

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 2017

FATHER VITTORINO GROSSI
Easter is the liturgy of life

FEATURING MOTHER FASCE
Story of a journey

TRACES OF RITA
Saint Rita, woman of joy

THE JOY OF EASTER

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FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

Bimonthly of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia
No. 2 March-April 2017

Auth. Court of Spoleto No. 9 of 26.06.1954. ROC Registry No. 2460
Italian edition: Year XCIV English edition: Year LVI
French edition: Year LV Spanish edition: Year XLV
German edition: Year XLV Portuguese edition: Year IV

On the cover: The joy of Easter. Photo: Fotolia.com ©vololibero

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Thanks to

Sr. M. Natalina Todeschini, Sr. Maria Rosa Bernardinis, Marta Ferraro, Cristina Siccardi

Photos

Giovanni Galardini, Massimo Chiappini, Lamberto Manni, Roger Bergonzoli, PPU Nigeria, Carlo Tini Brunozzi, Fotolia.com: © olly

Graphic Design and Layout

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Post office: a/c 69-8517-0

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06043 Cascia PG - Italy

IBAN CH8309000000690085170

FOR GERMANY

Post office: a/c 14421706

Payable to: Superior of the Monastery of Saint Rita

06043 Cascia PG - Italy

IBAN DE11600100700014421706

Printed in March 2017 by Litografotodi Ltd. on behalf of Tau Editrice Srl, Via Umbria 148, 06059 Todi (PG).



MISTO
Carta da fonti gestite
in maniera responsabile
FSC® C111553

The From the Bees to the Roses magazine is printed on environmentally-friendly FSC-certified paper

Christianity is not easy, but it is happy

For us, the traditional greeting of “Happy Easter” is not conventional and vain. Joy is the true Christian heritage. We are happy to announce the happiness of Easter. Christianity is not easy, but it is happy.

It is happy, not for the outward and temporal forms which human happiness takes – today torn by disputes that arise from its very heart and reveal insufficiency, non-existence, injustice and futility – but for the invincible reasons on which it is based; reasons of the infinite happiness of God, which radiates in love on the human scene, sows its sparks and appeals to a higher fullness, beating on the threshold of the human heart (cf. Ap. 3, 20) for an ineffable supernatural communion; reasons of the entire economy of salvation that has in fact offered itself for deliverance from our most serious and incurable inner self miseries, our trespasses, and that is communicated to us to give a positive resolution to all things (Rom. 8, 28), even the most negative – pain, poverty, fatigue, disappointment, death.

Rejoice, be happy with this faith, this fortune! This Easter hymn to life, to life that never dies and rises again, to life that, even in the temporal sphere, is illuminated by new hope, capable as we have said of making us dare the most challenging enterprises and solving the most intricate problems.



So Happy Easter to you all, therefore, members of this Church, which draws its reasons for living and spiritual enjoyment from faith.

An “ecumenical” Happy Easter to all Christian brothers. To all Peoples!

Happy Easter especially to you, young people, who have so much need of confidence and happiness, and are the best placed among all of us to understand, to make Easter yours, that is, life, the fullness of Christ.

Happy Easter to you, parents, who offer the fruits of your pure love to immortal life. Happy Easter to you, all the suffering and the poor, to whom the beatitude of Christ is due before anyone else and to whom anyone who has a human and Christian heart owes the gift of his service and his love.

Happy Easter to everyone, in the sure sign of beatitude deriving from the blessed resurrection of Christ! Hallelujah!

(Extract from the *Urbi et Orbi* Message of His Holiness Paul VI, Easter 1969)

Happy Easter of Resurrection and joy to all of you from the Augustinian Family of Cascia, from the Beehive, from the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation non-profit organisation and the editorial team of From the Bees to the Roses.

Easter is the liturgy of life

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



Cascia, Basilica di Santa Rita. L. Filocamo, Ultima cena (sec. XXI)

“Only when we have become silent, God can speak. He will inform us about the desert sands ... At that moment, Christ crucified and risen interrupts even silence to give us words of love! And we will feel the joy of Easter”.

Thus sang poet Bishop Tonino Bello one Easter day, and we, again this year, with our eyes full of the earthquake-struck but blessed land of Saint Rita, intone our Easter Hallelujah. Christian history tells us that the disciples of Jesus, eyes moist with the

emotion of Jesus risen from the dead, dedicated themselves to conveying to everyone that indescribable joy, announced to them by Mary Magdalene.

For the Christians of Asia Minor (now Turkey), instructed by Apostle John, the

***Easter as the explosion
of life throughout the
universe***

POPE FRANCIS: 10 RULES FOR LIVE SERENELY

Live and let live. *It is the first step for achieving peace and happiness.*

Be giving of yourself to others. *If you withdraw into yourself, you run the risk of becoming egocentric.*

Proceed calmly. *The elderly know how to move with kindness and humility.*

A healthy sense of leisure. *It is complicated (parents work long hours) but time should be found.*

Spend Sunday with the family. *Sunday is meant for being with loved ones.*

Help young people find work. *If they have no opportunities they may get into drugs.*

Take care of nature. *Creation must be safeguarded and this is not being done.*

Stop being negative. *Speaking ill of others is an indication of low self-esteem.*

Respect those who think differently. *The Church grows by attraction, not proselytising.*

Work for peace. *Peace sometimes gives the impression of being quiet, but it is never quiet, peace is always proactive.*

(Interview with Pope Francis on 27 July 2014, published in the Argentine magazine 'Viva')

cross did not represent the humble wood of torture to which the last (humiliores) in society were condemned, but the cross in the meaning of life. Thus, in the apocryphal "Gospel of Peter", Jesus himself crucified is referred to as "Life suspended (on the pole)".

Casting our glance on an Easter vigil of the second century, of which we have preserved the homily, we read that Easter was lived as the explosion of life in the entire universe, spreading rays of light and life from the cross that even reached hell and

In our every desire is hidden the desire for the Supreme Good

the darkness of the Tartars. For them, therefore, on the Friday of the crucifixion of the Lord, it was not a day of mourning but the day of Easter light-life and, therefore, "it was incumbent on them to make an end of the fasting" (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical

IN WORD

Edited by
Fr .Vittorino Grossi OSA

"I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: This is my body, which is for you; Do this in remembrance of me". (1 Cor 11: 23-24)

The Eucharist we celebrate is our Easter, in memory of the Last Supper of the Lord. For Jesus, Easter was the fulfilment of his earthly life, for us it is the bread of life on our journey towards the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God in us, the goal of our happiness.

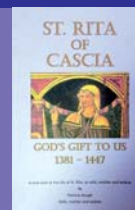
TAKE
AND READ

«St. Rita was a humble person and the way in which she led her life is an example to us. She teaches us to accept suffering with love, to forgive from the bottom of our hearts, to promote peace with enthusiasm and diligence». We recommend this fascinating book, a new look at the life of St. Rita as wife, mother and widow, written by Patricia Gough, wife, mother and widow.

St. Rita of Cascia.
God's gift to us
Patricia Gough
St. Rita's Promotions,
Honiton, Devon 2016

www.stritascentre.org.uk

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Augustine ties the liturgical feast of Easter to happiness

History V, 23.1). Almost in ecstasy, they prayed, singing: "When the cosmic agony (the death of Jesus on the cross) was ended, the cross remained as the boundary (of life) of all things, planted as a trophy of victory (over death). On the rising of the divine Spirit, the universe, as if reanimated, vivified and consolidated, again found its stability ...O Divine expansion in all things and in all places! O crucifixion that extends through the entire world! O divine Easter... O solemnity of the whole cosmos, o joy of the universe! For you, Life has spread over all beings. O Easter, light of a new procession of lights, virginal splendour, for you the lamps of souls are no longer extinguished. We therefore invoke you, O Christ, sovereign God, eternal King. Stretch out your huge hands (the arms of the Lord stretched out on the cross) over your Church and over the holy people eternally yours" (Anonymous, from the Homily on Easter).

Baptising new Christians on the Easter Vigil, St. Augustine explained their baptism as immersion in the life of Jesus Risen which would put them on the path of always dreamed of and desired happiness. Happiness (he explains in a paper – dialogue dedicated to happiness, "The Happy Life") finds its place in desires when they are accomplished. Yet we – he notes in a paper addressed to a not entirely Catholic ecclesial movement (the Manichaeans) – we are never satisfied. The reason lies, again according to him, in the fact that in our every desire is hidden the desire for the Supreme Good, God our Father. He wrote: "Of course we all want to live happily and in the human race there is no one who does not give his assent to this proposition, even before it is fully formulated. But, in my opinion, happy cannot be said about who does not have what he loves ... In fact, he who desires what he cannot obtain torments himself; he who obtains that which he should not err; he who does not desire that which he should obtain is a poor sick person. And none of those eventualities happens to the soul without making it unhappy; and because misery and happiness usually do not go together in the same man, none of them

is happy. As I see it, there remains a fourth hypothesis related to where you can find happiness, and this is given in what constitutes the supreme good of man, loved and possessed ... So, if we think we are happy, we must possess supreme good (which is) God. Following him, we live well; possessing it, we not only live well, but also happily ... But how can we follow what we cannot see? ... We will follow the way that God has opened for us with the choice of the Patriarchs, with the constraint of the law, with the prophecy of the prophets, with the mystery of the Word incarnate, with the testimony of the Apostles, with the blood of martyrs and the conversion of the heathen ... For us, God is the sum of goods, God is for us the supreme good. We must not remain below or search above, because below there is danger, above there is nothing ... Following God is the desire of beatitude, possessing beatitude itself. But we follow him loving him and we possess him not by already becoming just like him but very similar, and being in relationship with him in an extraordinary and clear way, that

is enveloped and bathed in the light of his truth and holiness. For he is the light itself from which we are allowed to be enlightened" (The Morals of the Catholic Church I, 4 et seq.).

The Easter liturgy is celebrated in every Mass

Augustine thus ties the liturgical feast of Easter to happiness, in the image of a path that, in Jesus Risen, tends to God, as Easter was the return to the Father for the Son of God, and for the newly-baptised incorporated into Christ in the Church is taking the path towards happiness. On this path, the liturgy of Easter, which is celebrated in every Mass, breaks the bread of life, feeding every believer throughout the entire liturgical year, taking him to fulfilment of his desires, that is, to happiness, which is the embrace of God, the only supreme good of the human heart. ■



SISTER MARIA ROSA, NEW PRIORESS

One minute after 11:00 on February 15, the bells of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia rang festively to let the whole town know that the new Prioress had been elected: Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis had been chosen to lead the 27 cloistered nuns of the Community of the Monastery for the next four years. "A few words to explain my choice of being called Prioress, rather than Abbess," were the first words of the Mother. "The meaning of 'Prioress' well describes the mission facing me: 'Prioress is the first among equals, the first in setting an example in service'. This is a great responsibility with which my sisters have honoured me and which, with the prayer of

devotees of Saint Rita for me, I will try to fulfil every day of my mandate."

Born in Udine in 1958, Maria Rosa Bernardinis is the seventh of eight children. For over thirty years, she has lived as contemplative nun in the monastery where Saint Rita spent 40 years of her life, until her death in 1457. For the last twelve years, for three consecutive mandates, Mother Maria Rosa has acted as Vicaress to outgoing Prioress Mother M. Natalina Todeschini, whom the Augustinian Family of Cascia wishes to thank for her work. Our best wishes to the new Prioress.



Since 2012, the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation non-profit organisation has been at the side of the work of the Monastery of Saint Rita, supporting all its solidarity projects. Created to support social projects, the Foundation has grown thanks to the charity and love of all devotees and continues to work to bring aid to the weakest. The project in which the Foundation invests most of its efforts is the **Beehive of Saint Rita** welcome house where the nuns take in girls of all ages in economic and social difficulty, taking care of them with the dedi-

Your help for the Beehive of Saint Rita

A small gesture of great love

by Roger Bergonzoli,
Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation Onlus

The Foundation has grown thanks to love of all devotees



In the handicrafts workshop, the Little Bees of Saint Rita learn to create wonderful objects. This approach helps young people to gain confidence in themselves, discovering skills they did not know they had.



cation of a real family. That same family that you, the reader, belong to.

Founded in 1938 by the will of Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce, the Beehive of Saint Rita is the result of the dedication and hard work performed by the nuns and teachers from its birth until today. Day in, day out,

HOW TO DONATE

In the Beehive of Saint Rita, Little Bees prepare to face life with joy and energy. Continue to accompany them in this process – all it needs is a small donation to the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation non-profit organisation through:

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c/c No. 1010759072

Our heartfelt thanks.

the Beehive project ensures the younger guests – called “Little Bees” – the warmth of a home, assistance in after-school education, adequate nutrition, and medical and psychological visits. It is here that the children grow up learning to hope for a better future. It is here that they construct an alternative life. And it is only thanks to the support of benefactors that the Beehive has been able to continue offering help to thousands of young people, accompanying them on their journey towards tomorrow. Benefactors who never miss an opportunity to make us feel their closeness.

For this reason, we ask you to give us **your help**, so that we will be able to continue doing much for the Little Bees of the Beehive of Saint Rita. By choosing to support the Saint Rita of Cascia non-profit Foundation, you too can ensure for our beloved Little Bees the opportunities for the future that every child should have. It really is a great opportunity to do good, which, thanks to all those who want to help the Beehive of Saint Rita, will make a difference for our young Little Bees. ■



edited by Marta Ferraro

Nigeria for Saint Rita

Devotion to Saint Rita is particularly widespread and felt throughout the world. The exemplary of the life of this woman, who went through all the states of the earthly experience with devotion and faith, is still a benchmark for many today, even though she lived in mediaeval times. Dutiful daughter, patient wife, loving mother, widow and stigmatised nun, in love with Christ; the

strength of our saint lies in her timeless message. Great is her veneration in the most disparate places, places with differing cultures and traditions: from the Americas to the extremes of Asia, passing through the Middle East until reaching Africa.

In this appointment with the section dedicated to the

Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita, we felt it appropriate and significant to propose the experience of faith and devotion in one African country: Nigeria. It seemed to us providential to receive the testimony of the Pious Union of Abuja on the laying of the first stone that marked the start of the building of a

Great is her veneration in the most disparate places

Some members of the Nigeria PPU on the day of the laying of the foundation stone of the new church dedicated to Saint Rita.





Father Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Augustinian Order, at the ritual of laying the first stone.

The Pious Union of Abuja wanted to realise this project

In September 2016, works were inaugurated in the presence of the authorities of the OSA (Order of St. Augustine, *ed.*) family, including: Prior General Father Alejandro Moral, the Bishop, Monsignor Robert F. Prevost, Father Miguel Orcasitas, Father John Abubakar and the National Chaplain of St. Rita of Cascia in Nigeria, Brother John Okoro. There was great emotion and the participation of many faithful at the opening ceremony: “A dream come true” as this new page in the life of the Primary Pious Union of Nigeria and of all the provinces that have embraced this great initiative with pride was defined by many. Once the works have been completed, the devotees of the saint will organise the feast of Saint Rita on May 22, as they have traditionally done for several years, but this time the setting will be very prestigious: the Church of Saint Rita of Cascia. (MF)

church dedicated to the Umbrian saint. This news comes to us as a sign of hope, particularly at a time when the town of Cascia is experienc-

Devotion to Rita is felt strongly in Nigeria

ing a delicate post-earthquake moment. While the city of Saint Rita is working with courage to return to the normal pace of everyday life, we felt it heartening to discover a

country so distant from Italy that is strongly linked to our own through deep devotion to the saint of the Valnerina. In Nigeria, in fact, devotion to Rita is felt strongly. Over 10,000 devotees, scattered over nine Nigerian provinces which are organised into 31 dioceses: there are, therefore, many faithful determined to follow the teachings of the saint of the impossible. The Pious Union group of Abuja, already present on the territory and recognised by the Monastery of Cascia since 2008, strongly wanted to realise this ambitious project, full of great sacrifices but also much emotion and joy.

JOIN THE PPU

Whether you are an individual or member of a group, join the PPU! You will thus participate in our meetings, encountering people who, like you, are devoted to the beloved Saint Rita. For information, contact the Secretary General, Alessandra Paoloni: piaunione@santaritadacascia.org

FEAST OF SAINT RITA 2017

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



MAY 20

Hall of Peace, 21:00 - Presentation of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2017. Francesca Fialdini, anchor-woman of Unomattina (Rai Uno), presents the women of Rita to the community: women whose life is close in example to that of the saint of Cascia.

MAY 21

Basilica of Saint Rita

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

17:30 - Handing over of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2017. Father Moral hands the parchment symbol of the prestigious award to the chosen women of Rita.

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

Square of the Basilica of Saint Rita

20:45 - Musical entertainment with the "Giovanni e Donato da Cascia" band, Flag-wavers and the mediaeval Tamburini of Cascia, who will parade in the square framed by the lights lit throughout the town.

21:30 - Arrival of the Torch of Peace, symbol of the 59th **Twinning of Faith and Peace** that unites Cascia with Paris, in the name of Saint Rita.

MAY 22

SOLEMNITY OF SAINT RITA OF CASCIA
Hall of Peace

05:00 - start of Holy Masses. Masses will also be celebrated at 06:00, 07:00, 08:00 and 09:00. The Mass at 08:00 will be presided over by OSA General, Fr. Alejandro Moral Antón.

Square of the Basilica of Saint Rita

10:00 - Arrival of the Historical Parade in fifteenth-century costumes and of the Procession bearing the statue of Saint Rita. Departing at 08:30 from Roccaporena, birthplace of Rita, the two processions come together at the foot of Cascia (09:30).

11:00 - Solemn Pontifical, followed by the **Supplication** to Saint Rita and the **Blessing of the Roses** (12:30).

Basilica of Saint Rita

18:00 - Holy Mass for Benefactors of the Sanctuary, presided over by the Rector of the Basilica, Fr Bernardino Pinciaroli, and animated by the choir of the Nuns of the Monastery of Saint Rita.



CRISTINA'S FOREWORD

Cristina Siccardi, biographer and historian of the Church

The Beehive, masterpiece of Charity

Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce created a true masterpiece of Charity: the Beehive of the “Bees of Saint Rita”, a work that the Monastery of Cascia still runs and coordinates with great dedication and extreme efficiency. It is a project that was started in a very troubled period due both to the internal history of the Monastery, which was experiencing problems caused by construction of the Sanctuary, and to the economic conditions in which Italy found itself. However, with her Faith, Mother Fasce decided to create a structure adapted to the needs of the “daughters of no one” and she poured all her maternal enthusiasm over the Little Bees as she called them. The idea of founding a home for orphans was born in 1938 after a request for help from a widow in Trisungo (Ascoli Piceno), who had come on pilgrimage to Cascia with her seven-year-old daughter whom she could no longer maintain. The child, the first “Bee”, was Edda Petrucci, but the nuns gave her the name of Mercy, because she had crossed the threshold of the Monastery on the day the Church celebrates Our Lady of Mercy (September 24). The Mother appeared to have been waiting for nothing else ... As Sister Caterina would testify: “She became a child among them, dressed them as dolls, made them play and, seated on the high chair, in suffering, she appeared to have no other concern than to entertain them”. From Mercy to today, the Monastery has welcomed, helped, educated and supported a population of young girls, centred on solid and disinterested evangelical Charity, that charity which allowed the founder of the Beehive to perform miracles of true mercy.



DID YOU KNOW ...

Born as an orphanage, today's Beehive Saint Rita is now a house of welcome for young girls from families experiencing economic and social hardship. Every day, the nuns provide the young people with health and psychological care, education, food and a loving home. All this is offered for free, thanks to the generosity of benefactors.

Story of a journey

by Monica Guarriello

While today's "Beehive of Saint Rita" house of welcome building was constructed in 1952, the project actually dates back to 1938, when Blessed Mother Maria Teresa Fasce welcomes Edda Petrucci, the first Little Bee – which is how the blessed was to call the girls – into the cloistered monastery ...

I like to think it happened as night fell. No one remembers what time it really was that September 24 in 1938. I spoke with Carlo, an indirect testimony of the story I'm about to tell you, but not even he has an exact recollection of how it all began.

Adele Polidori is widowed at the age of 42 and lives in poverty in the small neighbourhood of Trisungo, a district of Arquata del Tronto in the province of Ascoli Piceno. Fortunately, two of her children have grown up and can fend for themselves. Nevertheless, Adele is in difficulty and is seeking a solution to providing for the rest of her family. Now she is alone in deciding what to do. She looks intently at her youngest daughter, Edda, and while she would not want to be separated from her, food is scarce. *Maybe Mum will no longer be able to take*



care of you, my little one. Maybe her heart tells her to keep her close to her, someone will come to save them. Perhaps, instead, she is lucid and understands that her pain as a mother must be put aside, because the future of her daughter comes first. Or at least the possibility of imagining a future.

Somewhere, Adele has heard talk of a nun in Cascia and, while this nun lives in seclusion, she is very present with people through concrete works of charity and taking care of the needy in the name of Saint Rita, the saint of impossible cases. When there's nothing, that's enough to convince her to set out for Cascia on waking up. There are no suitcases to prepare. *Come on Edda, get up, the sun is already shining on your*



Edda Petrucci, the first Little Bee of the Beehive, was eighteen when she began preparing to face a new journey into the unknown (also pictured above).



The Beehive today: Sister Melania and her Little Bees.

There's the bell, pull it, pull it, it will open up good and gentle women; you'll see, they'll treat you well.

nine-year-old face. Come with Mum, today we're going on a trip.

The journey takes two, maybe three or four, days. Who knows how many times mother and daughter stopped on the greatest journey of their lives. The journey for life. They're going to Cascia. Who knows if Edda knew that, after arriving at destination, she would not see her mother again for a long time. On foot, along mountain trails and valleys, daydreaming with grass and twigs so as not to think about being hungry and having sore feet. But there comes a time when it's impossible to continue and she stops at a village that blocks the view and takes her breath away. For Edda Petrucci, that moment comes on September 24, 1938. *Come on Edda, just one more climb and we've arrived.* Facing mother and daughter is the imposing entrance to the Monastery

of Augustinian contemplative life of Saint Rita. *Look how beautiful it is, my little one! There's the bell, pull it, pull it, it will open up good and gentle women; you'll see, they'll treat you well.* The door is probably opened by a nun in charge, who then goes to call the Mother Prioress: *Sister Maria Teresa Fasce, yes, now I'll get her. Wait here.* And maybe Edda is still immersed in the small joy of having rung the bell of the door, before beginning to understand that the journey is really over and her mother – *why, Mom?* – will soon let her leave her embrace. Maybe she has started crying when she sees the huge figure of Blessed Mother Fasce standing in front of her, dressed all in black, who had not wanted to grow up too fast.

Something happens at this point in the story that has a touch of the wonderful, something, a word,

an emotion, or a mixture of these things that comes from the mouth of Adele and enters the depths of the heart of Fasce. So much so that the Mother convinces herself to accept Adele's request: Yes, the cloistered nuns will welcome the little Edda and take care of her. And to honour that day so different from any other, the child will take the name of the Our Lady which is celebrated today, Our Lady of Mercy.

It would have seemed quite natural for the Blessed Fasce to change the name of Edda to Mercy. At that time, in fact, anyone deciding to become nun changed her name to that of another chosen on purpose to seal the passage from life outside to life inside, so to speak.

Seventy-nine years later, Edda's son, Carlo Tini Brunozzi, is standing in front of me, in that same monastery that welcomed his mother, and he says:

A M O T H E R ' S W O R D

Bees collect honey even from poisonous flowers.

"When, after many years, I went back with her to visit the nuns, as soon as they saw her the nuns called out 'Mercy! Mercy!'"

Here she is, the first *"Little Bee of Saint Rita"*, as she will be called *will from now in front of our girls*. That is how they still call her in memory of the miracle of the bees, the first performed by Saint Rita, when she was still very small.

In tough nights without her mother and during the long days among women dressed in black, Edda told Carlo that for at least one year she was in the loving arms of Mother Maria Teresa Fasce, who often took her to sleep with her, to calm child's sobs. A year or maybe less, her recollections are confused, then Edda gets to know her first friend in that place that becomes her home: Palma, the second of thousands of Little Bees that are to follow. When she grows up, Palma will take the vows, be-

coming Sister Teresa. Edda does not. "Mum had no intention of becoming a nun," recalls her son with a smile. She is more or less eight-teen, in fact, when she prepares to face a new journey into the unknown. This time it's to Rome, *but not on foot*, to become a Red Cross nurse. And she succeeds, to the great satisfaction of Adele, who gets back together with her daughter in those years. But life still reserves many adventures for Edda, not to mention obstacles.

Edda stays in the Red Cross for ten years. A bad fall down stairs, with severe vertebral fractures, then tuberculosis, forces her to end her professional career. But, as they say, good also comes from evil, and Edda, now a woman, meets the man who is to become the love of her life, Flavio. Marriage is the start of another journey: destination Limi-ti, a small district of Greccio in the province of Rieti, birthplace of

Flavio, where Edda will lead the rest of her existence between love for her son, her daughter-in-law, her two grandchildren and all the people who have cared for her. "But as an adult, did Edda never talk to you about the choice your mother made" is the question I asked relatives during the interviews that led to this story. It was the question I had wanted to ask from the beginning, but it is not always easy to go straight to the point. "I once asked her," her granddaughter tells me. "She never said a word about the suffering of that separation. But she certainly suffered. I said to her: 'Granny, but were you not upset that your mum left you in Cascia with the nuns?' and she told me: 'She did it for me'."

To Edda, first Little Bee of Saint Rita (Trisungo, June 1, 1929 - Limi-ti, February 3, 2017).

To Adele, a courageous mother.

THE TESTIMONY FROM THE PROCESS OF BEATIFICATION OF MOTHER FASCE

Text no. 23:

My name is Elio Morini from Eliseo, born in Terni in 1917. Relations with the servant of God (Mother Fasce) began when I was hired to do carpentry work together with my father in the monastery.

"She displayed great charity towards others. During the war, when needs were so great and so numerous, there were many who went up to the monastery to plead for help: I know that no one left unheeded ... Having founded the Orphanage, the servant of God took a personal interest in making sure that her "daughters" lacked nothing, at least according to possibilities ... and she reserved her most loving care for the young girls ... I prepared the pine wood coffin with others. Without exaggerating, the whole of Cascia was at the funeral. The people were genuinely moved because they felt they had lost a beneficent mother."

APPOINTMENTS

Cascia (PG), February 9 to May 18 **Fifteen Thursdays of Saint Rita**

Every Thursday, from February 9, we gather in the Lower Basilica of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita to celebrate the Fifteen Thursdays preceding the Solemnity of May 22 when we remember the patron saint of impossible cases. The celebrations include **Holy Mass** at **17:00** (from February to March) and at **18:00** (from April to May). At the end of each Mass, there will be a small procession from the Lower Basilica to the chapel of Saint Rita **to pray before the body of the saint**. For those who cannot attend, the ceremony will be broadcast in **live streaming** on the **YouTube** channel of Augustinian Saint Rita of Cascia www.youtube.com/monasterosantarita

Cascia (Perugia), April 12 to 14 **Conference of the Friends of St. Augustine**

During Holy Week, from April 12 to 14, the "Friends of St. Augustine" association awaits you at Hotel delle Rose in Cascia, for the Conference on the theme: "Jesus Christ, Worker of Eternity". All can participate. Info and reservations: Antonio Franceschi, mobile 3358079828 - email info@amicidisantagostino.com

Cascia (PG), April 13 to 16 **Easter Triduum and Easter Sunday**

The Sanctuary of Saint Rita prepares to celebrate Easter with devotees who come to Cascia.



HOW TO REQUEST THE PILGRIM'S RELIC

Parishes of Italy that wish to have a sign of the presence of Saint Rita in their community, can request the **Pilgrim's Relic** of Saint Rita of Cascia from the Mother Prioress of the Augustinian Nuns and the Father Rector of the Sanctuary.

Contained in a precious reliquary, the Pilgrim's Relic is a **fragment of bone from the body of Saint Rita**. The parish priest, or person authorised by him, can make a request for a period of time (a week, ten days, etc.) by writing to: padrerettore@santaritadacascia.org or infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org



Maundy Thursday

21:00 - Solemn "Lord's Supper" Mass celebrated by Msgr. Renato Boccoardo, Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia;

22:00 - Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (until 24:00).

Good Friday

17:00 - Solemn Celebration of the Adoration of the Cross;

21:00 - Town procession of the Dead Christ.

Holy Saturday

21:30 - Easter Vigil animated by the singing of the Augustinian nuns.

Easter Sunday

07:30, 09:30, 10:30, 12:00, 17:00: Easter Masses;

17:00 - Solemn Mass animated by the "Saint Rita" Choir of Cascia;

18:15 - Second Vespers.

**Cascia (Italy) - Paris (France),
from April 28 to May 22**

Twinning of Peace and Faith

For the 59th edition of the **Twinning** in which the Municipality of **Cascia** joins with another of the towns of the world devoted to Saint Rita, the city of **Paris** has been chosen; more precisely, the twinning has been sealed by the Parish Priest of the Saint Rita Chapel located in the **red light district of Pigalle**. Initially wanted by prostitutes, many of whom turn to the saint, the presence of Saint Rita has been alive



FRIENDS OF SAINT RITA

Every year, the Saint Rita Group of the municipality of Rodigo, province of Mantova, comes on pilgrimage to Cascia, accompanied by Mario Fassi, who is very devoted to Saint Rita. The group consists of people who come to Cascia through devotion to the Saint of the Impossible, to pray in front of her body in the basilica. After Mass, the pilgrimage includes a visit to the Monastery of Saint Rita and the next day Mass in Roccaporena and climbing the rock reciting the Holy Rosary.
(Laura Valli)

in the Pigalle district since 1956. Over time, the Chapel has become a point of reference for many.

As per tradition, in the first part of the Twinning, a delegation from Cascia will leave for Paris from April 28 to 30. The French representation will then be hosted in Cascia for the Feast of Saint Rita, from May 20 to 22, during which the Torch of Peace (symbolically uniting the two peoples in the light of love for the saint), will come from Pigalle to reach the square of the Basilica of Cascia on the evening of May 21.

Cascia (Perugia), February to October Holy Mass with passage to the urn

Every **last Thursday** of the month, from February to October, at **18:00**, we await you at the Sanctuary of Saint for **Holy Mass**. After Mass, the procession will take place to gather in prayer at the urn of the saint. Here are the dates: April 27, May 25, June 29, July 27, August 31, September 28, October 26. For those who cannot attend, the ceremony will be broadcast in live streaming on the **YouTube** channel of Augustinian Saint Rita of Cascia

www.youtube.com/monasterosantarita

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, at the Sanctuary 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 7 Feast of Spouses

Holy Mass will take place in the Basilica of Saint Rita, at 16:00, for the Feast of Spouses. During the celebration, **couples** who celebrate in 2017 the 1st / 10th / 20th / 25th / 30th / 35th / 40th / 45th / 50th / 55th / 60th anniversary of **marriage**, will receive the Souvenir Parchment of Saint Rita and a rose. To receive the Parchment, you must be present and make a reservation 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**, to pray

the **Novena** together in preparation for the great feast of May 22. Holy Mass will be animated by the Parishes of the Valnerina, followed by entrance to the chapel which houses the body of Saint Rita.



Cascia (Perugia), May 14 Procession of the Banner

Leaving from the Sanctuary of Saint Rita, at **21:00** on Sunday **May 14**, the traditional Procession of the Banner winds through the streets of Cascia. Established by the Municipality in 1731, the procession is in thanksgiving to the saint to whom the inhabitants turned to obtain protection from earthquakes and pestilence. The seventeenth century banner carried in procession depicts Rita's entrance to the monastery. Local participants include: schools, humanitarian and religious associations, and the Beehive of Saint Rita.

The trust in God of Blessed Simon of Cascia

by Sister Giacomina Stuani OSA, Monastery of Saint Rita

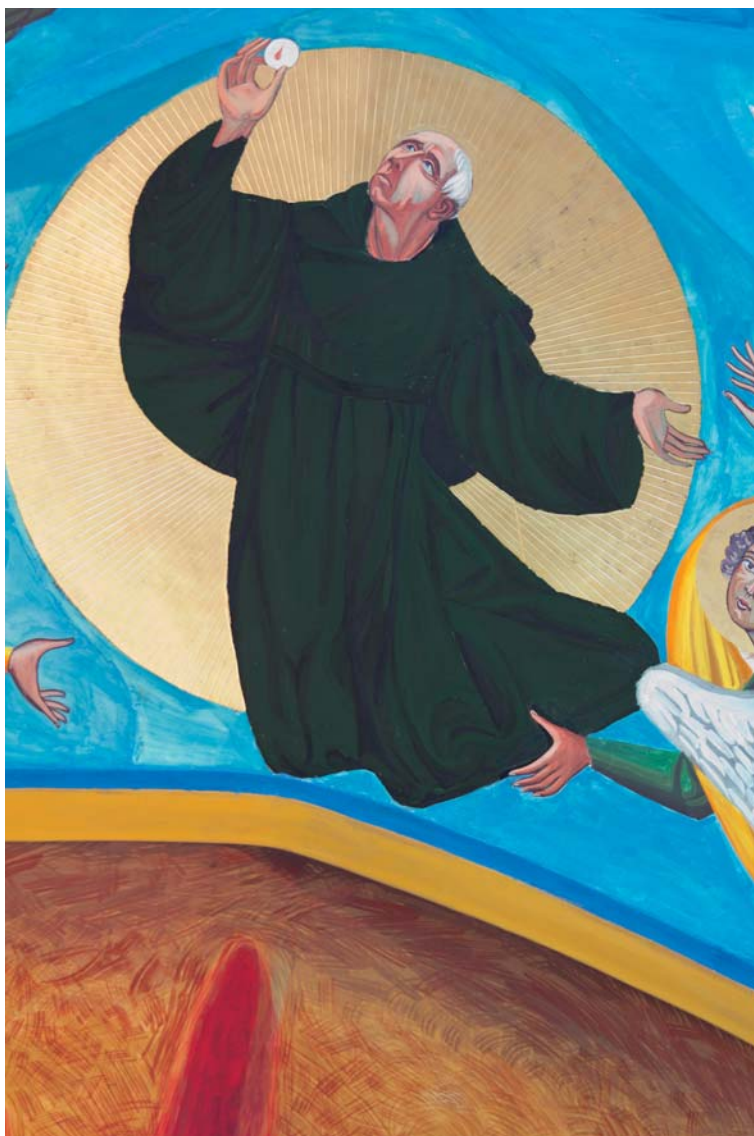
The right way to seek the Lord is the solicitude of the morning, because lukewarmness never found him ...

Seeking Christ in the morning means preferring him to all thoughts and reasoning.

He will always be found, if nothing is searched before him or outside of him (Blessed Simon of Cascia, De Gestis Domains Salvatoris, Book.VI, Chap. VII).

Cascia is not only the land of Saint Rita and Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce. There is a third character who drives us, by his example, to take the path to holiness: Blessed Simon of Cascia.

An Augustinian father who lived in the fourteenth century, he was one of the greatest spiritual masters of the Order in that period. Writer and theologian, lover of asceticism, he trusted only in God and in His grace (*God never starts a building and then walks away half done, unless he is abandoned ...*); faithful servant of the Word (*I do not know the right paths, but I was taught them by he who has the*



The Blessed placed trust only in God, lover of the peace of the interior desert

throne in heaven. I learned them from the Gospel of Christ God, which says: 'I am the way, the truth and life'); nostalgic of the contemplative life, a lover of the calm and peace of the inner desert

The Eucharistic Miracle is linked to him

(Where to rest? In the desert. Where is peace? In the desert. Where to rest the restless eye? In the desert. Where to rest the ear from useless din? In the desert. Where can man enter colloquium with himself? In the desert ... Resting with Christ in the desert is the culmination of love ...); supporter of the virtue of obedience, the height of all virtue, understood as "the highest expression of one's freedom and self-control" (In obedience, limit neither time nor hour. Do not place prayer or meditation or contemplation or any holy calm before obedience. Dedicate all and completely to it, because it is the tomb of your will, eliminate any possibility of deception); apostle of humility as a sign of adherence to Jesus and true holiness (Humility is the valley that collects water from the mountain; humility is the recipient of God's grace; humility is the sheltered place where the mighty wind does not blow;

humility is the light in which the soul finds every grace lost); passionate preacher of Christ's humanity (God places the real fearing on the stone, and the stone is Christ who became a refuge for the timid, and for men who are small, because their heart is humble. So, brother, seek refuge in Christ who became our refuge, raising us from the 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).

The priest saw that the host had become blood

The figure of Blessed Simon of Cascia takes on an even more particular significance because the Eucharistic Miracle is linked to him: in the year 1330 in Siena, a priest called to take holy communion to a sick person put the host in his breviary. At the home of the invalid, the priest saw that the host had become blood. He went to confess the incident to Blessed Simon, who brought the relic to Cascia. In 1389, Pope Boniface IX confirmed the authenticity of the miracle. Today, the relic is in the Lower Basilica of the Sanctuary of Cascia, right next to the small urn containing the bones of the blessed Augustinian. ■

SMILING AT LIFE

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

1



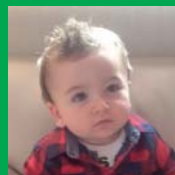
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5



6



1. Adele Azzarri (Rome - Italy)
2. Agostina e Martina Listello (Oliva - Argentina)
3. Candela Listello (Oliva - Argentina)
4. Davide Bonato (Fara Vicentino VI - Italy)
5. Gabriele Rocca (Lamezia Terme CZ - Italy)
6. Ilaria Bonato (Fara Vicentino VI - Italy)

Saint Rita, woman of joy

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

Everyone knows Saint Rita as the saint who lived much suffering; she who lived close to Jesus, and with the strength of Jesus. We know that one Good Friday, after a sermon of St. James of the Marches about passion, Rita was so impressed and taken by the desire to be even more united with her Jesus Crucified that she asked to participate more strongly in his passion. She was answered, receiving the stigmata on her forehead!

While it is certain that in Rita we have a

In Rita lives the certainty that Jesus is alive

particular example of acceptance of sufferings and how we can live them with dignity and fortitude united in Christ, it is equally true that Rita lives in the certainty that her beloved Jesus Crucified is alive, he is risen. And it is in the living Jesus, close to her,



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. 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.

Sr. Ancilla Pieri OSA (Corpus Domini Monastery, Cento FE - Italy)
Angiolina Colloredo ved. Morassi (Gorizia - Italy)
Antonia Matera (Bollate MI - Italy)
Argenide Martin (Porcia PN - Italy)
Armando Persiani (Borgo Cerreto di Cerreto di Spoleto PG - Italy)
Barbara Grillo (Genoa - Italy)
Bruno Litterio (Palermo - Italy)

Don Emanuele Previti (Verona - Italy)
Edda Petrucci (Limiti di Greccio RI - Italy)
Ezio Palvarini (Solarolo di Goito MN - Italy)
Francesco Gualtieri (Alessandria - Italy)
Giuliano Pistoni (Asola MN - Italy)
Lino Liguori (Naples - Italy)
Lucia Di Gangi (Alessandria - Italy)
Luciano Arduino (Verolengo TO - Italy)
Sr. M. Agostina Resca OSA (Corpus Domini Monastery, Cento FE - Italy)
Maria Zoratti Del Zotto (Udine - Italy)
Maria Teresa Finzi Amirante (Piglio FR - Italy)
Marina Pelagatti (Prato - Italy)
Marino Ceriani (Somma Lombardo VA - Italy)
Marzia Napoli (Rome - Italy)
Natalina Gritti (Credera Rubbiano CR - Italy)
Olimpia Trimarchi (Saint-Laurent QC - Canada)
Silvio Pedercini (Solarolo di Goito MN - Italy)

that she finds love for life. Who stops at the Crucifix cannot be holy.

We are not born for suffering, for the cross. True holiness is to know the God of life and happiness and seek Him, to have

True holiness is to know the God of life

Him at all costs! Even at the cost of hardship and suffering. Nobody wants to suffer, our Christian faith is not the faith of those condemned to suffer! Unfortunately, this is the image that has passed: such was, and often still is, the insistence on only “putting up with everything”. Saint Rita and all the saints are not “masochists” but

GRACE RECEIVED

TESTIMONY OF CRISTINA CAMPISI SAN PAOLO D'ENZA (RE) ITALY

On December 28, 2016 I was admitted to hospital and operated on for uterine fibroids and ovarian cysts. Before entering the operating theatre, I prayed to Saint Rita for everything to go well, even if I was very calm. The operation went well. While I was in the process of awakening from anaesthesia, I smelt roses and I saw Saint Rita close stretching her hand out to me. Looking after me were my parents who saw me smile and stretch out my hands to someone, but because I was still very sleepy they thought it was a reaction to the anaesthesia. Once I was completely awake, I explained to them that I had seen Saint Rita stretching out her hand to me, I had grasped it and she had told me to be calm because everything would be all right.

PRAYER

Lord,
life of my life,
Life alone, for me,
secret Life,
deep and mysterious
life, life ...
Of this to live,
even in the experience
of the infinite misery
of “my” life.
Life risen and beautiful,
through which
each brief instance of mine
is enlightened and transformed
into “eternal”.
LIFE!
Thank you!

*Prayer of Mother Alessandra Macajone
OSA (1931-2005).*

sons of the Gospel. They rejoice in suffering as a woman rejoices in the suffering of childbirth. As Jesus says: “When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the an-

The Jesus that Rita loves is the Jesus of Easter

guish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world” (Jn 16:21).

Saint Rita desires the Cross, she is a woman of suffering, but at the same time she is a woman of joy through the great, deep, unique love that is donated by her Jesus, the Living One. In Jesus, Passion and Death are in reference to the Resurrection and Life. And so the Jesus that Rita loves is the Jesus of Easter: she remains united to the Cross of Jesus, to live life with Jesus! Happy Easter with Jesus of Saint Rita! ■

I, spouse of the eternal King

by Sister Maria Grazia Cossu OSA, Monastery of Saint Rita

Dearest daughter, what do you ask of God and His Holy Church? - I ask to follow Christ, my spouse, in the Order of St. Augustine and to persevere in my intention for all of my life.

These few words, pronounced at the beginning of the rite of solemn profession, sum up my monastic vocation. Having entered the Monastery of Saint Rita in Cascia as a postulant on October 10, 2011, I consecrated myself to the Lord forever on December 8, 2016. A great gift in front of which, with much humility, one cannot fail to recognise inadequacy.

The special circumstances due to the earthquake that hit our areas again and again in recent months, forcing us to leave our monastery, allowed the *Yes, forever* to be pronounced in another Augustinian Monastic Community: the Hermitage of Lecceto, a community that welcomed us

with much love. An unforeseen event which, by temporarily uprooting us from our places and our security, helped me grasp new aspects of my vocation, leading back to all the essentials.

Nothing is accidental in God's plans. In this situation of trial and suffering, with many uncertainties, the impossible has become possible and, in the presence of two Monastic Communities – those of Cascia and Lecceto – surrounded by people dear to me, with great joy I gave back to the Lord what he himself had given to me with the *Yes, for all of my life*. With the handing over of the ring, without my meriting it and supported by His grace and the protection of the Virgin Mary, I have become the *spouse of the eternal King*, to praise him, feed myself on His Word and His Body, to devote myself entirely to Him and His Church, *in silence and humble daily fa-*

I have consecrated myself to the Lord forever



Sister Maria Grazia, during the rite of her Solemn Profession (this photo and on the facing page).



I have nothing and everything I have is God

tigue. It is a Yes that is renewed every day, a steady light towards eternity. And, in the heart, the joy of being poor and free. Happy to belong only and in everything to God. Poor in the eyes of the world and free from everything. Free to lose something, because I have nothing and everything I have is God; free from having to behave in a certain way to be considered someone, precisely because, in the eyes of the world, I am worth nothing, but the Lord, with much love, takes care of me. In prostration, lying on the ground in the form of the cross, accompanied by the singing of the Litany of the Saints, I gave my complete openness to the action of the Holy Spirit and total submission to God's Majesty. Because mine is a path of Faith and Love that seeks to leave everything for following God; for living the everyday constantly in His Presence and letting Him guide me; for walking, along with my sisters, for the good of the Church and of all humanity. And *desiring*, for others and for me, peace and joy without end of the heavenly Jerusalem. ■

Get up, come and don't be afraid

Dearest friend,
this invitation comes from Friend Jesus ... Don't worry, the suggestion is just to spend a few days in friendship, in prayer, in listening and reflection on the Word, in silence and meditation, in communion with other friends who like you are on the path towards Beauty, Freedom, towards Belonging as daughters of God, and with we Augustinian nuns ... It is not an alternative holiday, but in Him you can find rest and refreshment ... We are waiting for you!

**Women's Vocational Guidance Course
from 7 (evening) to 12 (morning) August 2017**

For information:
Monastery of Saint Rita - 06043 Cascia PG
tel. +39 0743 76221
e-mail: monastero@santaritadacascia.org

Easter is the victory of love

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

«**E**arly on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved ... So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running ...". This excerpt taken from the Gospel of Easter makes us go to the starting blocks.



E. Burnand, In the morning of the resurrection the disciples Peter and John on the way to the grave.

Mary is running, Peter and John are running, we too are running, not to the now empty tomb, but to meet the Lord of Life, who won the duel with death and is Risen.

Easter: Day of Life! Life on the rubble, on fears, on external and internal wounds, on physical and spiritual illnesses. Jesus Risen tells us that He has conquered all this so *finite* world and invites

us to raise our glance to the Infinite, to hear within us the gift of Life received, of the Love that precedes us in every moment, of the Sweetness that always caresses us, of the Mercy that saves us every day and makes us born again. It is an invitation to hope, to try to recognise in the daily path – inevitably narrow and grey, interwoven with problems – He in whom we have placed our hope and who fulfils our joy; to be men and women who reveal their passion for the Lord and recognise him as the Living One.

It is essential to gain the ability to build and reconstruct one's life around a *vital centre* which, for the believer, "is the paschal mystery, the cross of the Son who, lifted up from the earth, draws all men to himself". Easter is the victory of love: of the love of the Father who does not abandon the Son at death, of the love of the Son who gives his life for us and who, risen from the dead, brings peace and forgiveness. We live Easter each time we love, for who loves has passed from death to life (see 1 Jn 3:14).

"Certainly not everything that happens is simply 'God's will'. But in the end, however, nothing happens *without God willing it* (Mt 10,29); that is, through every event, whatever its eventual non-divine character, there passes a road that leads to God" (from the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer). In the words of Paul Claudel: "God did not come to explain suffering: he came to fill it with his presence". The Gospel teaches us that even if the Christian does not know any way that bypasses pain, he still knows a road for crossing together with the Lord.

That is why, even though this is an Easter different from others for all of us and for those hit by the earthquake, we do not lose our trust in the Risen Lord, "we fear not the trembling of the earth, because God is with us. He is our refuge and our salvation" and together we sing: *Hallelujah! This is the day of the Lord. Christ is risen! Let us rejoice and be glad! Hallelujah!* Holy Easter to all and good luck on the way to the Finish Line! ■

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.

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

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

POSTAL BANK ACCOUNT NO. 1010759072
INDICATING "ALVEARE" (BEEHIVE) AS THE REASON
BANK ACCOUNT IBAN IT270200821703000102136901
BIC/SWIFT: UNCRITM1J35
INDICATING "ALVEARE" (BEEHIVE) AS THE REASON



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