted in Cascia for the celebrations of St Rita, from May 20 to 22, during which the Torch of Peace, which started out in the Latin American city, will conclude its journey when it arrives in the churchyard of the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia on the evening of May 21.



## Cascia (Perugia), from April to October, Holy Mass with passage to the urn

Every last Thursday of the month, from April to October, at 18:00, we await you at the Sanctuary of Saint Rita for Holy Mass. After the mass, there will be the passage to the urn, allowing devotees to

(continued on p. 17)





# The eye of the heart

by Father Vittorino Grossi OSA,  
Executive Director, From the Bees to the Roses

**T**he word *mercy* runs through Christians generations, as pronounced and guarded jealously by people in love, who dream of a world in which they are embraced like a treasure trove. In mercy, you feel the embrace of God from whom you had distanced yourself, re-embrace who had mortally offended you, you feel and savour its caress, while your eyes moisten in tenderness.

St. Augustine speaks of mercy as the peculiar “seeing the heart”. The loving gaze that is of the mother, in that continuous staying awake to capture the questions of that little being who is her child. Mercy of the heart is *being aware* of need, like the Madonna at the wedding in Cana, *gets down to doing* (in Cana, the mother of Jesus *begs the Son*), *accompanies* without making the intervention burdensome or getting lost in *judging* who in Cana was responsible for the lack of wine. Pope Francis summarises the rhythm of those who are capable of mercy in the triad “welcome, accompany, do not judge”.

The holy bishop of Hippo relates *seeing of the heart* to the vocabulary of *heart* and *eye of the heart* related to the freedom of man who lives by the grace of God, like a lover who likes to walk leaning gently on the shoulder of his love (St. Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*, 6). In fact, the *eye of the heart* is the only thing able to establish a loving communication between two persons. This takes place not at the level of clamour (of voice) but of attention of the heart. He explains: “The voice without the word

strikes the ear but does not build up the heart ... In my search for a way to let this message reach you, so that the word already in my heart may find place also in yours, I use my voice to speak to you. The sound of my voice brings the meaning of the word to you and then passes away. The word which the sound has brought to you is now in your heart, and yet it is still also in mine” (Ser.

293: 3). The eye of the heart (*oculus cordis*) is a real sense in the order of knowledge and loving attraction which, in some way, can be described on the basis of the model of bodily senses. St. Augustine speaks, for example, of a voluptuousness of the heart (*voluptas cordis*), in the wake of one’s pleasure of their own bodily senses, applying it to the perception of faith, love of God and the unseen reality of the needs of one’s own similar. When pure, therefore, the eye of the heart even draws to God. He explains: “If we want to see God, purify that eye with which God can be seen. Where is this eye? Listen to the Gospel: ‘Blessed are the pure in heart,

for they shall see God’ (Mt 5: 8) ... If you want to see God, have the right idea: God is love. Which face does love have? What form, what stature, which feet, which hands? No one can say. However, it has feet, leading to the Church; it has hands, which give to the poor; it has eyes, with which you come to know of those in need: it is the mercy of seeing of the heart” (Comment on the Letter of John 7: 10). “Recovering mercy” in one’s life is the gift that those who live the Jubilee of Mercy have.



The coat of arms of the Order of St. Augustine: the heart is pierced by the love of God, through knowledge of the Truth which is God.



# Jesus, face of the merciful Father

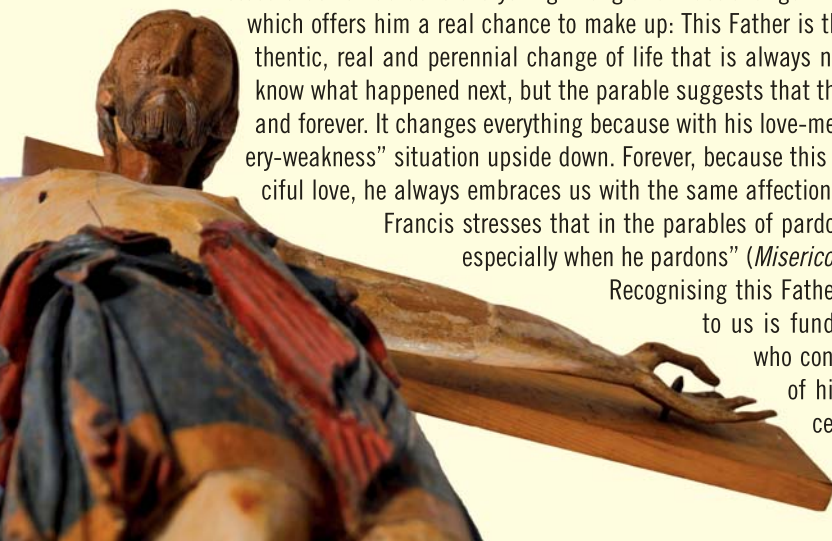
by Msgr. Giovanni Scanavino OSA

In the prologue of his Gospel, Saint John the Evangelist tells us that “no one has ever seen God”, but immediately adds, “the One and only Son – the One who is at the Father’s side – has revealed Him “ (Jn 1: 18). Jesus revealed the Father to us, and in this sense Jesus is the face of the merciful Father. He had once said to the apostle Philip, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves”(Jn 14: 9-11). In Jesus, the same Father speaks to us and shows himself in his works: the mercy of God is learned directly from the Gospel; words and deeds show us the heart of God, where his mercy lives.

A question regularly crops up at this beginning of the Holy Year: what should we do to celebrate the Holy Year in order to acquire a plenary indulgence? It is certainly necessary to pass through the Holy Door and recite some prayers, but the most significant work is certainly to learn mercy from the words and works of Jesus, which we find in the Gospel. The Holy Year starts from the Gospel and is celebrated with the Gospel: when we have assimilated the language, images, gestures and parables of Jesus, then we are able to witness the mercy of the Father for all: this is the true Holy Year. The Holy Year of that *youngest son* who had done everything wrong (the elder brother’s judgment is more explicit: “this son of yours who has devoured your property with prostitutes”) coincided with the meeting and the embrace of the Father (Luke 15.11-32; the parable of the merciful father, *ed.*).

He finally knows him as a true Father and – we think – remains conquered. He is reborn, not because he understood that he had done everything wrong and must change life, but because he encounters the true love, which offers him a real chance to make up: This Father is the benchmark of a true conversion, an authentic, real and perennial change of life that is always new, to be lived and announced. We do not know what happened next, but the parable suggests that this encounter-discovery changes everything and forever. It changes everything because with his love-mercy, this Father allows us to turn the “misery-weakness” situation upside down. Forever, because this Father does not change, he is always merciful love, he always embraces us with the same affection and is always ready to have a feast. Pope Francis stresses that in the parables of pardon, “God is always presented as full of joy, especially when he pardons” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 9).

Recognising this Father and meeting him as Jesus presents him to us is fundamental for conversion, because it is he who converts, not our good will; it is the certainty of his almighty love which changes the heart, certainly not our fears or the threat of some punishment. It is not easy to see this Father in the ministry of sacramental Con-







fession and Eucharist, but when absolution is pronounced this is where we need to make the voice coincide with the embrace of the Father who gives pardon and celebration. This is why the Holy Year experience becomes real in the celebration of the Sacraments of the pilgrim, sacramental Confession and Eucharist, because it is in these Sacraments that we concretely receive all divine mercy, and we grow in the ability to give it to our neighbour with the same generosity. The scheme of the encounter with the Father is relived: he pardons us and restores all his love to us; all he asks of us is to do the same with our neighbours, and we can do it because the mercy that he gives us is his own Spirit. This is the circuit of mercy. The same Spirit gives us all the love of the Father and of the Son; the same Spirit consecrates the bread and wine and gives us the life and salvation of Jesus Crucified and Risen. Mercy becomes the masterpiece of the Holy Trinity, a love that is more powerful than all weakness and death itself. Knowing this masterpiece and transmitting it is really the heart of the Gospel and of the Holy Year.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

The Pope invites us to perform the seven corporal works of mercy and the seven spiritual works of mercy. In this issue, we continue with reflection on the 4th and 5th works of corporal mercy:

### **SHELTER PILGRIMS.**

In the broadest sense, giving hospitality to pilgrims in our times means welcoming anyone who is a stranger: the foreigner, the homeless person, the person who is different from me. But today it is difficult to think that a family will have a spare room to make available to someone in need, besides the not insignificant fear of "putting in the home" someone who is potentially dangerous for our safety. What is difficult for an ordinary family is certainly easier for a religious family: a community of nuns or monks, for example, can devote part of the structure in which it lives for accommodation. But back to the lay person. A Christian can accomplish this work of mercy if, for example, he/she does a job that handles evictions: the Christian may wonder if it is actually necessary to continue the practice, without being a "victim" of impersonal bureaucratic procedures. However, first and foremost, welcoming has to do with listening to the other in a culture of hospitality. Welcoming the stranger is not just opening the doors of homes but is about being open to the other, considering ourselves a home that welcomes. I am home. I can open myself to the other. How? By conversing with the other, listening to the other without prejudice, giving the other time to make himself or herself known to us for what he/she really is, not what

I think he/she is. I don't do it to feel good, I do it because I am the same as the other. It takes humility. It takes curiosity.

### **VISIT THE SICK.**

Older people have health problems and, therefore, often spend most of their time shut up in the house. For them, talking to someone, seeing someone means living. Let's go, for example, to find an elderly neighbour who we know is alone, or a person admitted to the hospital; we do not necessarily have to know them. Being a volunteer can be an opportunity to perform this work of mercy. But even doctors or health care professionals in general can do their work by going beyond the mere exercise of their functions and also adding a value of justice and charity to their profession.

Alone and helpless, the sick person asks us to be listened to, to be accepted. But because the sick person is physically ill is weak, we who are in good health feel we are in a stronger position. We should remind ourselves that we have no "power" over the patient, that the patient should not be forced to take what we who go to visit him want to give him/her. Yes, we are driven by good intentions, but good intentions risk making us feel gratified for the gesture we are making, without considering the real needs of those we go to visit. Visiting the sick person means letting him or her guide the meeting, instead of us feeling ourselves as "saviours" or "Samaritans". Visiting the sick person means seeing, appreciating, esteeming, considering and attributing value to the sick person ... and receiving value in return.



# Jubilee of Mercy in the land of Rita

by Alessia Nicoletti

**O**n 20 December last year, a historic event without precedent took place – the opening of the Holy Door of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy at the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia. In addition to the mass of authorities, people and faithful bearing witness to the uniqueness and greatness of the event were the Augustinian nuns, who – having exceptionally left their seclusion – were the first to pass through the Gate of Mercy, immediately after Archbishop Renato Boccardo and the priests. This was the start of the long and extraordinary Jubilee journey in the land of Saint Rita where, thanks to the universal and timeless message of the Saint, two Holy Doors were opened: one at the Sanctuary of Roccaporena, her native town, and the other at the Basilica in Cascia which guards her incorrupt body. After the ceremony, in the early hours

of the morning in Roccaporena, the Archbishop reached the avenue of the Basilica, where the celebration began with the reading of a passage of the Bull with which Pope Francis convened the Holy Year. Then the procession started up to the Holy Door, located on the left side of the facade of the Basilica, which Msgr. Boccardo opened, then pausing in prayer on the threshold. Immediately after this, the faithful began to enter in a moment full of emotion, which saw the participation of many pilgrims and the whole community, schools, associations, guests of the hospital's rehabilitation centre, the boys of the educational centre of Roccaporena and the Little Bees of the Beehive of Saint Rita, welcoming the embrace and precious gift of God's mercy. The liturgy, which was enlivened by the singing of the nuns, was celebrated by Archbishop Boccardo, priests, Augustinian religious

and diocesans, including the rector of the Basilica, Father Mario De Santis. In his homily, Msgr. Boccardo reminded those present that, in being merciful and forgiving, God rejoices and expresses his omnipotence. "In this Holy Year," he said, "we are invited to feel found again by Jesus, because we all need to be reconciled and no one is without sin. Therefore, passing through the Holy Door shows that everyone, even the distant and those who do not feel worthy, are welcomed by the Father. Crossing its threshold means relying on Christ, engaging in a process of conversion. Here, in the land of Rita, instrument of the power of God's mercy, as Pope Francis called her, the Holy Door is opened to make mercy and pardon grow and to ensure that, in the school of Rita, a woman of peace, thousands of people from all over Italy and the world may experience this".

## Holy Door at the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia

During the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, if you wish, we await you in Cascia to pass through the Holy Door of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita, which remains open until 6 November 2016.





(continued from p. 12)

gather in prayer before the body of the saint, without the physical separation of the grating. For those who cannot attend, the ceremony will be broadcast in live streaming on the Augustinian Saint Rita of Cascia YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/monasterosantarita](http://www.youtube.com/monasterosantarita). Here are the dates: April 28, May 26, June 30, July 28, August 25, September 29 and October 27.

### **Cascia (Perugia), May Marian Month**

Every evening in May, at 21:00, we await you for the Holy Rosary in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Basilica of Saint Rita. On May 31, at 21:00, the Marian Month closes with a procession from the Church of St. Francis to the Basilica of Saint Rita.

### **Cascia (Perugia), May 8 Jubilee of the Family**

At 16:00 in the Basilica of Saint Rita, Holy Mass will be celebrated for the Jubilee of Families. During the celebration, married couples who celebrate

their 10th / 20th / 25th / 30th / 35th / 40th / 45th / 50th / 55th / 60th wedding anniversaries in 2016 will receive the Souvenir Parchment of Saint Rita and a rose. To receive the parchment, you must be present and book beforehand at the Information Office of the Sanctuary, tel.+ 39 074 375 091.

### **Cascia (Perugia), May 12 to 20 Novena of Saint Rita**

Appointment at 18:00 from May 12 to 20 in the Basilica of Saint Rita for the Novena in preparation for the great feast of May 22. Holy Mass will be animated by the parishes of the Valnerina valley, followed by entry to the chapel which houses the body of Saint Rita.



### **Cascia (Perugia), May 15 Procession of the Standard**

The traditional Procession of the Standard leaves the Sanctuary of Saint Rita at 21:00 on May 15. Instituted by the City Council in 1731, the procession is a thanksgiving to the saint, to whom the inhabitants turned for protection against earthquakes in the 18th century. The 17th century standard carried in procession depicts Rita's entry into the monastery. Local participants will include schools, humanitarian and religious associations and the Beehive of Saint Rita.





# Onorina: "Mother Fasce welcomed me"

*Onorina came to the Beehive of Saint Rita 75 years ago, at the age of 5: she was one of the first Little Bees welcomed by Mother Maria Teresa Fasce, the abbess who, in 1938, founded the Beehive of Saint Rita. Today, Onorina lives in Piedmont but returns to Cascia without fail every year to re-discover the people and places of her childhood ...*

I entered the Beehive of Saint Rita in 1941 on the death of my mother. I was 5 years old and I was with my sister. It was Mother Fasce who welcomed us and she was always very present for us Little Bees (as the Mother called the little girls affectionately, *ed.*). I received confirmation from her because the godmother my father had chosen for me from the town did not turn up and I was alone. So Mother Fasce said:

"I'll handle it, I'll do the confirmation".

I saw the birth of the Beehive, I saw it as they were building it, from the moment Abbess Fasce bought the land (while the current Beehive building dates to the '50s, the proj-



Onorina in Cascia, along with "exceptional" former Little Bee Sister M. Teresa Ciavatta, who joined Blessed Fasce and Saint Rita in heaven in November.

ect started in 1938, when Blessed Fasce welcomed the first Little Bee into the cloistered monastery, *ed.*). In the old college, there were two big dormitories and there was the nun with a private area who slept with us, with the

youngest. I remember that in Vicar, Sister Guglielma always had big "pock-ets" full of pastries of Saint Rita, the ones that the nuns make, and which they gave us when they met us. She was very good. Then the school was run

by them in there. When I grew up, I helped Sister Teresa watch the younger girls. As far as they could, they did not let us want for anything. We were fine. I remained very loyal to the nuns.



## MOTHER FASCE AND THE FEAST OF THE ABBESS

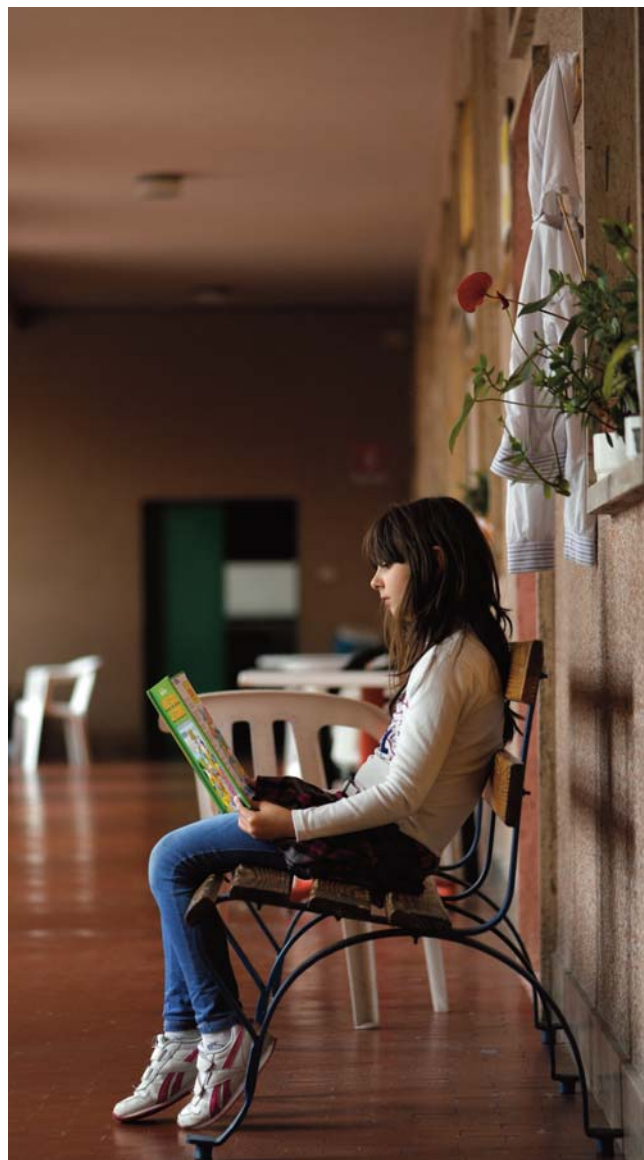
On 18 January, the Little Bees (who live in the Beehive of Saint Rita) and Wildflowers (guests of the Beehive during the day) celebrated the memory of Blessed Mother Maria Teresa Fasce, unforgettable abbess of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia. On that day 69 years ago, in fact, "the Mother," as everyone called her, ascended to heaven after exhausting suffering of the body and extraordinary strength of spirit. For this great woman and blessed – who contributed decisively to spreading devotion to Saint Rita throughout the world, built today's Basilica of the Sanctuary, the town's hospital and the Pilgrim's House (today, Hotel delle Rose), and founded the From the Bees to the Roses magazine and the Beehive of Saint Rita social project – the Little Bees and Wildflowers organise an annual day event known as the "Feast of



The Abbess, Mother Natalina (centre), along with the Little Bees, Wildflowers and her sisters.

the Abbess". In memory of Blessed Fasce, the feast also pays tribute to the Abbess currently in office. Along with Sister Melania De Luca (the only nun delegated to live in the house of the Beehive), the Community of the Monastery and the Beehive chaplain Father Mario Di Quinzio, and the girls and children participated in the Holy Mass, and then united around a large table for a banquet in the presence of the Abbess in office, Mother M. Natalina Todeschini. Amid smiles and applause, the Abbess thanked the Little Bees and Wildflowers on behalf of the whole Community for their efforts in the preparations.

## SAINT RITA FOUNDATION



Since 1938, the Beehive of Saint Rita in Cascia, has housed girls in need of assistance and aid. Young people with parents unable to take care of them full-time. For them it aims to be a nest in which to grow serenely.

When I left, I was 19 and I moved first to Rome, then to Spoleto, and finally to Turin, where I still live with my family. I have three sons and a granddaughter, take care of my family full time, and I devote myself to my own parish, especially for charitable activities. My experience in the Beehive transmitted the value of sharing with those who have little, with respect and joy for the little things.



PIA UNIONE PRIMARIA  
SANTA RITA  
DA CASCIA  
Famiglia agostiniana

Edited by Alessandra Paoloni, PPU General Secretary  
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# The town of Rita's miracle

by Domenica Sidella, head of PPU Conversano (Bari)

**C**onversano is a small town in the province of Bari. It was here, in 1877, that one of the three miracles took place that would lead Pope Leo XIII to canonically establish the sanctity of Rita of Cascia. Tailor Cosimo Pellegrino was affected by a serious and unknown brain disease. His wife begged and pleaded with the Blessed Rita in the Church of Santi Medici in Conversano.



Three days after the celebration of Holy Mass in honour of Rita, in May, the old tailor fainted and then awakened with amazement, healed and happy. He recounted how he had had a vision where a smiling Rita told him he would be healed. The event struck the then Bishop of Conversano, Cosimo Gennaro, who years later instructed the canonical process for recognition of the miracle, which proved decisive for the beat-

ification of Rita. The devotion to the Saint of Cascia, which was already deeply felt by the inhabitants of Conversano, became even stronger, so much so that, in 1915 in the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian, Monsignor Lamberti instituted the Pious Union in honour of Saint Rita of Cascia. The purpose of the Pious Union was the greater glory of God through worship of Saint Rita and to deserve her patronage, in life and in death, through imitation of her virtues. The bond with the Umbrian city was very strong and, in 1998, on the initiative of Monsignor Domenico Padovano, the twinning between the towns of Cascia and Conversano took place in honour of Saint Rita. Years later, another important milestone for the bond between Cascia and Conversano was reached. On 27 September 2015, on the occasion of the Regional PPU Meeting in Molfetta, the moving ceremony of affiliation between the Pious Union of Conversano and the Primary Pious Union of Cascia took place. The symbol of this union was the posting of the rosette on the local standard. With the hope that devotion to Saint Rita supports all Pious Union members, all devotees and associates committed themselves to promoting in the Christian community and in civil society the values of the family, peace, pardon and reconciliation, which are the unique characteristics of the human and Christian testimony of the Saint.

## JOIN THE PPU

Whether you are an individual or member of a group, join the PPU! In this way you will take part in our meetings, getting to know people like you devoted to the beloved St. Rita. For information, you can contact the Secretary General Alessandra Paoloni: [piaunione@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:piaunione@santaritadacascia.org)



# Keyword: Welcome

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

From 19 to 21 January, in the context of the great events of the Jubilee of Mercy, the Roman organisation gathered together all those working in Sanctuaries – priests, religious and male and female operators – for three days focused on pilgrimage and its religious significance. There was discussion and reflection on what Pope Saint John XXIII had already said about the Parish, the start of the pilgrim's path, calling it “the village fountain where, before setting out, the pilgrim – or the tourist of the spirit – draws water and quenches his thirst for facing fatigue and the unexpected on the journey towards the *Sanctuary*, defined by Blessed Pope Paul VI the “clinic of the spirit” where the water of the Samaritan (Jn 4: 1-26), lubricates and animates hearts encrusted by misery and human and moral suffering.

Today, the sanctuary retains an extraordinary fascination for pilgrims, in view of the increasing number who go there. Men and women, young and old, people of all ages and social condition and, not infrequently, even non-Catholics, come to find refreshment of the soul. But the “village fountain” will have the joy of seeing “its users” draw water, only if



At the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia, the nuns and fathers offer a listening service to pilgrims in search of comfort.

sanctuaries, in the person of its priests and operators are able to welcome, listen to and dialogue, with patience and love, with those crossing the threshold of the sanctuary. This is where Pope Francis, in his speech in the Nervi Hall (for the Audience with participants at the Jubilee for Pilgrimage Operators on 21 January 2016, *ed.*), expertly demonstrated his ability to enter the hearts of the 1,500 present by combining elements far and wide in one word – *welcome* – which he defined as the keyword for priests, religious, and male and female operators of the Sanctuary. “With welcome,” stressed Pope Francis, “we stake all ... and patience is also necessary! The Gospels present Jesus to us always welcoming those who approach Him, especial-

ly the sick, the sinners and the marginalised.” The Holy Father addressed a final word to the ministers of pardon: the sanctuary “is a house of pardon, where everyone encounters the Father’s mercy, who has mercy for all, no one excluded. He who approaches a confessional does so because he is repentant, he is repentant of his sin. He feels the need to go there. He perceives clearly that God does not condemn him, but receives and embraces him, as the Father of the Prodigal Son, to restore his filial dignity to him (cf. Luke 15: 20-24). Then, as is his custom, Pope Francis assured his “prayer for the intercession of Mary our Mother”, inviting everyone to live their service “as a work of corporal and spiritual mercy”.

# Looking at ourselves

by Father Giuseppe Caruso OSA

**W**hen you think of a monastery, you quite rightly imagine a silent place: in every religious community, silence is always considered a condition to be sought after and defended. It was also like this in the Monastery of Saint Mary Magdalene in Cascia (today's Monastery of Saint Rita, *ed.*), where Rita lived the last phase of her earthly existence.

It is not easy to explain why so much value has been assigned to silence, especially because to do so you need to use words that actually destroy it; but we will try.

Silence is often perceived as an attitude that is in some way aggressive: The person who is silent is someone who takes their distance from a situation, has nothing to say or wants to emphasise their de-



Augustinian nun in contemplation before the body of Saint Rita in Cascia.

## THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

*To you, Lord, we humbly recommend these our dead. Take them into your Paradise, where there is no more grief, no pain, no tears, but peace and joy with your Son and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Adele Pozzan (Grancona VI - Italy)  
Adelina Corradini (Rome - Italy)  
Adelina Vaccari (Cavriana MN - Italy)  
Ambrogina De Angelis (Palestro PV - Italy)  
Angélique Favre (Switzerland)  
Anna Cinco (Trieste - Italy)  
Anna Maria Prestini Legati (Castel Goffredo MN - Italy)  
Antonia Fara (Iglesias CI - Italy)  
Bruno Fara (Iglesias CI - Italy)  
Carmela Calderoni (Ravenna - Italy)  
Dino Dalzotto (Montecchio Precalcino VI - Italy)  
Emma Sacconcelli (Tuoro sul Trasimeno PG - Italy)  
Ercole Brundu (Porto Torres SS - Italy)  
Ermilda Calura (Galbiate LC - Italia)  
Fausta Porcella (Cagliari - Italy)  
Fausta Tronci Porcella (Italy)  
Francesco Lamberti (Solarolo di Goito MN - Italy)  
Franco Stingo (Villaricca NA - Italy)  
Giovanna Luciani (Gallarate VA - Italy)  
Ivo Manfredi (Torre de' Picenardi CR - Italy)  
Lauretta Capovilla (Vigonza PD - Italy)  
Leonardo Porcelli (Orta Nova FG - Italy)  
Lucia Petroni (Terni - Italy)  
Maria Palumbo (Aversa CE - Italy)  
Maria Peressini (Tolmezzo UD - Italy)  
Marisa Matzè (Iglesias CI - Italy)  
Michelina Carlevaro (Genoa - Italy)  
Natala Marinelli (Senigallia AN - Italy)  
Nicoletta Mazzante (Pescara - Italy)  
Ninetta Conoscenti (Castelbuono PA - Italy)  
Palmira Tedoldi (Casale Cremasco CR - Italy)  
Pietro Giovannone (Solarolo di Goito MN - Italy)  
Raimondo Cabriolu (Villacidro VS - Italy)  
Tommaso Stanizzi (Cropani CZ - Italy)  
Virginia Mennella (Torre del Greco NA - Italy)

# GRACE RECEIVED

## TESTIMONY OF MARIA, ROME - ITALY

I want to make known the healing of my daughter Marina through the intercession of Saint Rita. In July 2015, Marina was struck by a severe brain haemorrhage. She was taken to Policlinico Umberto I and underwent surgery that lasted eight hours. On leaving the operating theatre, the surgeon said: "We've saved her life, but now we have to wait 48 hours to be sure ... We don't know how she will react". Marina was put into an induced coma and the 48 hours turned into interminable days. I turned then to Saint Rita and I made the novena and recited rosary. Actually, the novena became fifteen, because Marina remained in a coma for 15 days.

You cannot imagine what it's like for a mother to see her daughter through a window attached to tubes! Then, slowly, to the amazement of all, Marina started to awaken, moving her fingers, hands and feet, and opening her eyes. She could not speak because she had undergone a tracheotomy, but she made herself understood by moving her lips. We were advised to transfer her to a rehabilitation centre, and there she began a slow and steady recovery. The statue of Saint Rita was present in the gym where Marina did her physical therapy and the name of the director of the department was Rita - maybe this was a coincidence? Every day, Marina made progress and everyone was amazed. In mid-October, she had the bone graft operation to replace what had been removed in order to proceed with the operation in July. It went well and the surgeon was amazed by the success. Marina was again transferred to the Saint Lucia rehabilitation centre, but by now she was completely healed. On the 15th she was discharged and returned to her family and her son and, above all, she went back to work. Me and my other daughter Monica, who is also very devout, thank Saint Rita and Saint Monica at the tomb where I went to pray. I also want to say that, four years ago, Marina had breast cancer and Saint Rita also helped then.

## PRAYER

In Your hands, Lord, I commend my life, my day, my tears, my thanks.

Let my life become prayer for You, because I feel surrounded by the perennial embrace of your love.

In the darkness of my pain, give me the strength to recognise when it is right to fight and never leave me alone, but allow my life to become presence of You my Lord.

Help me give meaning to what I have lost, You who scrutinise and know my heart. Be my teacher and my guide and enter the depths of my being.

Make me understand that facing the night can help me take the first step towards the dawn of a new day, where You await me with all that I have loved and lost.

*(Prayer written by Isabella from Campobasso)*

sire to break any positive contact; think of those sullen silences which so eloquently express discomfort or aversion. But this is, of course, very far from true religious silence.

Religious silence does not concern a general absence of sound, but rather the interruption of that flow of words with which we recount to others and often, above all, to ourselves, who we are, always making sure to give ourselves an image, whether good or bad, but which we have become accustomed to and therefore reassures us. When we are truly silent within ourselves, stopping to recount ourselves, we are in the ideal situation to hear the voice of God who reveals to us who we really are, that voice that can help us discover persons different from those that we thought we were, persons that God has created with love, persons that God always loves.





**O**n the day of the Epiphany, in the Eucharistic celebration, Mother Church announces Easter with these words: “Dear brothers and sisters, the glory of the Lord was manifested and always will be manifested in our midst until his return. In the rhythms and events time, we recall and live the mysteries of salvation. During the entire liturgical year, the focus is the Triduum of the Crucified Lord, buried and risen, which will culminate on Easter Sunday, 27 March 2016”.

The Paschal Triduum is the beating heart of the entire liturgical year of the Church. Our life as Christians is completely

# In silence

by Sister Giacomina Stuani, OSA

guided towards this expectation of the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord. If we stop at the first two mysteries, passion and death, we think it's over! But if we remember what Jesus himself told us in the Scripture: “... after three days I will rise ...”, then our expectation of holy Thursday-Friday-Saturday is fruitful, is full of meaning and reaches its fullness, its culmination in the Sunday of the Resurrection. In the Easter Triduum, which begins on the Thursday with the Mass of the Last Supper and ends on Easter Sunday, liturgy calls on us, in silence, to retrace the Scripture, to join the Son of God in his mysterious and victorious path towards salvation, our salvation. The crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus are the “credentials” for entering the new life, life as risen – gift and mystery together.

We said: in silence ... Silence is precious for stopping and reflecting on the many stimuli we receive, for focusing on the really important questions of our life. Think of the silence of Holy Saturday. Christ lies in the tomb, our heart contemplates the mystery of His death, the value of this death for our lives. The Liturgy of the Hours, with psalms and readings, makes us stand before the tomb. It is not a time of mourning, but a meditative pause in expectation of the fulfilment of God's promises. “What has happened? Today on earth there is great silence, great silence and solitude. Great silence because the King sleeps: the earth trembled and remained silent because God made flesh has fallen asleep”, according to an ancient homily on Holy Saturday. Our Augustinian brother Blessed Simone of Cascia, a passionate preacher on Christ's humanity, saw wilderness-silence as the culmination of love because it allows us rest in Christ:

"Take refuge, therefore, brother in Christ who became our refuge lifting us up from generation of the flesh to that of the spirit, from the generation of the bad to that of the good, from the generation of the wicked to that of the perfect [...] Where is rest? In the wilderness. Where is peace? In the wilderness. Where does the restless eye find rest? In the wilderness. Where does the ear rest from useless noise? In the wilderness. Where can man enter into dialogue with himself? In the wilderness". Even the public life of Jesus, his "heading decidedly" towards Jerusalem to fulfil the will of the Father, began in the silence and solitude of the wilderness (Luke 4: 1-13), and was spent in other glaring silences, up to that offered by the question of questions. The one that was asked by Pontius Pilate, the man of power who had the fate of meeting the eye of God on earth: "What is truth?" (Jn 18: 38). Jesus did not answer, offering himself. And leaving the question open for each of us.

If the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week are the "quasi" point of arrival of a strong and deep itinerary of faith and life which started on Ash Wednesday, the night is the lone and silent spectator of the point of arrival of this itinerary that is the Resurrection. We listen to the beautiful words of the Exsultet, the solemn announcement of praise sung on the night of the Easter Vigil, with which the victory of light over darkness is proclaimed, symbolised by the Paschal candle which is lit and announces the resurrection of Christ: "O truly blessed night, worthy alone to know the time and hour when Christ rose from the underworld! This is the night of which it is written: The night shall be as bright as day, dazzling is the night for me, and full of gladness. The sanctifying power of this night dispels wickedness, washes faults away, restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to mourners, drives out hatred, fosters concord, and brings down the mighty ... O truly blessed night, when things of heaven are wed to those of earth, and divine to the human". Holy Easter of the Lord!

## "Rich in Mercy ... ... rich in Thanks! "

Dear friend,  
how many reasons we have to say THANKS to the Lord, grateful above all because we are loved.  
Thanks because ... God bursts into our lives with his Word.  
Thanks because ... God seduces us with his gaze that attracts.  
Thanks because ... God chooses us and leads us to the fullness of life.  
Do you also want to try to say your "Thanks because ..." and to repeat with Saint Augustine: "I now exist because of Your goodness, which made provision for all that You have made me to be and all that You have made me from ... My happiness depends on You" (Confessions, 13: 1,1)?  
We await you!

**Women's Vocational  
Orientation Course  
From 8 to 13 August 2016**



For information:  
Monastero di Santa Rita - 06043 Cascia (PG), Italia  
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e-mail: [monastero@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:monastero@santaritadacascia.org)

# Why do we celebrate Mass for the dead?

*Rev. Mother, for a long time I have been curious about something. When St. John Paul II died, it was written in his will that he would have liked "Holy Mass". So, I have been wondering whether, when we have a Mass said for the soul of our deceased loved, on the other side, in the afterlife, does the Lord make the deceased take "a small step" toward purgatory or heaven where he is? Sometimes, at the beginning of the Mass, I hear the priest recommend certain names, sometimes they are also too many, to the Lord. I live in the province of Fermo (in the Marche region) and right in a church nearby, in the arch there is a dedication written by St. Paul the apostle, which reads: for whatever Holy Mass celebrated in that church, the deceased will benefit from a "tot" period of purgatory, as if they were receiving a push toward heaven.*

Marcella C.

Dear Marcella,  
when we close our eyes to this world to open them to the light of God, in eternal life, before entering into the light and peace of God, every person needs purification in order to remove all the "waste" from their inner being that human frailty has deposited there. Mother Church has always encouraged praying for the dead so that, as the Holy Scripture says, "they may be absolved of their sins" (2 Mac 12: 45). In this context of purification, people are invited to offer prayers for their dead: alms, works of penance, acts of charity, but above all celebration of the Holy Mass, in which Jesus himself makes our prayers for the souls of our loved ones His own and presents them to God the Father. The Catechism for adults says that, finding the dead in this state of purification – purgatory, in fact – "they may be helped by the prayers of the Church and of individual Christians, above all by Holy Mass". It is, in fact, in the celebration of Mass, in which the communion of the saints is expressed – or the solidarity of believers

and the Christian community in praying to God – that solidarity is necessary before oneself and we are called on to cooperate with his grace in order to facilitate purification of deceased. Praying for the souls of the dead means *spiritual work*, a good offered to God on behalf of the dead. Praying for the souls of the dead means entrusting them to the mercy of God the Father, asking that they be freed from the earthly sins they have committed through human weakness so that they may live in eternal happiness. Pope Francis reminded us of this in his Angelus of 2 November 2014: "Church tradition has always urged prayer for the deceased, in particular by offering the Eucharistic Celebration for them: it is the best spiritual help that we can give to their souls, particularly to those who are the most forsaken". St. Augustine also tells us that his mother Monica, before dying, had told him: "Bury my body wherever you will; let not care of it cause you any concern. One thing only I ask you, that you remember me at the altar of the Lord wherever you may be" (Confessions 9: 11, 27).

Praying for the souls of the dead is an act of love: and God is always looking for love in us. So let us pray for our dead loved ones, so that they may receive remission of the punishment due to their sins and hear the call of the Lord: Come, good and faithful servant, to rest, to joy and peace that know no sunset!



## THE ABBESS RESPONDS

If you want to share your hopes or fears or your doubts or happiness with us write to [monastero@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:monastero@santaritadacascia.org), specifying your consent for publication of the letter. Mother M. Natalina will reply to everyone, either through the Magazine or in private.



# "SAINT RITA" HOUSE OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISES COURSE PROGRAMME 2016



## COURSES FOR PRIESTS AND DEACONS

**July 4 (lunch) - 9**

"Augustinianum" Patristic Institute  
*The "ministry of mercy"*

**October 10 (lunch) - 15**

*Msgr. Giovanni Scanavino OSA*  
*Priests of the third millennium:*  
*Spiritual fathers and confes-*  
*sors*

## COURSES FOR THE RELIGIOUS AND FOR THE CONSECRATED

**April 3 - 9**

Provincial Chapter of the Augustinian Province of Italy

## COURSES FOR LAITY

**March 11 - 13**

Lombardy Saint Rita Pious Union

**August 1 (lunch) - 6**

Fr. Giuseppe Pagano OSA  
*Merciful as the Father*

**August 8 - 12**

*Msgr. Giovanni Scanavino OSA*  
*One rule for all: Daily training*  
*for life in the Spirit*

**August 26 - 28**

Don Gianfranco Basti  
*Course for engaged couples*  
Contact: Sophie Alicino,  
Mobile 333.81.80.301  
e-mail amucidisantapuden-  
ziana@gmail.com

**September 5 (lunch) - 8**

For friends and collaborators  
(also potential) of the Augustinians

Fr. Giuseppe Pagano OSA  
*God is love: comment on the*  
*first letter of St. John by St. Augustine*

**October 7 - 9**

*Heads of Saint Rita Pious Unions*  
Fr. Ludovico Centra OSA

**October 19 - 26**

Course in German  
Fr. Christoph Weberbauer OSA  
e-mail  
Christoph@augustiner.de

**October 27 - 31**

Fr. Francesco Maria Giuliani OSA  
*May they have life and have it*  
*in abundance*

## MALE VOCATIONS

Young men in search of their vocation can spend periods of prayer and meditation on the Word of God and on fraternal life with Augustinian religious communities. Those interested can call +39 0743 75091.

**In free time, the House  
willingly welcomes groups  
organised by others**

Courses for lay people have a different duration. The first date indicates the starting day (in the evening), the second that of departure (in the morning).

The participation fee, including all living expenses, is 40 euro per day, (supplement for single room € 8).

Reservations should be sent to:

### EMAIL:

casaesercizi@santaritadacascia.org

**Post:** Management, Casa Esercizi Spirituali "Santa Rita" - 06043 CASCIA (PG)

**Phone:** the House phone (operated only during the courses) is +39 0743 71229; at other times, call +39 0743 75091

**Fax:** +39 0743 76476

It is our  
task to let  
them grow  
serenely.

estrogenti

**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.

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