

90
YEARS

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES ³

POPE FRANCIS

The reassuring novelty

THE POWER OF PRAYER

**Interview with
Roberto Bedettii**

FEAST OF SANTA RITA

Take part in events



APPROACHING GOD

SUMMARY

- 3 *Editorial*
Approaching God
- 4 *Today*
The reassuring novelty
Roberto and strength in prayer
- 8 *Saint Rita Foundation*
Help full of love
- 10 *Augustinians*
The coat of arms of the Augustinians
- 12 *Cascia Events*
Appointments
- 14 *Traces of Rita*
Learning from the saints
- 16 *Around the world*
Twinning Cascia-Râmnicu Vâlcea
- 17 *Primary Pious Union*
A meeting for the faith
- 20 *Dialogue with the Monastery*
The secret of happiness
Saint Rita Recognition

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In 2011, postal charges increased considerably and this has led us to ask for a small contribution to support our magazine.

To continue spreading Rita's message of hope, help sustain "From the Bees to the Roses", the voice of Saint Rita throughout the world.

By writing "subscription" as the reason, your small contribution will help us maintain contact with you.

Thank you all!

Sr. M. Giacomina Stuani,
Editor-in-Chief

90
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FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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Approaching God



Dear friends and readers, the Feast of Saint Rita is now with us! We breathe it in the air and in our hearts. Let's live it all together with joy and in prayer to the Risen One, on behalf of those who suffer and those who are sick, those who need to be heard. To be seen. To say, "I exist and I am among you, why do not you see me?"

Following the example of Pope Francis, let's turn our eyes towards the most helpless and let's embrace them! Let's talk about them, talk with them. Let's listen to them - and with attention. Because, often, those in need are next to us, really close by. And maybe we are not aware of them, immersed as we are in finding solutions to our daily problems. Sometimes, the solution lies in sharing the suffering, which is the beginning of a journey where two people exchange gestures of relief and hope.

Just as Saint Rita of Cascia invites us to do with her example, let's forgive! Because God has forgiven us. Because each one of us needs to have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the light that is in forgiveness.

And let's make gestures. Yes, let's act, not just to say and think, but act to renew the things that are not working around us because each of us, through their own possibilities, can make life on earth better for everyone and, like the saints, approach God.

Happy Feast of Saint Rita to you all!



Photo courtesy of Fabio Frustaci

As Cardinal Prospero Grech reminds us, Francis "is the Pope of the people".

POPE FRANCIS. CROSS AND FORGIVENESS

From Archbishop of Buenos Aires to the first Pope from the Americas. Jorge Mario Bergoglio is a 76-year-old Argentine Jesuit and became Pope on 13 March 2013, taking the name of Francis in honour of the poor man of Assisi. He was born in the Argentine capital to parents who had emigrated from Piedmont. Pope Francis was and is a simple shepherd for his former diocese, which he visited by moving around with the underground and buses, as for the entire Church. His message of humility and peace bursts out through Love of the Cross and the knowledge that there is no sin that God cannot forgive. Faced with the evil of the world, Pope Francis reminds us that God did not remain in silence, indeed, "God has spoken, he has replied, and his answer is the Cross of Christ: a word which is love, mercy, forgiveness". "Even if you have been far away, take a small step towards him: he awaits you with open arms".

The reassuring novelty

by Roger Bergonzoli

In an era of lasting uncertainty, in short, in the presence of a condition of change, we are here and lack the ground beneath our feet because we do not know how to make ends meet; what will become of us, our families, the future of our children, even just thinking about the day after tomorrow. Then, suddenly, a novelty. And, if I approach it cautiously, I discover that this novelty does not bring nasty surprises, rather, it tastes good.

A man tells me, "the real power is service", he looks into my eyes and asks me to trust him, reminding me that those who are higher up should be at the service of

those who are lower down. And he does so in the oldest fashion in the world, that is, he gives me simple, symbolic demonstrations to deserve my trust. He immediately puts a cross around his neck that is not gold and decides to call himself Francis. Certainly, it would not have seemed strange if Pope Francis had chosen the name of a Jesuit saint, so much so that at the beginning some had suggested further legitimate connections with St. Francis Xavier of the Society of Jesus. But no, for his name he chose that of a saint of a religious order different from his own. This also seems like a sign that is not at all obvious. And to think that there

were those who, like me, interpreted this choice as the desire to satisfy a request from the world “outside” the Curia; in fact, “Francis” was a name (highly symbolic of a need for change) that had been widely called for just before the Conclave. These two details - the cross and the name - struck my imagination when Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Pope on 13 March. For me, they render the Pope’s message incredibly new, when he uses the language of dialogue that cuts across the religious and cultural background of each of us, bringing in values such as love for the weakest and humility, in both the material and spiritual sense. It is true that “he has not invented anything”,



17 March 2013. Pope Francis is welcomed in the Church of St. Anne in the Vatican by Augustinian pastor, Father Bruno Silvestrini.

the message is that of Jesus Christ, that every Pope before him has conveyed. But the novelty, which has reassured us all, lies in having accompanied his words with facts that are immediately perceived by the common people not only as concrete but as decidedly unexpected, based on physical gestures and the immediacy of lan-

guage, at a moment in time marked by so many twists and turns that destabilise us and old ways of thinking to the point of collapse; at a moment in time when we need a missionary Pope; at a moment in time when there is a need for social justice. All this is perfectly embodied in the gestures of Pope Bergoglio. ■

CARD. GRECH: “HE IS THE POPE OF THE PEOPLE”

In the homily of his inauguration mass on 19 March, the keywords used by

Pope Francis were “service” ... “Tenderness” and “caring for creation”. The Holy Father has taken St. Francis as his model of life, and this, of course, is translated into practice with his love for poverty, both in words and in deeds. For example, in Buenos Aires (when he was a cardinal), Bergoglio took the bus, he did not even want his car; he took the underground, he was always among the people, so he has already lived his life as a “Franciscan”. And then, of course humility which he already showed when he asked the people (on the day of his election, 13 March 2013, *ed.*), in St. Peter’s Square to pray for him. He is the Pope of the people.

And this perhaps suggests some hints of a possible programme? Of course, Pope Francis knows that there are problems in the Curia, there is a need to make changes; he will make them.

Do you see the intention of Pope Francis to continue on the path of transparency traced by Pope Ratzinger? Ratzinger, it is true, has a completely different character ... I personally am very attached to the Pope Emeritus, because I worked with him for twenty years in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Of course, each Pope has his own personality, his own character, his own ideological, pastoral background ... but I see in Pope Francis more of an affinity with Pope John XXIII, whom he also resembles through his search for simplicity. Pope John was a so-called “transitional Pope” but then, by inaugurating the Second Vatican Council, he changed a bit the whole Church, the entire world.

Augustinian Cardinal Prospero Grech gave the opening sermon at the Conclave that elected Argentine Jesuit Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope.

Roberto Bedetti, 37, opens the door of his car for the short ritual of introduction. His smile is generous. Then, back in the car, yes, I will follow you with my own, through a tangle of increasingly narrow bottleneck streets to Sacrofano (Rome). Until we come out in front of a building, go through here, and come to the door. He welcomes me to a home that is humble like him, full of love like him; that love that is framed in his eyes and on the kitchen door in drawings by his two older daughters, Victoria, 5 years, and Beatrice, 4, that he had with Stefania.

The drama begins on the day of the birth of Rita, the third daughter, named in honour of the patron saint of impossible cases, to whom the couple is very devoted. But that same moment of light, in fact, coincides with the darkness that envelopes Stefania. Immediately after giving birth, the woman goes into a coma. It is 31 July 2012. Stefania will not stay much longer in Rome, where there is no place for her, so she is admitted to a clinic on the outskirts of Imola. And everything changes.

Roberto and strength in prayer

by Monica Guarriello

Before his beloved Stefania went into a coma, Roberto Bedetti was in charge of the bar in the Casa del Cinema in Rome. Today, he has had to abandon his role as supervisor and go back to being a simple bartender in the place where, through the windows, you can enjoy one of the most beautiful views in



Roberto, with his two older daughters, Victoria and Beatrice (photo above), also shown with their mother, Stefania, who is now in coma (photo alongside).

the world: the park of Villa Borghese, with the small church where the tiny Rita was baptised the day after our conversation of 20 March.

The family lives on one salary and the living room contains the essentials: little Rita peacefully asleep, Stefa-

nia's mother Pierina sitting on the couch next to me, family photos and two cups of freshly brewed coffee. "I get strength somewhere else, even I don't not know where from ... I can't explain it," Roberto tells me, talking about the enormous faith he has had since a very young age, when he breathed it at home with his parents and his brothers, one of whom, Antonio, has been in a wheelchair since birth.

"With Stefania, we always went to the Sanctuary of Cascia. We also bought Saint Rita wedding rings ... Stefania and I have worn them for the last five years."

"We are devoted to Saint Rita because of our first child, Vittoria. She was born with a major congenital infection; the doctors told me not to see her, that she would not have survived 24 hours; but I placed holy pictures of Saint Rita and Pope John Paul II and left. I prayed for days. And the little girl is now fine. She goes to kindergarten, and this year she'll go to primary school; she is more intelligent than normal."

"The evening before Stefania gave birth to Rita, she was very afraid, she lit a candle to Saint Rita and prayed to the saint. And she's still alive, after all that she has been through ... In the early days, I almost couldn't take it anymore. Instead, now, it's

THREE QUESTIONS TO A YOUNG DEVOTEE

by Marta Ferraro

Mauro Farina, a 20-year-old university student, lives in Augusta and is active in the Parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; with the help of parish priest Father Davide, he has helped to spread the cult of Saint Rita in the city, which was already closely linked to the Patroness of impossible cases.

Mauro, tell us about your "encounter" with Saint Rita? It occurred at an early age. As a child, I learned about her figure through my grandparents. Over the years, thanks to information about her life and her miracles transmitted to me by the parish priest and one of the leaders of the Primary Pious Union (association dedicated to the cult of Saint Rita, see pages 18 and 19 of this issue, ed.), I have cultivated this attachment to the saint and it is steadily becoming stronger.

In your everyday life as a 20-year-old university student, what is your commitment to spreading the cult of Saint Rita among your peers and beyond? In my daily life, I have a lot to do with my peers, especially during meetings of Catholic Action. Rita is often the subject of our conversations, because of her testimony of faith and services towards others.

What is the most important lesson that the experience of Santa Rita has given you and how do you follow it in your life? The strongest teaching is humility. In the world of today we are used to having always to be first, to have to do "the lion's share". On the other hand, Rita has been, and will be, an example of meekness and humility. As far as I am concerned, I am often called on to play the role of "leader" and I always try to refer to Rita to avoid falling into arrogance.

only by prayer that I carry on. It makes me feel ... a force ... I can't explain it. Sometimes I leave the hospital and maybe Stefania has not given any signs and is worse. But in the evening I recite the rosary ... The next day I'd do it

again, I sleep 4 hours! It's as if I had slept for 24 hours, I feel stronger than before."

"I told my daughters that mummy has to wake up, I told them the truth because they are very intelligent. Along with my daughters, we pray." ■

THE WORD

edited by
Fr. Vittorino Grossi osa

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

(Jn 4: 23)



Help full of love

Interview with Gloria, 38, supporter of the Saint Rita Beehive

Gloria, you wrote to us: “Every night, in her prayers, my child reminds Jesus to always protect her Little Bee friends”.

How did this feeling of friendship for young people who live miles away from you

come about? My daughter is always asking me for a little brother but, unfortunately, that's not possible. So, one day, I thought that maybe Saint Rita, the Saint of the impossible, could hear the prayers of my daughter and we set out for Cascia. A priest showed us around the monastery and my daughter stopped in front of the white windows of the Beehive, saying to the priest: “Maybe Jesus does not send me a little brother because what I can do for Him I can do for the “little bees”. According to Chiara, the trip to Cascia has not brought her a little brother but a large family.

In your opinion, what is the value of a contribution, however small, in favour of those in need? In my opinion, it's not the value of money that counts but the meaning of the love with which one makes a donation and sacrifice, in this case that I and my little girl make.

How important is the teaching of Saint Rita of Cascia in your choice of charity? Saint Rita is my strength, my light, my courage; she is the sun that enters my



To little Chiara, to Gloria and to all the supporters of the Saint Rita Beehive: heartfelt thanks from the Little Bees.



house in the morning, the smile on my daughter's face when I take her to the schoolbus. That little help that we give to the Little Bees and the relationship that has developed between my daughter and her new friends is an encouragement to always be better in the journey with God and we hope that with these small gestures there might be a better world one day.

The Little Bees will carry you and little Chiara in their hearts, even when they are grown up. Do you have a message for them?

The message I give to my little girls is to always carry in their heart and soul the teachings they have learned in the Beehive and never forget the faith that has been transmitted, to never give up in the face of any difficulties in life, especially when they leave the Beehive to start their lives in the outside world. To always walk beside the Lord Jesus, because God sees and provides, and a great example of God's hand is the creation of the Beehive to give a future to these little girls.

SUPPORT THE BEEHIVE PROJECT WITH US

- 12€** buy a textbook for a girl in need.
- 20€** provide one hour of educational support to youngsters taking after-hour schooling.
- 50€** is the cost of one week's meals for girls in difficulty.
- 100€** provide professional medical care to a youngster in need.
- 200€** allow us to buy a complete kit of teaching materials for a girl.

The Beehive is a structure that lives solely through the donations of people who make their devotion concrete, through aid to the weakest.

A donation, however small, is enough to support the Little Bees and Wildflowers, through:

Post Office Account No. 5058 made out to: Monastero S. Rita da Cascia

Bank

IBAN IT27D0631538330000001001328
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Credit Card

at www.santaritadacascia.org/donazioni

indicating "Alveare" as the reason.

I also help the Little Bees

If you also support the Little Bees of the Saint Rita Beehive and want to share your personal experience of charity with the readers of "From the Bees to the Roses", send us your testimony at redazione@santaritadacascia.org
Thank you!

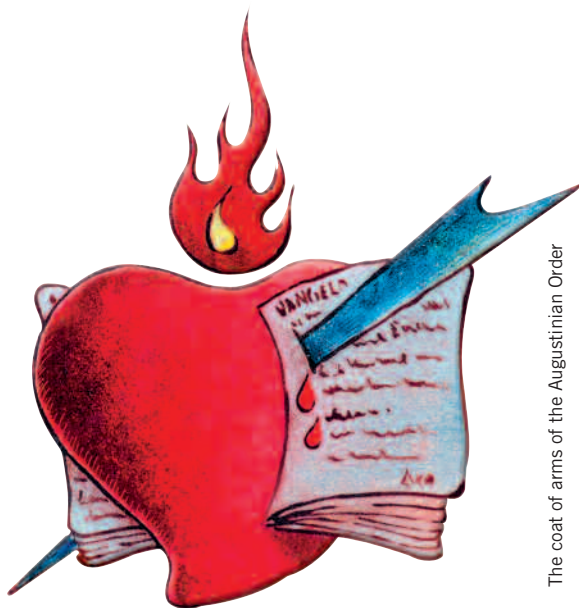
The coat of arms of the Augustinians

by Fr. Remo Piccolomini OSA

Each religious order has its own sign of recognition, its coat of arms, which graphically describes the guiding principle of the religious order to which members belong.

Santa Rita, as is known, is a cloistered nun of the Augustinian Order. Her spiritual father is St. Augustine, who wrote a *Rule* for all male and female monasteries and which, in the course of monastic history, has been very successful because of its essentiality and simplicity, based on the Gospel and respect for the dignity of the human person. The coat of arms represents a book under a flaming heart pierced by an arrow.

The text of Augustine that inspired it is the following: "*You pierced my heart with your word, and I loved you*" (*Percussisti*



The coat of arms of the Augustinian Order

cor meum verbo tuo, et amavi te), (Confess.X, 6, 8). The book is the Holy Scripture, which, like a double-edged sword,

IN MEMORY OF FATHER TACK

"With a sense of sadness and loss, I am writing to inform you that Fr. Theodore Tack died on 10 February 2013 in Tulsa, Oklahoma". It was the Prior General of the Order of St. Augustine (OSA), Father Robert Prevost, who announced the news, immediately after the ascension to heaven of the Prior General Emeritus. A Member of the Province of Chicago, Fr. Tack was Prior General of the OSA between 1971 and 1983. "During his mandate," continued Fr. Prevost, "he directed the renewal of the Order with determination and conviction, following the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, together with the Constitutions of the Order, whose Special General Chapter was renewed in Villanova in 1968. The document of the intermediate General Chapter of 1974, under the guidance of Fr. Tack, made public the well-known "Dublin Document" which clearly shows how to understand the life of the community and was a force for transformation in the life of the Order".

The Augustinian Community of Cascia and the Editorial Committee and Editorial staff of From the Roses to the Bees join the entire Augustinian Family in the most heartfelt prayers to the Lord for the eternal repose of Fr. Theodore Tack.



penetrates the hearts of those who seek the Lord like an arrow, and inflames the love of God. The coat of arms describes the personality of Augustine, a tireless seeker of Truth (that is, of God), which he has looked for everywhere, even along mistaken paths, and once found, has united himself to it for ever.

But love of God is love of Christ which, drunk with milk from the mother's breast, became the *raison d'être* of his apostolate, along with the Church, whose mission continues until the end of time. The reason for the effectiveness of his activities as a pastor was to have been the *servant of the servants of God and of the Church* (see Letter 217). It is the synthesis of the spirituality of the Order: Truth is sought which, with the guidance of the Word of God, finds in the diversity of brothers unity of mind and heart reaching out to God. It finds LOVE. ■

A CONFERENCE FOR HOPE IN THE CHURCH

From 27 to 30 March, the Friends of St. Augustine gathered at the Hotel delle Rose in Cascia for the conference on "The hopes raised by the Council delivered to the Church of today's world", dedicated to the Second Vatican Council, 50 years after its opening. In fact, it was the Second Vatican Council that encouraged the birth of the Friends of St. Augustine. For the then young members of the association, Saint Rita represented along the way what Blessed John Paul II called the "feminine genius" and the tenderness of a mother, with the heart of her Sisters open to the call of the Council for young people. And the Conference was organised precisely for renewing this call towards the boys and girls of today, to welcome them and encourage them to be the new hope of the Church.

SMILING AT LIFE

Send photos of your children to monastero@santaritadacascia.org with the consent of both parents for publication



1. Alessia and Giulia Posenato, Monteforte d'Alpone (VR) - Italy
2. Denise Parutto, Fanna (PN) - Italy
3. Elisabeth Laudi, Mondercange - Luxembourg
4. Francesco Pio Feppo, Maddaloni (CE) - Italy
5. Gioele Scantamburlo, Limena (PD) - Italy
6. Maria Aliya Bautista Buenaobra - Philippines
7. Matteo and Antonio Karol Piserchia, Foggia - Italy
8. Nathan Rodrigue, Quebec - Canada
9. Noemi, Riccardo and Eliana Cernusco, Lombardone (LC) - Italy
10. Pietro, Sara and Mattio Addis, Buddusò (OT) - Italy
11. Rita Corona, Villamar (VS) - Italy
12. Valeria and Giuseppe Camorin; Susanna, Alice and Amanda Schettino, Castellammare di Stabia (NA) - Italy

From 20 to 22 May, come to the Feast of Saint Rita!

20 MAY

21.00 - Presentation of the five women awarded the **Saint Rita International Recognition 2013**. The recipients of the award are: Alexandra Jianua, Lina Trappetti, Teresina Natalino, Sister Elsa Caterina Galfré and Zenobia Elmi. "Women of Rita", whose life is very close to that of Rita of Cascia, who have distinguished themselves by conveying the message of peace and forgiveness in the life of every day.

21 MAY

16.30 - The Augustinian Family meets for **Solemn Mass** presided by Fr. Robert Prevost, Prior General of the Augustinian Order.

17.30 - **Saint Rita International Recognition 2013**: Alexandra Jianua, Lina Trappetti, Teresina Natalino, Sister Elsa Caterina Galfré and Zenobia Elmi receive the parchment attesting to their work as "women of Rita". This is followed by Solemn Celebration of the **Transit** of Saint Rita, which commemorates the passing of our Saint from earthly life to that of Paradise, presided over by the Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, Mons. Renato Boccardo.

21.30 - **Arrival of the Torch from Râmnicu Vâlcea (Romania), twin town of Cascia**. The annual Twinning takes place between Cascia and an Italian or foreign town which has in itself a strong bond with Saint Rita. The town chosen this year is



Râmnicu Vâlcea, where the first Greek-Catholic church in Romania dedicated to the Saint of Cascia was built in 2006.

22 MAY

5:00 - Start of **Holy Masses**, with the joyful sound of all the bells of Cascia, continuing at 6.00 / 7.00 / 8.00 / 9.00.

10.15 - Arrival of the **Historical Parade on the Square** in front of the Basilica,

11.00 - **Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches**, celebrates the **Solemn Pontifical Mass**; at the end, **Blessing of the roses** and **Supplication** to Saint Rita.

18.00 - Last **Mass** for Benefactors of the Sanctuary.

SAINT RITA SPIRITUAL EXERCISES HOUSE

PARTICIPATE IN 2013 COURSES

COURSES FOR LAY PEOPLE

1 June (lunch) - 2 June (afternoon)

Guide: Fr. Giuseppe Pagano
"Santa Rita, woman of peace"

29 July (lunch) - 3 August (morning)

Guide: Fr. Remo Piccolomini OSA
"The Holy Spirit in the Church"

17 August (evening) - 21 August (morning)

Guide: Mons. Giovanni Scanavino OSA
"One Rule for all"

23 August (evening) - 25 August (afternoon)

Guide: Don Gianmario Pagano
Course for fiancés
 Info and reservations:
 Sophie Alicino, Mobile 333 81 80 301
 amicidisantapudenziana@gmail.com

9 September (evening) - 13 September (morning)

Guide: Fr. Francesco M. Giuliani OSA

16 September (lunch) - 19 September (morning)

Guide: Fr. Ludovico Centra OSA
Course for friends and collaborators (including potential collaborators) of the Augustinians

COURSES FOR PRIESTS AND DEACONS

1 July (lunch) - 6 July (morning)

Patristic Institute "Augustinianum"
Course open to all priests and deacons

23 September (evening) - 28 September (morning)

International College of St. Monica
Course open to all Augustinians

21 October (lunch) - 26 October (morning)

Guide: Mons. Giovanni Scanavino OSA
"We fortify by believing, to confirm our brothers"

COURSE FOR CLERICS AND THE CONSECRATED

2 September (lunch) - 7 September

Guide: Mons. Giovanni Scanavino OSA
"Faith and consecrated life"
Course open to the entire Augustinian Family (for men and women clerics, consecrated men and women)

In free time, the Saint Rita Spiritual Exercises House willingly hosts groups organised by others.

The dates not available (because already booked for closed meetings) are:

- 15 to 17 March;
- 26 to 28 April;
- 25 to 26 May;
- 14 to 15 July;
- 5 to 10 August;
- 12 to 18 October;
- 26 to 28 October.

Reservations

The participation fee, including all costs for room and board, is € 40 per day, all inclusive (supplement for single room: € 8).

Reservations can be made

by:

e-mail:

casaesercizi@santaritadacascia.org

mail: Direzione Casa Esercizi Spirituali
 Santa Rita - 06043 Cascia (PG)

phone: 0743 71229 (number only active during courses) or 0743 75091

fax: 0743 76476

Male vocations

Young men in search of their vocation can spend periods of prayer and meditation on the Word of God and on fraternal life with the Augustinian religious communities.

The boys can call 75091 0743

Learning from the saints

by Fr. Giuseppe Caruso OSA

The cult of the saints has always played a central role in the lives of Christians. Ever since the first centuries of the diffusion of Christianity, when communities were persecuted, the testimony of the martyrs who, in not denying Christ did not hesitate to give their lives, were a valuable encouragement for the faithful and a reason for hope: if those men and women of all ages and from all walks of life became sanctified through giving themselves, saintliness is really possible. Capitalising on this ancient practice, even the Second Vatican Council, in the constitution on its *Sacrosanctum Concilium* liturgy promulgated just fifty years ago (4 December 1963) states the following about the liturgical calendar: “The feasts of the saints proclaim the wonderful works of Christ in His servants, and display to the faithful fitting examples

for their imitation” (SC 111). Many women and men of our own time declare their devotion to Saint Rita, and perhaps we ourselves are among these; however, we might ask to whom Rita herself was devoted. Obviously, the spirituality of Rita is centred on the passion of Christ; his forehead, marked by the stigma of the spine, was the outward and visible sign of a completely internal assimilation of the Crucifix. Rita was also devoted to Mary, dearly loved by all the people of Cascia. But among the saints, which did she choose as her special patrons? Ancient tradition answers the first question, indicating John the Baptist, Augustine and Nicholas of Tolentino as the protectors of Rita, but does not explain why them and not others. Perhaps we can find an explanation by carefully scrutinising Rita’s life and the way in which she imitated her heavenly patrons. John the



The appearance of Saints John the Baptist, Nicholas of Tolentino, Augustine, and Rita.
(Ancient Choir, Monastery of Saint Rita, Cascia).

PRAYER

Dear Saint Rita,
stay close to me in times of sorrow,
I reconfirm my devotion
and trust in your protection.
Pray for the full conversion
of my heart
that I may please Him always
with a more fervent life.
You are welcomed by God and obtain
that which you seek for your devotees:
for this, I place great hope in you.
Come with me, Saint Rita,
with your blessing
that I may always praise,
bless and with you thank the Lord
for all the good that he may give me.
Amen.

Baptist is the prophet who retires into the wilderness to be alone with God, but at the same time works with audacity so that the world becomes a better place: Rita must have seen in him the synthesis of Christian life, of her life. For Rita the Augustinian nun, Augustine and Nicholas will be respectively father and brother; sharing the style of life expressed in that Rule that puts the search for God at the centre of inwardness and sharing in the community, Rita also grew up in love until reaching the heights of holiness. The Saints loved Christ with a total

TESTIMONY OF ROSARIO
BOTTARO, URUGUAY

I am the mother of four children and, as a mother, I prayed for the health of a 24-year-old guy without knowing him. Saint Rita was there as a friend, the best of friends, who speaks to you and knows how to listen in all moments, makes us feel that she is, like a true friend, in the immense love of God the Father. This young man had to face a risky operation due to a spinal tumour, set for 2 August last year. A miracle happened, because the tumour regressed and it was no longer necessary to operate. I know with certainty that it was Saint Rita who protected him with her immense faith, so that the doctors no longer had to operate. I had promised that if this was to happen I would have publicly given thanks for this miracle! My heart, my soul, my family are full of the joy of having You and our Lord God among us. We love you.

GRACE RECEIVED

love, a love capable of becoming the compass to guide every choice in everyday life; learning to love like them is the ultimate and genuine meaning of our devotion. ■

THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

To thee, Lord, we humbly recommend these our dead, because as in their mortal life they were always loved by You with immense love, so now, freed from all evil, they may enter by Your grace into eternal rest. Carry them to your Paradise, where there is no longer mourning, nor pain, nor tears, but peace and joy with Your Son and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Agostina Giobbi Schiagnano (Como - Italy)
Dino Bianchi (Casali di Ocosce, Cascia, PG - Italy)
Edison Wias (Rio Grande do Norte - Brazil)

Elizabeth Carneiro Alecio Rocha (Rio Grande do Norte - Brazil)
Emilia Mistretta (Marseille - France)
Enzo Brunelli (Spoleto, PG - Italy)
Giuseppe Revelli (Centallo CN - Italy)
Iolanda Armiero Zomparelli (Naples - Italy)
Maria Zaccariello (Torre del Greco, NA - Italy)
Sr. M. Caterina Marani OSA (Corpus Domini Monastery, Cento, FE - Italy)
Maria Donata Iuliano (Schlierbach, Mulhouse - France)
Quorina Risoldi (Monteleone di Spoleto, PG - Italy)
Rita Rossi (Monteforte d'Alpone, VR - Italy)
Rosita Guaglio (Trecate, NO - Italy)
Silvia Grisanti (Borgo San Dalmazzo, CN - Italy)

Every year, on the occasion of the Feast of Saint Rita from 20 to 22 May, Cascia joins in partnership with a town in the world that has a strong connection with Saint Rita. For 2013, the Twinning of peace and faith brings together Cascia and Râmnicu Vâlcea in Romania, where the first Greek-Catholic church in the country dedicated to the Saint was built in 2006.

Twinning Cascia-Râmnicu Vâlcea

by Don Marian Stoicânescu, pastor of the Romanian United with Rome, Greek-Catholic Parish of Râmnicu Vâlcea, dedicated to Saint Rita of Cascia

With the collapse of the communist regime (the Romanian Revolution of 1989, *ed.*) and after the return of the Romanian United with Rome, Greek-Catholic Church (BRU) to legality in 1990, the United Church with Rome re-established its role of promoting Christian-National values in all parts of Romania, urged on by those believers who desired the establishment of new parishes. The same thing happened in Râmnicu Vâlcea, where there was a compact group of Greek-Catholics: over 450 people who, overcoming major obstacles due to an immature democracy, managed to sign

the deed for the foundation of the Parish of Râmnicu Vâlcea on the afternoon of 6 July 2001. Since then, we have been engaged in hard and radical work aimed not so much at the construction of a parish church, as at strengthening the faith of the few Christians present. Step by step, on 15 August 2001, the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, the first mass of the Greek-Catholic community of Râmnicu Vâlcea was celebrated in the Roman Catholic Church of Sfântul Anton. Then, on 22 May 2005, the foundations were laid of the future parish church dedicated to Saint Rita of Cascia, patroness of the Community together with the Blessed Virgin Mary. Overcoming all obstacles, on 1 October 2006, all of us had the immense joy of participating in the dedication of the church of the Romanian United with Rome, Greek-Catholic Church in Râmnicu Vâlcea to the Saint of Cascia. Over time, we have enjoyed a series of extraordinary events, such as the *Peregrinatio* (pilgrimage) of the relic of Saint



April 2013. Celebration of the first part of the twinning, in the parish of Râmnicu Vâlcea.

Rita in 2011 and 2012. Today, Rita is loved and prayed to in a world, the Orthodox world, where she was little known. It was because of this great devotion to Saint Rita that I asked to start the process of the Twinning of Faith and Peace, on the occasion of the Feast of Saint Rita in 2013 (May 20 to 22) and which will see the two communities, the Sanctuary of Cascia and the Parish Church of Saint Rita of Vâlcea, and the two municipal authorities, celebrate an event in honour of the Saint of Cascia, committed to restoring peace in a world torn by strife and discord. ■



The church of Râmnicu Vâlcea



A meeting for the faith

edited by Natalino Monopoli



Some of the participants at the national PPU meeting on 16 and 17 March.

Another great moment of faith and fellowship took place during the meeting of the Primary Pious Union in Cascia on 16 and 17 March 2013. Despite the weather forecasts predicting inclement weather, the sun that accompanied the two days must certainly have been seen as a welcome from the Saint of Cascia. Saturday morning was marked by prayer with the route of penance "The Way of the Thorn". The long penitential procession, which started from the avenue of the sanctuary, reached the church of St. Augustine at the top of the hill of Cascia. During the phases of the itinerary, participants meditated on the Passion of the Lord and the proximity of the Saint in the fifteen years that she bore the thorn on her forehead. At the end of the ceremony, the leaders of the different affiliates met Mother Abbess Sister Natalina Todeschini and the sisters



The statue of Saint Rita from Marcellina (Cosenza).

to rejoice together to take stock of the activities undertaken at the regional level and for new affiliations from Marcellina (Cosenza) and Abbiategrasso (Milan). A moving moment was the greeting of the Saint's urn, held in the afternoon with meditation, followed by the scholarly catechesis given by Mons. Leonardo Bonanno, Archbishop of San Marco Argentano, on the annual theme of the meeting; "That I know myself, to know Thee". At the end of the long day, after vespers with the Augustinian community, an intense and silent prayer vigil united hearts in the joy of seeing the even more extended family of Augustine and Rita, with its new affiliates. In the emotion of the eyes of



This year, the PPU family has expanded to groups from Marcellina (CS) and Abbiategrasso (MI).



The procession winds along the avenue of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita.

those who have been part of the family for years, one could almost see a moment of renewal of their adherence to Christ the Lord under the guidance of Saint Rita. Sunday opened with the Augustinian voice of Father Remo Piccolomini, ready as always to lead the entire PPU in the footsteps of St. Augustine and make all one heart and one soul, in the neighbourhood, in charity, in fraternal knowledge and in full adherence to the will of God. The prayerful procession with the statue



The banner of the PPU group from Abbiategrasso (Milan).



of Saint Rita (this year from Marcellina) then left a trail across the town of Cascia, which almost seemed to come to a standstill during the short itinerary at the passing of the insignia and the various communities in prayer. The Holy Mass represented the intense moment in which, taking advantage of the preceding reflections and prayers, like the children of the same Merciful Father, everyone gathered around the table of the Eucharistic banquet. “Going back home,” concluded spiritual father Fr. Ludovico Maria Centra, “take with you the testimony of Saint Rita and make sure that it becomes spiritual treasure for others who will meet you; be burning lamps in this year of faith.” It is almost tempting to say that the time never seems to be enough: “It is good to be here with Thee Lord, with our patroness Saint Rita”, yet the greeting and souvenir photos were only the goodbye to the regional meetings.



A moment during the liturgical celebration.

JOIN THE PPU

Whether you are an individual or member of a group, join the PPU! In this way you will take part in our regional and national meetings, getting to know people like you devoted to the beloved St. Rita. For information: Alessandra Paoloni, National Coordinator: Mobile + 39 331 4261 897 (from Monday to Friday: 9.00-11.30 and 14.00-16.00) piaunione@santaritadacascia.org

The secret of happiness

by the Sisters

On 28 March, the Community lost another of its columns: Mother Margherita Brasili, born in 1920. She had entered the Monastery in 1937 at the very young age of 17, welcomed by Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce. She lived with her for 10 years, and was very close to her in sickness and at death. She was young and strong in the faith and the Christian values she had learned in her

only one commitment before God: its holiness.” This esteem led the sisters to want her first as Director of the Beehive, then Mistress of Novices and the Professed and, on more than one occasion, Mother Abbess and Mother Vicar. Precisely because she was wise and a woman of prayer, she made her life a constant gift of Love for God and

***Mother Margherita
made her life a gift
of Love***

her neighbours, whom she often encountered in the locutories where she carried out her mission of welcoming and listening. Everything led to Her Jesus, to the point that she would rise well before dawn just to be able to devote more time to her intimate conversation with the Bridegroom and give Him the first fruits of the day.



Mother Margherita Brasili, who ascended to heaven on 28 March 2013.

family. Meek and ready to grasp and accept the teachings and examples of holiness of the Blessed Mother, she was captured to the point of wanting only to give herself unreservedly to Jesus for the Community, for the Church, for the salvation of souls and for the entire world.

Mother Margherita was much esteemed for her love of prayer and of the Bridegroom, for her constant and attentive dedication to the Community, for her profound humility, for her commitment on the path towards holiness, because the Blessed Mother said to her daughters: “the soul has

*A legacy
is a gift of love*

Allocating a small legacy to the Saint Rita of Cascia Monastery means leaving a sign of your presence over time.

Thanks to these legacies, we support the “Beehive of Saint Rita” project, giving hope to all the children who will inherit your love.

Write to monastero@santaritadacascia.org and receive information on how to help children in difficulty who need you.

She was always grateful for all acts of gentleness

In recent years, due to age and illness, she needed more care and proximity to the Sisters. She was always grateful for all acts of gentleness or even just a visit. She often repeated her desire to go to heaven to the sisters who came to visit her or keep her company, considering that she had fulfilled her mission here on earth.

At 16.00 on Holy Thursday, the day that the Lord gives us the Eucharist as the greatest act of His Love, together with the gift of the priesthood and of the commandment of love, conscious and calm about going to meet the Bridegroom, she passed away accompanied by the prayers and affection of all of us, grateful for having received and learned so much from this sister.

During the funeral rites, Archbishop Giovanni Scanavino described the life of Mother Margherita in four delicate phrases: simplicity (daughter of humility), spirit of poverty, smile and kindness, silence.

Dearest Mother Margherita, continue to remain next to each of us to make us understand that the secret of happiness is always to give all that we are with joy, for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. ■

Plan with God, live in the present.

Come visit us to discover yourself.

Dearest friend, we are living the Year of Faith. Do you want to make a sharp acceleration in your journey as a Christian woman? With God, plan the vocational dimension of your life, giving it a horizon of meaning and significance.

If you ask yourself, "Can I be happy?", faith in Jesus will answer that you can as long as thirst is alive in you and you have the burning desire to discover what God wants to accomplish in you. He can revive your heart and give you the courage to try new paths and roads for making you confident again each day.

We are waiting for you to live a few days with Friend Jesus, with we nuns, with other girls thirsty like you, in prayer, in friendship, in silence, in joy.

FEMALE VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION COURSE

19 - 24 August 2013

Monastery of Saint Rita, Cascia (Perugia)

For information:

Tel. 0743-76221

e-mail: monastero@santaritadacascia.org



Saint Rita Recognition

by the Sisters

Tenacity, humility, service, surrender to Christ, forgiveness, the courage to be themselves. These are some of the features of the five women who, for this year's Feast of Santa Rita, will be awarded the Saint Rita International Recognition award on 21 May.

Alexandra Jianua who, despite the difficulties associated with socio-religious conditions in Romania during the communist regime, managed to maintain principles strongly connected to the faith. In 2001, when the Romanian Greek-Catholic nucleus was reconstituted, Alexandra was at the forefront in supporting and promoting the new church of Râmnicu Vâlcea dedicated to Santa Rita.

Lina Trappetti who, with hard work and sacrifice, has never stopped giving herself to others in silence and with humility in everyday life. Born in Spoleto into a large but simple family, she strives every day for her family and her parish, which she serves with passion and without financial reward.

Sister Elsa Caterina Galfrè, who has dedicated her life to helping the less fortunate with love, becoming a missionary in her town. From the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cuneo, Sister Elsa began voluntary service in 1989 at the prison of Cuneo, carrying out this commitment with passion and deep love for those most in need.

Zenobia Elmi from Marsciano (Perugia), who has not allowed herself to be overwhelmed by her own physical diversity and, like Saint Rita, has entrusted her own life to Jesus. Often finding herself having to face marginalisation and discrimination, her faith has allowed her to live her life with joy and she has found the inner strength that comes from forgiveness, a

virtue that she herself has always venerated in Saint Rita.

Teresina Natalino who, after losing her husband, let herself be guided by faith, which gave her the strength and the courage to convey a message of forgiveness and love. On 5 December 2010, on highway 18 near the town of Sant'Eufemia di Lamezia Terme (Catanzaro), a 22-year-old youth under the influence of drugs careered into eight cyclists killing them. One of them was the husband of Teresina who, though destroyed by pain, bore no grudge but immediately forgave the young man.

Thanks to all of them, who carry the example of Rita's message into their communities.





A desire that invokes God is already prayer.
If you wish to pray without ceasing, do not cease to desire.
Saint Augustine

It is our
task to let
them grow
serenely.



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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