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BIMONTHLY  
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN  
MONASTERY  
OF SAINT RITA  
OF CASCIA

# FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine  
of Saint Rita of Cascia

EDITORIAL

**Washing of the feet reminds  
us we are all equal**

SOLIDARITY

**All feet washed tonight**

TRACES OF RITA

**Humility does not mean weakness**

**WE ARE ALL EQUAL**

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## FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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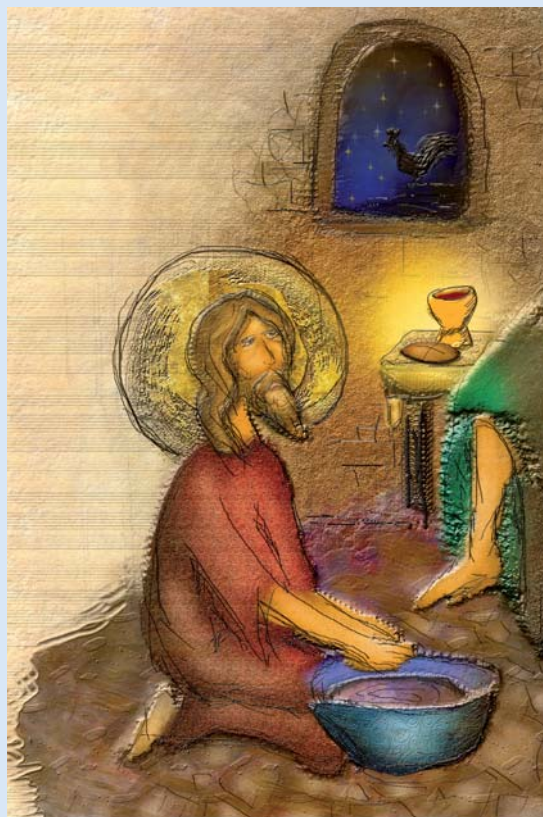
# Washing of the feet reminds us we are all equal

Even if Easter has already passed, in this issue we want to share with you the meaning of one of the most intense moments we experience during the Easter Triduum, that is the washing of the feet that takes place during the *In Coena Domini* Mass (Mass of the Lord's Supper). To begin with, let us say that in this particular type of liturgical celebration, we commemorate the Last Supper of Jesus, during which the Son of Man offers us all the institution of the Eucharist, anticipating the salvific meaning of his sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection.

After the homily, the ritual of washing of the feet takes place. Pope Francis reminds us of this every year as he himself washes the feet of the “last”, of the people marginalised by society, such as those detained in prisons.

In the 13th chapter of his Gospel, John writes: “Jesus ... got up from supper, laid aside his outer clothing, took a towel, and tied it around himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel that was around Him. He came to Simon Peter, who asked Him, “*Lord, are You going to wash my feet?*” Jesus replied, “*You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand*”.

That gesture by Jesus was completely “unacceptable” for the mentality of the time, because it was reserved for slaves and servants. With this revolutionary act, Jesus offers an example to his disciples and all of us Christians, called on to walk the path of generosity, humility, acceptance of others, even if the other is considered inferior. In fact, Christ reminds us



that we are all equal before God and that He “did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matthew 20, 28).

Saint Paul invites us to turn our gaze to eternal things, while remaining firm and anchored in our daily lives, with the desire to live in the logic of the free gift of self. Hope opens us to eternal feelings and thoughts, to choices of eternal value. This is already living as resurrected, inserted in the Eternal Today of God that makes living daily, our small choices eternal!

With the wish to all of you that this Easter which has just passed will generate Hope, the seed of new life. ■

# All feet washed tonight

Journey with the volunteers who welcome those who are last

by Monica Guarriello

Thanks to Tonino Fiorenza and Amistad not-for-profit for kind concession of the photo.



Alessandro and Roberto (from left) carry the "Amistrada" project forward, together with the other volunteers of the Amistad not-for-profit association.

I've asked myself a thousand times how do you put into practice the teaching that Jesus wanted to leave us with the washing of the feet. I thought a first step could be to breathe the same air as someone who, metaphorically, washes them more often than me, offering their time and giving themselves to those last people that nobody wants to see. So I started, as I usually do, with the people around me.

Roberto Leonori is a surgeon in Rome who is specialised in aesthetic and vascular surgery. It was he who, at least twelve years ago, led me to discover the good side of cosmetic surgery, that side put at the service of the weakest, for those last people who have no money, for those born with

congenital malformations or for those who remain victims of an accident that devastates the body. In 2009, wanting to do more, Roberto founded the Amistad not-for-profit association together with a group of friends, those who want to make life a better place for living. From there, it took six years for the "Amistrada" project to take shape. With this activity, the association offers food, clothes, blankets, medicines and medical care to homeless people who live on the streets of the capital, through a regular weekly commitment of a dozen volunteers led by project coordinator Alessandro Frate.

It's half past 7 on the evening of Tuesday February 12, 2019 and the night is expected to be cold and wet. I have just en-

tered the little room that the volunteers use as a base camp in 'Nostra Signora de La Salette' parish. It is there that they organise their night rounds in the neighbourhoods of Monteverde and Trastevere. With Alessandro and Roberto, there is nurse Adolorata Moschetta, called Tina, young shop assistant Emanuela Cutrupi, Roberto's wife Grazyna Leonori and pensioners Gabriella Francione, Pasquina Masciovecchio, Anna Andolfi, Vanda Passarelli and Vinicio Basciu.

First stop, the nearby greengrocer who offers unsold fruit at a ridiculous price. He also gives some free, so it can be distributed in abundance to the homeless people we are about to meet.

"The weekly rounds we do are always the same," explains Alessandro. "There are about 30 beneficiaries, and we try to meet them all at every round. They are people who suffer from the cold in this season, who need something waterproof when it rains ... We often give the same person a blanket from week to week, because maybe it got wet.

Every now and then, there are some new faces," continues Alessandro, "but in general we try to always go and find the

same people we have decided to follow, to take care of. This is because, rather than simply distributing basic necessities, we prefer to understand how they are, to know them, to know something about their lives." In short, creating a relationship with people who need material goods, yes, but above all human contact, attention and friendship.

"Another discomfort that homeless people face," notes Alessandro, "is that they often lose what little they have when police evict them from the place they are in. Then most have problems with drug addiction and alcoholism." And, while he is talking to us, we come to D., a very elegant Polish lady "we have been following for four years." D. has been living rough for 16 years, she repeats, while a volunteer asks her: "What do you need?" "A house," she replies, laughing heartily. Then she asks for pantyhose, which the volunteers promise they will bring the following Tuesday. D. lives together with her companion, both rolled up on a pavement under blankets with a strong acrid smell. On a wall a little farther on, their friend C. has found a place. He says he wants to go back to Romania, where a fireplace is waiting for him



There are thirty or so homeless people in Rome who receive food, clothing and medical care from Amistad volunteers.

## HOMELESS, THE FIGURES

According to the United Nations, there are over 100 million homeless in the world (*raistoria.rai.it*).

The 2017 Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe, curated by the Abbe Pierre Foundation and FEANTSA, shows how being young, having a dependent family and having a history of migration in Europe are social factors that strongly expose people to the risk of ending up on the street. Millions of people are abandoned by inadequate political responses (*fiopsd.org/focus-poverta-abitativa*).

In Italy, according to the ISTAT survey carried out in 158 Italian municipalities in collaboration with fio.PSD and the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and Caritas, there were an estimated 50,724 homeless people in 2015. These people live in extreme poverty or in a condition of profound distress linked first of all to the lack of a home as a place of intimacy and shelter; the average profile of homeless people is mostly men (85.7%), 4 out of 10 are Italian, 4 out of 10 are chronic or have been living on the street for more than 4 years, they live mainly in the regions of northern Italy (56%) and they have an average age of about 44 (*fiopsd.org/persone-senza-dimora*).

that will warm him up. In the meantime, he sips the tea offered to him by one of the volunteers, bringing it close to his face as it was a small fire.

"Many just want to chat," Alessandro tells me as the van leaves. "They need human warmth and, strangely, material things seem not to be so essential." Meanwhile, Alessandro and Roberto prepare me for the meeting with an old man who is submerged in material things. A. is Italian and lives in a camper van invaded by various objects, above all science and nature books that are stacked well in sight. He opens the small door asking the doctor if he has brought him paracetamol. A. says that when it is cold, his daughter takes him in. "But only when it's very cold," he specifies. Then I ask him, "What is it you most like receiving from the Amistad volunteers?" "A big hello," he replies without hesitation.

But we have to move on, because only a few hours remain before everyone decides to go to sleep. For those who have it, a bed. We knock on the door of one of the camper vans behind a parking lot, where wife and husband R. and F. have been spending their days for about a year now. F. does not look at us willingly, while trying to justify his situation. The volunteers usually talk to his wife R. The two come from southern Italy, where they worked as custodians at the home of a wealthy gentleman. On his death, the heirs decided to sell the property and so a series of odd jobs followed for R. and F., until life stopped. Meanwhile the volunteers are scattered between one camper and another. The first thing everyone asks are wet wipes for washing. I think that perhaps the sensation of being clean helps them not having the feeling of being "dehumanised". Every

### IN A WORD

Edited by  
Fr. Vittorino Grossi OSA

... God chose what is insignificant in the world,  
what is despised, what is nothing ...

1 Cor 1:28

Saint Paul reminds us that the Lord favours people who have no value on the scale of human values. God, therefore, revolutionises the most consolidated frames of reference that govern human relationships. However, it is not a classist position the other way round, rather it is a manifestation of the sovereignty of God, so that all recognise themselves as small before Him, so that nobody thinks of being more important than others, before the eyes of God.



Thanks to Tonino Fiorenza and Amistad not-for-profit for kind concession of the photo.



Many homeless people just want to chat with volunteers who offer them basic necessities. First of all, they need human warmth.

good is precious and treated with care. Every moment of relational exchange has a very high value. I am made to understand that well by T., an old woman afflicted with bone cancer, who does not hesitate to let the cold air enter her camper van, just to chat. And as we move away, she stays out in the cold, and continues to wave her hand, just like my mother does if she has had guests at home, when she stands in the doorway out of education until she no longer sees anyone on the horizon.

A book is never missing at the side of every homeless person. Everyone reads, I romantically think out loud. They kill time, Roberto tells me. Now I present you a real “character” he adds, as he invites me to get into the van. This character, called A., tells jokes in continuation and easily talks about any topic. A. is an agronomist who now lives on the pavement outside a building, enclosed by a wall (almost like a bedside table, seeing us leaning over a book by Simenon). Roberto is measuring his blood pressure, while A. offers the best of his irony and spares no one, not even the volunteers who have shown a faded brown sweater as a likely garment for him. “You wear this,” he says, horrified at the sight of

the garment. In fact, I also think it's really bad. In short, A. speaks with everyone on an equal footing, without hesitation, and “I also volunteer on Tuesday and Thursday at the canteen of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Civitavecchia. I make myself busy in order to pay penance”.

It is 11:25 and we are heading back to base camp. I have to go to work in the morning, I think, and I'm so tired I can't stand on my feet. The cold has got into my bones. My legs have swollen because I have not sat down for four hours. Without sharing my thoughts, I ask, “But do you do this round every Tuesday?” A chorus of “yes” slaps my conscience. “And those of you who go to work, how do you keep up the pace? What makes you do it?” “Monica, it's simple,” says Emanuela, the young shop assistant who could be my daughter, “the affectionate words that they address us with, as if we were members of the family. The nice thing is that they are waiting for you and when you don't go, they are looking for you. I don't know if it's more them that receive from me or more me that receives from them.” And, as I return to the warmth of my house, I think of how many feet have been washed tonight. ■



# Why support the Beehive?

by Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis,  
Mother Prioress of the Saint Rita  
Monastery and President of the Santa  
Rita of Cascia Foundation not-for-profit  
organisation

The Beehive is a reception project of the Saint Rita Monastery for children and young girls from families in difficulty. It was founded 81 years ago by a special prioress, Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce. And it is only thanks to this work of Ritian charity that we nuns have been able to help thousands of young people by ensuring them food, education, medical care, psychological support and a house full of love.

All this has been possible thanks to God and to the generosity of so many devoted benefactors of Saint Rita who help our "Little Bees", the girls who are guests of the facility, day after day, for cultivating their future. When a social project concretely changes the future of those who are the weakest for the better, then that is why we must do everything for it to continue to exist.

There are many benefactors who donate, even with small offers, to the Beehive. But there are many people who are not in a position to make cash donations. This does



Thanks to a staff of educators, the Little Bees of the Beehive receive adequate help for growing up in serenity.



not mean that there are no other ways to support the Little Bees in their growth. In fact, the Lord works along many ways and each of us follows their own in Him.

There are those who have the possibility to offer money, which is undoubtedly fun-

***We must do everything for it to continue existing***

damental for guaranteeing continuity to the project, but the girls also need prayers, moral support, closeness and affection. And we nuns want to return all the love that people give us, as is done in the family, with our presence and our prayers.

Today, in the 81st year of the Beehive, we are preparing to continue on the same road travelled so far thanks to the many



the affection and trust of our benefactors have allowed us to once again believe in a dream: that so many grains of solidarity, together, can be turned into a mountain.

***Every supporter is precious***



devotees and benefactors who have made the existence of the Beehive project of

***The girls also need prayers***

Saint Rita possible since 1938. Every supporter of the Beehive is precious for our Little Bees. The concrete help we receive, and

A mountain made of love, yes, but also of professional interventions aimed at allowing our girls to have an opportunity for the future and to prepare for life by believing in their own abilities.

You are all our mountain. On you, these little flowers of ours bloom. On you, these our nightingales fly. Upon you, our little girls take their first steps with hope towards their tomorrow. ■

# Humility does not mean weakness

by Mauro Papalini, Augustinian historian

**S**aint Rita was a humble woman of condition: daughter of peacemakers of Christ, of average social status even when she was married. Her always sweet and meek attitude hid her undoubted qualities, which she never exhibited. Widowed and alone, her condition worsened, but this did not prevent her from working hard to reconcile the enemy factions after her husband was killed because, as Saint Augustine says, humility does not mean weakness or acquiescence to error, and her efforts were rewarded.



Basilica of Saint Rita, G.B. Galizzi, Test of Obedience (XX cen.)

## PRAYER

O Saint Rita, an admirable example of goodness, humility / and love, give us a ray of divine light to illuminate our earthly journey. / You who in life knew so much suffering, / you understand the pains, the needs, the joys and the / hopes of we who turn to you confident. / Listen to our prayers, our praises and our graces and whisper them in the ear of God. / Your voice, enlivened by the mercy of the / Father, will come back to us and transform weeping into / smiling, despair into comfort. / Lord, you who gave Saint Rita a rose / blossomed in the snow, renew in us / this miracle: in the dryness of our hearts make hope / faith flourish again; in the discouragement of / "endless labyrinths" make it so that we can walk / the right path, accompanied by the hand of your / sweet Rita.

*Prayer recited in the small church of Saint Rita in Colombaro di Corte Franca (Brescia), composed by Alessandra Bono.*

***The Mother Superior ordered her to water a dry stick. After a year a vine appeared***

She never held prominent offices in the monastery, partly because widows, although religious like the others, were employed in the humblest services. Tradition has handed down to us this very significant episode: when Rita was

# GRACE RECEIVED

## TESTIMONY OF ANTONIETTA (SOMMA VESUVIANA NA - ITALY)

On September 28, 2018, I had a check-up mammogram done at the CMO centre in Torre Annunziata (Naples), because I had been operated on in October 2015 for malignant breast cancer (C5). On Wednesday October 10, accompanied by an OSS (social health worker, ed.) I go to pick up the result. It was raining heavily and as I crossed the very busy road, I saw a little picture on the cobblestone that seemed a holy picture to me, but I didn't pick it up. At the centre they tell me that the mammogram (only mine!) did not yet have a result (strange!) so I will have to return the following Friday. On leaving, I think of taking the same road and go to pick up the little picture; I felt a sense of guilt and an inner strength that pushed me there. Wonder of wonders, it was a holy picture of Saint Rita to whom I have always prayed every day. On the other side was the image of Mother Maria Teresa Fasce, whose existence was unknown to me. Sunday October 15, I go on the website of Saint Rita for the usual prayers and I see the image of Mother Maria Fasce and, intrigued, I read her story and how she suffered from breast cancer. I became really emotional about how Saint Rita had suggested I turn to her for healing! A fact that I consider prodigious! Too many coincidences! I picked the mammogram result up on the Friday and everything was fine.

a novice, to test the virtues of humility and obedience, the Mother Superior ordered her

to water a dry stick every day. The saint obeyed without hesitation and after a year a

## Rita was humble above all through virtue

vine appeared that can still be seen in the monastery of Cascia. Rita was humble above all by virtue: we imagine her to be silent, all gathered up in God, always active for as long as her health permitted, then patient in illnesses and in carrying that painful thorn which, in addition to making her share in a small way in Christ's suffering, could nevertheless have been be a temptation of pride for having received from Jesus such a great gift, but she avoided this temptation. Rita was humble until the end of her life: she feared that she had failed in her journey of perfection and that the souls of her husband and sons had been lost, but those roses and figs that blossomed in the snow were the delicate signal that God sent her to calm 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. Amen.*

Alberto Casagrande (Rome - Italy)  
Andrea Ignazio Pau (Monserrato CA - Italy)  
Anna Soriano (Santa Maria di Catanzaro CZ - Italy)  
Arduino Maiuri (Rome - Italy)  
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Claudio Gracchi (Bettola PC - Italy)  
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Vittoria Uggeri (Farini PC - Italy)





by Marta Ferraro

# Saint Rita in the heart of the people of Avellino



The Avellino PPU at the Sanctuary of Saint Rita in Cascia, during one of the annual general meetings (also photo alongside).

**T**he story of the family of Luigi Della Sala and Giuseppina D'Argenio, founders and leaders of the Pious Union of Saint Rita of Avellino, focuses on devotion to the saint of impossible cases and on the close link with her land. The two spouses have always been very attached to the example of the Umbrian saint and they educated their now adult children on the basis of her example.

From a chance meeting with one of the promoters of

the PPU, they themselves moved from being simple associates to founders and leaders of the Avellinese prayer group, which today has 110 members.

Although the Irpinia group never fully takes off, with tenacity and stubbornness Luigi and his wife Giuseppina continue to keep it alive from 2011 and take every opportunity to return to Cascia alone, with family or with associates to share their devotion and to rediscover their Cascian friendships,

which is reaffirmed on the many occasions they have been on pilgrimage to the Basilica of Saint Rita.

Since 1987, Luigi and Giuseppina have organised a pilgrimage to Cascia every year for those who wish to gather in prayer in the land of Saint Rita. In fact, in Avellino, Luigi and his wife are a point of reference for devotion to Saint Rita and anything that may concern the saint of impossible cases, and they participate willingly giving their contribution.



In 2005, on one of their many trips to Valnerina, the couple met Ciro Deliddo, one of the leaders of the first PPU groups, now leader of the Neapolitan group. That was their first and decisive encounter with the nascent reality of the Pious Union and Giuseppina, in fact, today boasts holding membership card number 1.

As individual associates, Luigi and his wife spent money on creating a group also in their city, becoming themselves its leaders. Every year with the associates they go on pilgrimage to Cascia, never missing national meetings. And the couple from Avellino are always active and enthusiastic in Cascia. In Avellino, PPU members recite the 15

Thursdays of Saint Rita to prepare together for the feast of the saint, and take part in the city procession on May 22, carrying the banner of their association through the central streets of the town.

The couple, who were married in 1968, formed a strong connection with the Cascian reality precisely because “since the '80s, when our children were still young, we liked going to Cascia,” says the leader. Last July, Luigi and Giuseppina celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in the Basilica of Cascia in the presence of Father Ludovico, ecclesiastical assistant of the Primary Pious Union and, precisely in the place they like to come back to whenever they can,

they renewed their marriage vows surrounded by the affection of their numerous and likeable family, of some leaders of other PPUs and of some of Cascia's shopkeepers who have now become friends of the couple.

The celebrations for their anniversary continued at the Hotel delle Rose, where the staff felt particularly involved due to the close relationship that has developed over time with Luigi and his wife, now very familiar in these parts.

“Celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary in Cascia has always been a great desire of mine,” says Luigi Della Sala, “a way to feel closer to her. Saint Rita is very important for us, she has entered our hearts”.

BY THE AUGUSTINIAN GENERAL POSTULATION

# Blesseds Esther and Caridad, Augustinian missionaries

What really draws attention is that, in that crisis situation, the Sisters, warned by diplomacy to leave the country and constantly stimulated about the need for personal security, along with the communities they chosen to distinguish what was God's will for them at that moment and what were the needs of the people they had served and loved for so many years.

It was the afternoon of the Sunday of Domund (World Mission Day, *ed.*) in 1994. The media in Spain gave the surprising news of an attack in Algeria against two Spanish nuns. A little later they revealed their identities: Caridad Álvarez and Esther Paniagua, Augustinian missionaries who had been relieving the pain of weak

***With their lives they tell the world that love comes first***

and sickly children and the elderly in need. From that moment, the media continued to build an information network for the bodies to be repatriated to Madrid and, beyond that, also because dying on the afternoon of Domund for two missionaries is not an isolated fact.



Today, we write about them with the same interest as then and with growing admiration. Moreover, on January 27 this year, Pope Francis authorised the beatification of the Servants of God Esther Paniagua and Caridad Álvarez, together with Monsignor Claverie and sixteen other companions, martyrs for the faith in the violence of the 1990s. Nineteen in all.

The Word of God was a guiding beacon on this journey: conscious, reflective and serene, they prayed, searched and studied in order to reach a free and responsible decision to remain at the side of the people they had served for so long. A life full of peace and passion for God and for the brothers had immense value for them, but not so



much as to betray their ideals.

And they knew it very well when they were invited to pay attention in a difficult historical moment where life was objectively in danger. With what conviction, humility and consistency we listened to her responding to the sisters who said that terrorists could

## *They chose to continue living by serving the people in need*

take away their lives: “No one can take away our life, because we have already given it”. And they chose, being able to leave the place, to continue living, loving and serving the people who needed them. Why?

Esther said: “For me in this moment the perfect model is Jesus. He suffered, had to overcome difficulties and ended up with the failure of the cross, from which the source of life is born”. And Caridad concluded in her discernment: “Mary was open to the will of God, perhaps it cost her. I want to have this

attitude before God in this moment”. Reading the story of Abraham, she concluded: “I am open and obedient to what God wants from me, to what my superiors want”.

On December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, they were beatified in the cathedral of Orán together with their 17 fellow martyrs. A small number of Augustinian Missionary Sisters participated. The two new blessed, Esther and Caridad, are a new richness in the testimony of fidelity of the members of the Augustinian Family throughout the world, and they encourage us, despite their many sufferings, to love the cross, as Saint Rita of Cascia herself loved it. Like her, the two new Augustinian missionary blessed knew how to be a sign of peace amid hatred, a sign of justice in the midst of the shedding of blood of the innocent, a sign of brotherhood among those who kill each other.

Blesseds Caridad and Esther brought holiness so close to the limit of our lives, living theirs with simplicity and dedication, in love with the cross of Jesus. With their lives they tell the world that love comes first, that it can do more than bullets, which can only kill the body. ■

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

## SMILING AT LIFE

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

1



2



3



4



5



6



1. Andrea Izzo (Mercato San Severino SA - Italy)
2. Gaia and Nicole Gasparoni (Barbara AN - Italy)
3. Ludovica Cippitelli (Frascati RM - Italy)
4. Margherita Calia (Altamura BA - Italy)
5. Matteo Galluzzi (Taranto - Italy)
6. Samuele and Gabriele (Italy)

MARTA FERRARO MEETS THE PILGRIMS OF THE SANCTUARY OF SAINT RITA OF CASCIA

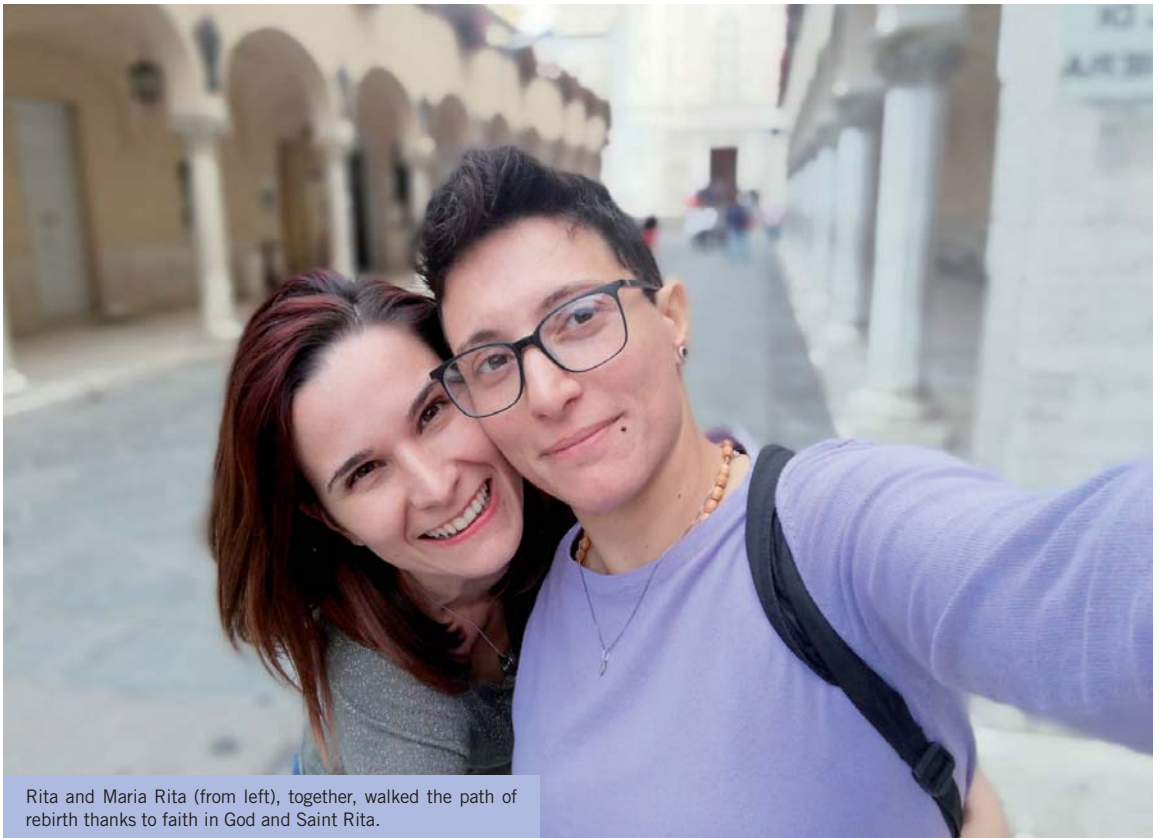
# On pilgrimage, seeking good

**R**ita Antonia Caggiani attended the Basilica of Cascia from an early age and, like all children, she was almost bored. Only the homilies of Father Scanavino, whose sermons always referred to the love and light of the Lord, managed to capture the attention of that child. Every time she listened to him, Rita was fascinated and, in life, she always looked for that light of which the Augustinian Father spoke with such conviction.

Rita is a person that everyone should meet, the friend everyone should have.

Rita knew how to transform her pain into an opportunity to do good, always.

Her life flowed normally until she met with a grave loss: a distant aunt with whom she had a strong bond and whose last desire had been to see Rita again. The distance and daily vicissitudes did not allow this meeting and Rita had to live with this guilt for a long time. This is one of the reasons why she chose to become a nurse and “If I caress someone, if I place a blanket on a patient, I feel like I’m doing it to my aunt,” says Rita convinced. It



Rita and Maria Rita (from left), together, walked the path of rebirth thanks to faith in God and Saint Rita.



is precisely at work and her scrupulous and affectionate way of doing her job that distinguishes her, as she manages to bring hope and delicacy to a place where suffering is at home. For a period of time, Rita

was by the side of a colleague with a difficult past, who also lived with a great sense of guilt, for having fallen in love with a man who had led her family to live in total darkness. Due to the attitude and behaviour of this man, however, that Rita's colleague had loved anyway, their two children had never known family serenity, the caresses of a mother and father. But Rita had seen in this woman the chance to save her daughter who, in particular, bore most heavily the consequences of her mother's choices.

One day the woman found out she was ill and decided to entrust her daughter to Rita, saying: "Only you can help her". During breaks from work, Rita and her colleague talked about this daughter, named Maria Rita, who was enclosed in grief over all she had had to suffer as a child.

When the colleague went to heaven, Rita immediately contacted her daughter. Rita and Maria Rita went on pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Cascia, they had a talk with Sister Natalina and Father Scanavino who directed the two new friends to undertake this hard journey of rebirth. Together and bit by bit, the women took this path towards the light. "When I realised my strength was not enough, we returned to Cascia and the sister offered us the help of a spiritual father. We walked a downhill road; every time we had a problem we returned to Cascia and we had an answer".

Today the bond between Rita and Maria Rita is very strong. If you ask Rita why she wanted to help a person in such a difficult situation even if she didn't really know her at all, she replies: "Because if you know the pain and then the good, you can't let others live in pain without trying to look for the good, at least for a while". (MF)

## TELL US YOUR STORY OF PILGRIMAGE

If you have also visited the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia on pilgrimage and wish to tell Marta Ferraro your story, write to us at [redazione@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:redazione@santaritadacascia.org) and we will contact you to share your experience with the readers of "From the Bees to the Roses".



# That little hidden church in Hungary

by Rita Gentili

**O**ur appointment with the devotion of Rita in the world flies to Hungary, a country where there are many faithful who turn to the saint of Cascia, but there is only one church named after her. A small building, hidden by tall buildings in a rather poor neighbourhood in Budapest. Parish priest father Toth Kàlmàn tells us that before the Second World War the building had acted as a workshop for repairing tyres for the fire brigade; in a letter dated May 22, 1947, he promises its intended use for the parish, then dedicated to Saint Rita. It is a construction that devotees themselves contributed to, gathering bricks from buildings destroyed during the war or ready to be used in new buildings. The parish priest tells us that the small size and secluded position of the church allowed people to

continue to frequent it even when the communist regime prevented them from attending church. This aspect determined a particularity of this church: inside it, Rita is always depicted as a lay person because, with the wearing of ecclesiastical clothes being forbidden, the image of a nun would have been difficult to understand in the eyes of the people. The parish priest tells us that devotion to Saint Rita in Hungary began in 1938 when, on her return from Cascia, a Hungarian nun called Margit Ur-



*The small size  
of the church allowed  
people to continue to  
frequent it*

## RITA IS ALSO HERE



**Country:** Hungary.

**City:** Budapest.

**To know:** Before the Second World War, the small church of Saint Rita was used as a workshop for repairing fire brigade tyres. The devotees themselves contributed to the expansion of the building as seen today, collecting bricks from buildings destroyed during the war or ready to be used in new buildings.



bancsek brought back a painting to the city of Bucharest, of which the church has a photo, depicting Rita with her three patron saints and a small booklet about the life of the saint, with which she began to spread the cult. The image is also replicated on the holy cards which, starting from 1947,

the then parish priest began to distribute secretly (because of the prohibition of religious propaganda) among the people, accompanying them over time with information leaflets on the story of Saint Rita and the location of the church. Since then, devotion to the miracle-worker has continued to grow and today a network of believers has been created, widespread not only in Hungary but throughout Europe, called the Family of Rita. Today, the parish priest explains, the Parish of Saint Rita (Szent Rita Pl bania in Hungarian) is not very well-attended on Sundays, like so many churches in the world, but gathers 3-4 thousand devotees on May 22. They are mostly women and the elderly, but also young people, afflicted by health problems and family disagreements. Certainly, the parish priest tells us, there are those who have received a grace through the intercession of Rita; like the woman who told of being cured of the pathology that afflicted her after feeling a strong and sudden heat over all of her body while she was sitting in prayer in front of the image of Saint Rita; or the child who was admitted to the hospital next to the church for a congenital kidney tumour and recovered following the daily prayers of her father to Rita during the days of the child's stay in hospital.



The Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita of Cascia together with parish priest farther Toth Kálmán, in 2018, inside the little church dedicated to the saint in Budapest.

# APPOINTMENTS

## **Cascia (PG), from February 7 to May 16 FIFTEEN THURSDAYS OF SAINT RITA**

Every Thursday, starting from February 7, we meet in the Basilica of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita to celebrate the Fifteen Thursdays that precede May 22, the Feast of Saint Rita. We await you for Mass: 07:30, 10:30 and 12:00. In the afternoon, the Solemn Celebration is at 18:00, also broadcast live on the YouTube Channel of **Santa Rita da Cascia Agostiniana** - @monasterosantarita.

## **Cascia (Perugia), May MARIAN MONTH**

Every evening in May, at 21:00, we recite 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 will end with a **Procession** from Piazza Dante to the Basilica of Saint Rita.

## **Cascia (Perugia), May 5 FEAST OF THE SPOUSES**

**Sunday May 5 at the Sanctuary of Cascia** we await you for the **Feast of the Spouses**. The appointment is at the **Basilica of Saint Rita** at **16:00** for the liturgical celebration dedicated to celebra-

tion of the following wedding anniversaries: 1st - 10th - 15th - 20th - 25th - 30th - 35th - 40th - 45th - 50th and those that follow. The spouses present will receive a parchment, leaflet (photo) and a rose, symbol of Saint Rita. **To participate in the Feast of the Spouses**, please inform the Information Office of the Sanctuary that you will be present: tel. +39 0743 75091 - e-mail infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org

## **Cascia (Perugia), from May 12 to 20 NOVENA OF SAINT RITA**

Appointment at **18:00** every day from May 12 to 20 at the **Basilica of Saint Rita**, for the **Novena** in preparation for the great feast of Saint Rita of May 20, 21 and 22. Holy Mass will be followed by the possibility of entering the chapel that houses the body of Saint Rita.

## **Cascia (Perugia), May 19 PROCESSION OF THE BANNER**

The traditional Procession of the Banner through the streets of Cascia starts from the Sanctuary of Saint Rita at **21:00** on Sunday **May 19**, with the participation of all citizens as well as the civil and religious institutions of the area. Started by the municipality in 1731, the procession is a thanksgiving to the saint that inhabitants turned to in order to obtain protection from earthquakes and plague. The seventeenth century banner carried in procession portrays Rita's entry to the monastery.

## **Cascia (PG), June 9 FEAST FOR CHILDREN**

On the second Sunday of June, **all parents with children from 0 to 10 years** are invited to participate in the 1st edition of the **"Feast for Children"**, which will be held on Sunday June 9 in Cascia at the Basilica of Saint Rita. There will be **Mass at 16:00**, followed by a special moment dedicated to the little ones, with the **blessing** of God on them through the intercession of Saint Rita. Please notify your attendance to the Information Office of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita: tel. +39 074375091 - e-mail infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org





# FEAST OF SAINT RITA 2019

CASCIA, SANCTUARY OF SAINT RITA  
FROM MAY 20 TO 22



## ► MONDAY, MAY 20

### Hall of Peace

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

## ► TUESDAY, MAY 21

### Basilica of Saint Rita

**16:30 - Solemn Eucharistic Concelebration of the Augustinian Family**, presided over by Father Joseph L. Farrell, Vicar General of the Augustinian Order.

**17:30 - Presentation of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2019.** Father Farrell presents the parchment symbol of the prestigious award to the chosen women of Rita.

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

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

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

## ► WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

### SOLEMNITY OF SAINT RITA OF CASCIA

#### Hall of Peace

**05:00 - Morning Mass.**

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

#### Churchyard of the Basilica of Saint Rita

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

**11:00 - Supplication to Saint Rita** followed by the **Solemn Pontifical**. Closure with the traditional ritual of the **Blessing of the Roses** (12:30).

#### Basilica of Saint Rita

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

# Humble are those who trace everything back to God

by Mauro Papalini, Augustinian historian

Carefully examining the biography of Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce we realise that humility is not the most obvious virtue: but perhaps we must be clear about the authentic meaning of this word. In general, the cliché of the virtue of humility is that of a compliant, resigned, condescending and hidden person: according to these criteria, Blessed Maria Teresa was not at all humble. St. Augustine comes to our aid, saying that humility comes from the awareness of having received everything from God, so we cannot boast of anything; it follows that our first commitment in life is to always try to do the will of God and not ours. This attitude must condition our way of acting; that is, not assuming our means, but from our behaviour the work of God stands out. In this, Blessed Maria Teresa was truly humble. That stubbornness of becoming an Augustinian religious only in Cascia actually supported the design that God had for her. Not to mention her great spiritual works, such as the reform of her community, to the point of making it a beacon of luminous sanctity, or the of-

fice of Prioress held for 27 years. Then the material works, such as the "From the Bees to the Roses" bulletin, the new altar and, above all, the new sanctuary dedicated to Saint Rita. All these activities could make one think of her thirst for

being the centre of attention; far from it! She considered herself a humble instrument in the hands of Jesus her Spouse and always at the service of the sisters, of the Augustinian Order that she loved so much and of the Church of which she







Mother Fasce (centre) together with the Community of the Monastery of Saint Rita.

felt totally a daughter. In fact, she maintained: "The soul has only one commitment before God: its sanctification. And this depends on perfect fulfilment of his most holy Will". To do God's will, one must live in a Christian way by denying oneself and practising the perfect exercise of all Christian virtues, especially humility. It seems to us that this passage from St. Augustine perfectly sums up the spirit with which Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce conducted herself during her life: "If you should ask me what are the ways of God, I would tell you that the first is humility,

## ***The soul has only one commitment before God: its sanctification***

the second is humility, and the third is humility, and no matter how often you keep asking me I will say the same over and over again. Not that there are no other precepts to give, but unless humility precede, accompany, and follow every good action which we perform, be-

ing at once the object which we keep before our eyes, the support to which we cling, and the monitor by which we are restrained, pride wrests wholly from our hand any good work on which we are congratulating ourselves" (Letter 118: 3, 22). It is natural to make a comparison between the two Augustinian saints, Rita and Maria Teresa, but in our opinion it is unthinkable: too distant in time, very different eras, social and religious environments totally different from today, yet they are both models of humility, in the sense of the Augustinian term, of course. ■

### THOUGHTS OF A MOTHER

*Holiness consists in the small things that occur every minute more than in the great things that rarely occur.*

BLESSED MOTHER MARIA TERESA FASCE



# Waiting for the day without sunset

edited by the Sisters

**“B**ut at day-break on the first day of the week they [the women] took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus” (Luke 24: 1-2).

After the longest Saturday in history, the women head towards the tomb to anoint the dead body of the Lord. They do not know that the night just passed is a special night. It is a different night from all the others because the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, passed beyond death to return to life, from darkness to light, he passed beyond humiliation to rise again in glory. For this reason, the women find the stone removed from the entrance to the tomb and, instead of a lifeless body, they receive the announcement of the Lord's resurrection.

That Sunday morning, that Sunday of Easter (or *Passover*), the whole story of Jesus of Nazareth, the whole history of all humanity, was to change in meaning.

We relive this passover in the Easter Vigil, which for St. Augustine is *“the mother of all holy vigils, during which the whole world is awake”*.

The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night, which symbolically is fundamental for the celebration itself. In the middle of the night, in fact, the Church, spread out all over the earth, calls its children to watch in prayer in expect-



tation of eternal life. There are four liturgical moments of this special night:

**Liturgy of the Light.** The symbolism of the night and the skylight refer to the primordial struggle between darkness and light. The ritual calls for: blessing of the fire, preparation of the candle, procession, announcement of Easter. It is the representation of the passage from darkness to light.

**Liturgy of the Word.** To break the silence, nine readings (seven taken from the Old Testament and the last two from the New) retrace the main moments in the

history of salvation, up to the Easter of the Lord, event-centre of the life of man and the whole world. The symbolism of the Light gives way to that of the Word, which announces the story of salvation wrought by God.

**Baptismal liturgy.** This moment celebrates baptism, through which *"we were buried with him in death so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too can walk in a new life"* (Rom 6: 4). St. Paul explains that the dawn of life, achieved by passing through baptism, overcomes the darkness of

death. The freedom of eternal life in Christ overcomes the slavery of sin.

**Eucharistic liturgy.** Celebration of the Eucharist is the culminating moment, where humanity immersed in the darkness of ignorance and error, of sin and death, passes beyond in Christ to rise again to eternal life. It is the foretaste of that Sunday when the sun of life no longer sets for going to die in the night.

And on the day without sunset, Christ's resurrection is his definitive victory over death and his promise that eternity awaits each of us. ■

## AS IF SEEING THE INVISIBLE

Dearest friend,

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

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

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

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

**For information:** Monastery of Saint Rita - 06043 Cascia PG  
tel.: 0743 76221 - e-mail: [monastero@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:monastero@santaritadacascia.org)



# *A bequest, a gift of love*

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

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

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

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





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

**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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It is our  
task to let  
them grow  
serenely.

ESTROGENT

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

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