

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine
of Saint Rita of Cascia

BIMONTHLY
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
MONASTERY
OF SAINT RITA
OF CASCIA

NO. 3 MAY-JUNE 2014

SAINT RITA RECOGNITION
The award winners speak

TWINNING
Cariati, town of peace and faith

A MOMENT FROM THE FEAST
The Transit of Saint Rita

SAINT RITA

Getting ready for the feast

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The Nuns of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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No. 3 May-June 2014



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The feast of Saint Rita

There it is, I see it, the procession arriving at the Basilica of Saint Rita. It is May 22 in my memories, and I lean out from the terrace to recognise the characters represented in the procession: there's Rita as a child, then as an older girl, as a mother and when she was a widow, there's Rita as a nun and stigmatised, embracing the crucifix. She is followed by many dames, nobles and commoners of the fifteenth century, in an annual historical parade that evokes the stages of the life of Rita of Cascia. The parade merges with the procession made up of devotees of today, in a marriage of love for Saint Rita.

But there is another tradition that is perhaps even more representative of the veneration that the inhabitants show for Sister Rita: the torchlight procession. On the night between 21 and 22 May 1447 (or 1457, there are two schools of thought on the date of death of Rita, as well as the birth), the bells rang on their own, to tell everyone that Rita had risen to heaven. And the people, from the poorest to the richest, ran all the way up to the Monastery (which was then named after St. Mary Magdalene) to pay homage to the saint's body. For days and



Every year, on 22 May, devotees of Rita take part in the feast of the Saint of Cascia.

days, so many people came that the nuns could not bury her, as happened for other sisters on their death. Everyone wanted to venerate the person who was already considered a saint. Everyone wanted to see her. Everyone prayed to God before her, asking for her intercession. The torchlight procession, which takes place in Cascia at dusk on 21 May each year, specifically recalls this uninterrupted flow of people for Rita. Even today, devotees from all over the world converge on the square with torch in hand.

Then, in 1958, the Municipality of Cascia, along with two Augustinian friars, gave rise to the twinning of peace and faith which, every year, unites Cascia to a town in the world devoted to Saint Rita. To crown this union, an imposing Torch leaves Cascia in April and in May arrives in Roccaporena and, on the evening of the torchlight procession on 21 May, is carried by an athlete to the Basilica. No one really knows when the people's Torchlight Procession started, but what is certain is that the Torch of Twinning has joined this tradition and they now go hand in hand.

The love of the many pilgrims following the death of Rita was so overwhelming that by the first anniversary of her death, the Municipality of Cascia had instituted the Feast of Saint Rita on 22 May. A century later, a municipal council resolution of 1562 defined directions and details on how the procession should take place. But for having a Mass celebrated, we still had to wait almost another century: in fact, it was only in 1627 that Rita was beatified and on 22 May of the following year the first Mass in her honour was celebrated during the festivities. And after or during the Mass, even in 2014, like a river in flood, the devotees will raise a red rose – symbol of the saint – to heaven, seeking her blessing.

Forgiveness and example

Mariella Cantamessa is interviewed by Giulia Di Lauro

On 21 May 2014, during the celebrations in honour of St. Rita in the Sanctuary of Cascia, **Mariella Cantamessa** will receive the **Saint Rita International Recognition Award** for having forgiven the man who, on the night of 8 September 2013, in Chiuduno (Bergamo), ran over and killed her daughter Eleonora, a 44-year-old doctor, while she was busy on the roadside helping a young man who had been stabbed. After the death of her daughter,

Mariella embarked on a witness path to remember the service and charity of which Eleonora was an example.

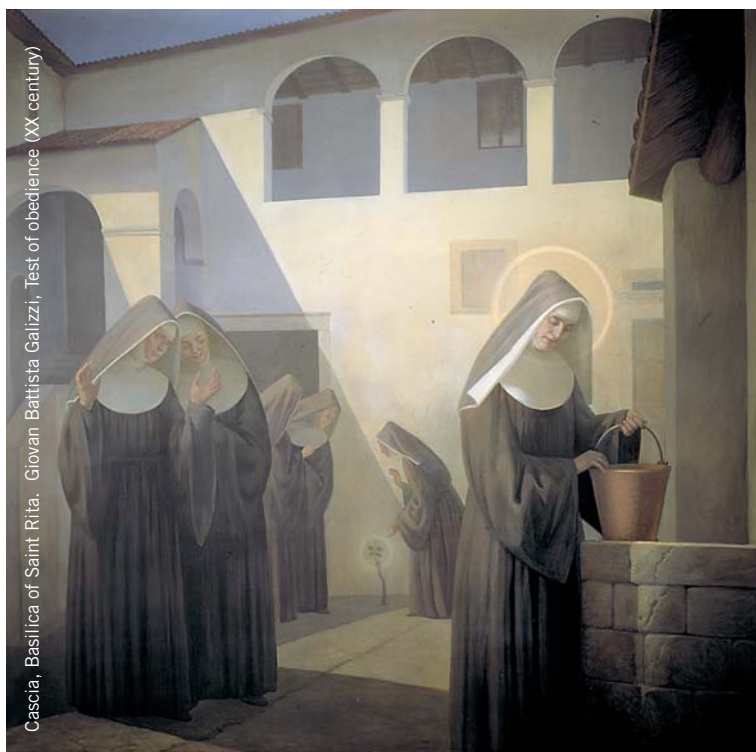
Mariella, you have forgiven the person who killed your daughter Eleanor ... I

Perhaps it was even my daughter who gave us this serenity

didn't need to forgive because neither I nor my husband have ever experienced resentment, anger, or hatred to vent. Perhaps it was even my daughter who gave us this serenity. Then, when I met Pope Francis, he told me: "I have prayed so much for you". Maybe it was also the prayers of the Pope that worked to make sure that we did not live this drama of conflict, of revenge. I'll tell you something else. I would have had to repress such feelings if I had felt them. Otherwise I would have betrayed the gesture of my daughter, don't you think?

Eleanor gave her life for others, humanly and through her medical profession. How do you plan to carry forward the values of solidarity and Christian charity that guided your daughter during her life? My husband and I are starting a foundation in the name of my daughter to support women in need, women who are alone or abused, because Eleanor always helped women a lot.

She was always very sensitive to the suffering of others



Cascia, Basilica of Saint Rita. Giovan Battista Galizzi, Test of obedience (XX century)
Having entered the Monastery, Rita gave an example of obedience by wetting a dry twig with water from the well, as requested by the Abbess. That twig turned into a vigorous vine.

What lesson do you think Eleanor leaves us? Humanity, respect for the individual, the values that my daughter always believed in. She was very easy-going, her patients called her by name, because she had a confidential, human relationship with them. Just think, she even bought medicine for those who couldn't afford to do so. She was always very sensitive to the suffering of others. She also participated in their pain, showed understanding and compassion for the suffering. Perhaps because she had suffered a lot in life. Her last gesture, taking a risk by going to help a man who was dying, was proof that in the face of suffering she felt a sort of call.

On 21 May you will receive the Saint Rita International Recognition Award. Are you tied in some way to the saint of Cascia? Yes, when my daughter lived in Brescia, I was often there with her and a very dear friend of mine introduced me to the church of Saint Rita. We always went to Mass in the afternoon, and we also brought my daughter a bluish crown of ten beads, which she always kept on

We always told her: “Saint Rita will help you”

her bedside table. We had taken it because she was always saying, “Look, Saint Rita is the saint of the impossible, she'll help you”. Now I have it on my bedside table. And who would have

thought that one day I would have gone to Saint Rita for her?

What message would you like to send to all those families who, like yours, find themselves having to deal with such a tragedy? You have to think that there's good and there's evil, and you either follow the path of evil or try to make the path of good prevail so that something good may come from misfortune. ■

TRACES OF RITA

Solidarity, from the family to society

For a long period of time, the life of Rita was quite similar to that of many. But even in the seeming ordinariness, something extraordinary happened. In daily life, Rita was a sign of the love and of presence of God for her loved ones. And, from family solidarity, the passage to the social sphere is immediate. We can thus imagine the home of Rita as a friendly place, where the women of Roccaporena and Cascia could stop by to receive a good word; where Rita's sons and the other young men could find a sip of cool water in between games; where there was always a piece of bread for the hungry beggar. Rita's home, a seemingly anonymous place, but full of her womanhood, became the concrete sign of a different way of living, in the light of the Gospel, the relationship between people.

(Father Giuseppe Caruso OSA)

THE WORD

by

Fr. Vittorino Grossi OSA

When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, “They have no more wine”. And Jesus replied, “Woman, why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come”. His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you”. (Jn 2: 3-5)

The passage refers to the entire history of salvation, to the covenant, to the tender and faithful love that God has for his people. The presence of Mary directs us to the groom as the only one capable of filling life with the fullness of eternity. Wine is a symbol of the revealing Word and the hour is a reference to fulfilment of the covenant. It is as if Jesus is saying to Mary that, by asking for the wine, she is asking for the gift of himself, Word and Revelation of the Father, which will be fulfilled finally on the throne of the cross.

That gift to ourselves

Elisabetta Parmegiani is interviewed by Rita Gentili



Elisabetta Parmegiani will receive the **Saint Rita International Recognition Award** 2014, on 21 May, on the occasion of the celebrations in honour of Rita that will take place at the Sanctuary of Cascia. Elizabeth receives the prestigious award for having pardoned and prayed for Francesco Tuccia, the young man who, on the night between 11 and 12 February 2012, raped her daughter Carla and left her dying outside a discotheque in Pizzoli (L'Aquila);

Elisabetta, where do you found the strength to forgive? Forgiveness is a grace that we receive because it allows us to live in peace with ourselves and in harmony with others. Humanly speaking, we are not inclined to forgiveness. The Lord has placed his hands on us.

And how do you find the strength to accept the bad, when your own daughter is involved? How can we call ourselves Christians? In front of a cross, where there is a Mary who left everything to happen so that someone else might be saved ... I always look at the cross and I think that one of the best moments of my own personal life is worship (of this, *ed.*), because through the cross there is the realisation of salvation, of the good of others.

So if forgiveness is a gift that we give to ourselves, the feeling towards Francesco is ... It is a consequence of for-

giveness. This young man has lost by not understanding evil.

How do you feel about him? A deep Christian piety. I saw Francesco as an extremely lonely person. I see Francesco as my son. I don't know why.

And your daughter understands this? Yes. I have seen her reactions in front of him, there was no anger in her eyes; perhaps there was a great disbelief, a lack of understanding why a man can go that far. Grace has been made for the whole family.

The grace to be able to continue to live ... Yes and live with a smile and with the hope of good. Every so often, I wonder something else: who am I, who is my daughter, who is my husband, my other daughter, that the Lord has loved us so much?

Through the cross, there is salvation

TRACES OF RITA

Resentment or forgiveness

The killing of Paolo, Rita's husband, was caused by the struggle that divided the population of Cascia in a spiral of bloody revenge. Today, as yesterday, nothing is more destructive than resentment, that feeling that sometimes leads us to keep alive in our minds the wrongs done to us. Obviously, some losses may change your life, but Rita had not changed her profound conviction that good eventually triumphs. Forgiveness is not an easy choice, but it is a journey that is always worth making, because resentment and revenge are, even if does not seem so, far harsher and costlier. The Lord Jesus, when he commanded us to offer forgiveness with generosity, wanted our most genuine good: Rita firmly believed this, and for this reason she is a good teacher for us. *(Father Giuseppe Caruso OSA)*

***You can be left alone by friends,
by relatives, but He never
abandons you***

And have you never thought “why have you been so bad”? No, no (laughs, *ed.*). I am joyful; this is also a grace, it's not up to me. You can be left alone by friends, by relatives, but He never abandons you. Our sadness is due to the fact that we “make the film” in our head. But it is not necessarily so. It may be that the Lord reserves for us another path. If we are angry because we have not got what we wanted, then there are problems.

And how do you overcome them? For me it is quite easy, praying to the Lord to give us the discernment and prudence to un-

derstand our lives. The Lord always helps us. My grandmother used to say “the Lord sends cold according to the clothes”. It sounds like a joke, but I believe it. I believe that the Lord does not want us tested beyond measure, because otherwise we will not make it. ■

MEETING OF VINTAGE CARS AND MOTORCYCLES

Cascia (PG)

26 and 27 July

We have reached the 15th edition of the meeting devoted to vintage cars and motorcycles that enlivens the town of Cascia every year thanks to the presence of numerous fans. In collaboration with the Hotel delle Rose, the two days will begin on Saturday 26 July at 15.00, with the arrival of participants in Piazza Garibaldi. This will be followed by an evening of dancing and gastronomy, with tasting of typical local products. On Sunday, at 9.30, there will be the traditional blessing of the motorcycles, followed by a scenic ride through the mountains of the Nera Valley.

For reservations and information:

Hotel delle Rose

tel. 0743.76241,

fax 0743.76240 or:

Organising Committee

tel.3385403224.

All the details are available in the Agenda of the site www.santaritadacascia.org



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Love in illness

Maria Teresa Caviglia is interviewed by Marta Ferraro

For the Feast of Saint Rita 2014, the married couple **Maria Teresa Caviglia** and **Ruggero Badano** will receive the **Saint Rita International Recognition Award** on 21 May in the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia. Parents of the Blessed Chiara Luce Badano, Maria Teresa and Ruggero (from Sassello, Savona) are honoured with the award for having accompanied their daughter in the painful ordeal that ended with her death as the result of a bone tumour, shortly before the age of 19, in 1990. Chiara was beatified on 25 September 2010.

One of the most famous phrases of Blessed Chiara Luce is: “If you want Jesus, I

also want him”, pronounced at the time of her trial: the illness. What is the relationship between suffering and holiness? There is an abyss. But, if you offer yourself to God, you make a real leap towards heaven. This gap becomes Resurrection in God. Clare uttered it immediately after the first operation and I think it was then that she made her leap towards heaven.

How do you manage to stay close to a sick person so bound to the love of God? What was your attitude in the face of so much strength of will? With the grace of God, Chiara suffered a lot, but she offered everything to God and He who is good made strength descend, even on us parents. It’s hard to explain. It was as if with the

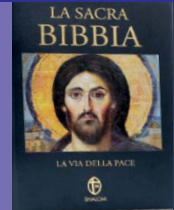
sacrifice of Clare, all three were united and prepared to receive this grace. So that Clare could live the abnormality of the illness with normality. We were also greatly helped by the Focolare Movement. It’s nice to have someone close in those moments, even if we primarily need Jesus. Trust in Him and He will help us.

Illness affects not only the sufferer but also those who are close. How do you fight the helplessness of seeing a loved one pass away without being able to help? It’s difficult to be next to a sick person, you never have the right words. So it is better to love them, let them feel our love. Because all are part of God and we do not have the answers. We’re

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AND READ

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Clare managed to live the abnormality of the illness with normality

there close by with prayer, holding their hand and abandoning ourselves and helping them abandon themselves to the will of God. We are no one to help them. Jesus finds the way to be beside them, always.

Chiara's greeting, before ascending to heaven, was: "Mum, be happy because I also am happy", showing that she had accepted God's plan for her. How do you survive the death of your child? You try to do good, with the help of God. When we realised that Chiara's departure was near, we realised that however much she had prepared us, you are never

ready for death. It was terrible. I felt in my heart that I still had so many questions to ask her and she to me. That silence is excruciating. The pain is so great that even those who have faith risk losing it. My husband and I understood this dan-

ger, we knelt at the feet of Chiara and recited the *Creed* and immediately we felt an inner peace. At that moment, I remembered that Claire had told me, while I dressed her for her departure, that I had to say, "Now Chiara will see Jesus". ■

TRACES OF RITA

From pain blossoms a flower

When we suffer, we risk not seeing the other. But it need not be necessarily so. Taking as a model the Lord Christ, the Son of God who out of love has taken upon himself the pain and sin of the whole world, Rita learned to give herself to relieve the pain of those who suffer. At the time of Rita there were many life-threatening diseases, but the most dreaded was certainly the plague. Rita paid a high tribute to this disease: in fact, her two sons, in all likelihood died from this terrible disease. At Roccaporena, there is an old Lazaretto (place of quarantine), where plague victims were gathered. It is said that, precisely in this place, Rita dedicated herself to caring for the sick, those that no one wanted to take care of: from the pain due to the loss of her sons blossomed the flower of solidarity. (*Father Giuseppe Caruso OSA*)

A normal person

Anna Maria Brizzi is interviewed by Monica Guarriello



Cascia, Sanctuary of Saint Rita.

A *anna Maria Brizzi lives in Collestatte, a small village near Terni, with her sons Michele and Nicola and her elderly aunt Vincenza, whom she looks after. Every day, Anna rolls up her sleeves to face life with determination, without her husband, who died of pulmonary fibrosis, and with all the difficulties of having an autistic child. One day in February, she receives a phone call from the Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, Monsignor Renato Boccardo, who informs her: you will be honoured with the **Saint Rita International Recognition Award** 2014, on 21 May, in Cascia. Why her? Because, with determination and placing her trust in the Lord, she faces up to the trials of life. Anna Maria cannot believe it, hers is a simple story, like that of many other people.*

Anna Maria Brizzi welcomes me into her house in Collestatte (Terni), still surprised that I have asked her for an interview. She introduces me to her aunt Vincenza, 92, who lives with her and her two sons, Michele, 36, who suffers from autism, and Nicola, 25, who, after his father's death five years ago, risked going astray. If it had not been for Anna Maria, "small", tenacious and hopeful, a woman who – a widow with two children, like Saint Rita - believed in the family, struggling to stay on her feet. The story of Anna Maria, 61, reminds us of one of the values on which the example of Rita of Cascia is founded: simplicity. In fact, the strength of the saint's gestures lies in the fact that these gestures are available to everyone: anyone can walk along the road of holiness.

Anna Maria, how did you know that you had been chosen to receive the Saint Rita International Recognition Award? I am active in the parish of St. Peter the Apostle, here in Collestatte. Shortly after the pastoral visit of Archbishop Boccardo, there was a pastoral council meeting on finance ... That day I was there doing the accounts for the bills, I'm precise, and the phone rings: "Hello? I am the Bishop". I thought it was a joke! And he told me that I had been chosen. It was early February. I didn't believe it, and I said to him: "But I am a normal person!".

What's it like living with an autistic son? It changes your life, from day to night. Until he was one year old, you didn't notice that he was autistic. But perhaps, deep down, I knew it. When he

TRACES OF RITA

That extraordinary simplicity

We have no written records from Saint Rita but only her simple gestures preserved to this day. Her concern for helping the sick is well-known, as is also her concern for feeding the hungry. Even in the face of the fratricidal conflict among the people of Cascia, which led to the killing of her husband Paolo, Rita responded by invoking and obtaining mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. Holiness is never lack of interest and taking one's distance from the suffering of people: Rita understood this. The Gospels give us a vivid representation of the Lord Jesus sensitive to the sufferings of humanity, up to the point of taking upon himself, an innocent, the sin of the whole world: it is He who is the model for every Christian. In the extraordinary purity of everyday gestures, like the saints, we too can love in a practical and industrious way, without expecting anything in return, if not the sweet awareness of being spent in imitation of the master, the Lord Jesus.

(Father Giuseppe Caruso OSA)

But before you also took care of your husband ... Two years of illness, pulmonary fibrosis. Any movement that was a bit more difficult, like tying his shoe ... For a year he had to use an oxygen cylinder, to go out we had to have the cylinder. It was a nightmare. I was also afraid for my other son, Nicola, and here enter drugs. He locked himself in his room, he didn't respond to anyone, he didn't accept his father's death. I neglected Michele to bring back Nicola.

Would you like to say something to a reader of the magazine? In life, everything that happens must first be accepted and then you fight. Never give up. And put your trust in the faith. I always say that from evil one must also have the good. Faith has given me so much strength in the darkest hours. I told the bishop, "I don't pray, but I speak with Jesus, Mary, Saint Rita, Padre Pio, and I ask: "what do I have to do?" And I find the answers. And now I also speak with my husband. ■

began to walk, we saw the problems, he didn't play with the others ... but the first diagnosis was that he was deaf. We knew that Michael was autistic when he was 4 or 5 years old. He never looked you in the face, he

didn't eat ... he ate the flakes of plaster from holes in the wall, he ate soap ... We all want our first son beautiful with blue eyes ... my husband Ennio always suffered. Then, five years ago, he passed away.

MOTHER FASCE

AGAINST THE CURRENT, TOWARDS CHRIST

She loves the Virgin Mary in a special way and imitates Saint Rita with passion. The Blessed Mother Maria Teresa Fasce (Torrighia, 1881 - Cascia, 1947) is a woman with a strong personality who, in order to follow Christ, is capable of going against the current. As Abbess of the Monastery of Saint Rita, she promotes reading, inviting everyone to be informed in order to be able to act. Her trust in Providence has never meant "standing and watching the action of God" but "doing by putting oneself in His hands". A nun of action and prayer, just as St. Augustine teaches.

Among her works is the Basilica of Saint Rita. Built with the offerings of benefactors, even the smallest, the Basilica is a project that the Blessed Mother Fasce strongly desired for accommodating the devotees to the town of the patron saint of impossible cases. She knows how much this Saint can be loved, and the pilgrims flock in their millions, yesterday like today.

Cascia-Cariati, Twinning of peace and faith

di Padre Mario De Santis OSA, Rettore Basilica Santa Rita

On the occasion of the Feast of Saint Rita from 20 to 22 May, the municipal administration and the Sanctuary of Cascia, in the light of the message of Peace and Faith that the Saint of Cascia lived in full and spread throughout her earthly life, organise a twinning every year with an Italian, European or continental town where Saint Rita is especially venerated. For 2014, it is the turn of the Twinning between Cascia and Cariati (Cosenza).



The Parish of Holy Mary of Grace, Cariati (Cosenza).

For the Twinning 2014, the choice fell on a Calabrian town in the province of Cosenza, Cariati, Diocese of Rossano-Cariati, where Saint Rita has been venerated in the parish of Holy Mary of Grace since 1938. Having contact the mayor, Prof. Filippo Sero, and with the parish priest, Don Angelo Bennardis, and having received their full agreement, it was decided to give concrete shape to the event with two by now traditional moments: from 25 to 27 April, in Cariati, with the delegation from Cascia for the lighting of the Torch of Peace and Faith; from 20 to 22 May, in

Cascia, with the delegation from Cariati, accompanied by the Torch that will burn on the evening of 21 May on the tripod placed in front of the Basilica; 3,000 small flames glimmering in all corners of the town of Saint Rita will crown the event. As per tradition, the visiting delegation will offer the oil to keep the lamp beside the body of Saint Rita lit throughout the year.

Cariati's calling card for its visitors are its ancient and massive walls that surround its perimeter and the eight towers that embellish it and make it attractive and recognisable throughout Calabria. The Turkish threat

***The people of Cariati
are linked to the cult
of Saint Rita***



Saint Rita has been venerated in the parish since 1938

from the end of 1400s constituted the most negative note that did not allow the town to develop to the fullest; only in the 1700s was there a certain cultural awakening. From then onwards, a town began to rise and where, today, there is the town's Marina.

The statue is carried through the streets of the town

The Marina district was an area that pedestrians, caravans and merchants were forced to cross and they were obliged to pay a customs or passage fee to the bosses. During this period, probably in 1680, the Church of Holy Mary of Grace (once called the Church *Outside the Walls*) was built. Only in 1721, did the young Bishop of Cariati, Giovanni Andrea Tria, constitute the Canon Theologian as pastor of Holy Mary of Grace, assigning him the territory of the Marina. Later, bishop Mons. Giovanni Scotti established it as the parish of Marina di Cariati and canon Don Michele Gambardell was appointed as parish priest. The church was thus elevated to parish level to allow the now sizeable community of the Marina township to participate in its religious life. A photo from 1938 shows that already by this date the people of Cariati were linked to the cult of Saint Rita of Cascia, the saint of impossible cases. Each year, the festivities begin with a heartfelt religious and participatory novena culminating in the procession which traditionally takes place on 22 May. The statue, followed by the faithful singing traditional songs dedicated to her, is carried through the streets of the town, while the balconies adorned with the most beautiful blankets are scattered with rose petals. It is one of Cariati's most beautiful festivals. ■

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thou who hast granted to Saint Rita to participate in the Passion of Christ, give us the strength to bear our sufferings, so that we can participate more intimately in the paschal mystery of your Son. He is God who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SMILING AT LIFE

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



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2. Elettra Ruggeri, Gualdo (MC) - Italy
3. Filippo and Francesco Pernigotto, San Bonifacio (VR) - Italy
4. Giulia Broccoli, Santarcangelo di Romagna (RN) - Italy
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7. Lily Marie Lavallée, Windsor (ON) - Canada
8. Lucia and Giandommaso Nieddu, Alà dei Sardi (OT) - Italy
9. Martina Rita and Francesca Rita Marchiori, Cernusco sul Naviglio (MI) - Italy
10. Riccardo Pellizzon and Annagrazia Marson
11. Rita Petrosino, Monaco - Germany
12. Sofia Gianini, Vellano - Switzerland

edited by Fra Paolo Zecca OSA

FEAST OF SAINT RITA AT THE SANCTUARY OF CASCIA

20 to 22 May

20 May, Hall of Peace

21.00: Presentation of the women who will be honoured with the **Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2014** by journalist and TV presenter **Benedetta Rinaldi**. The women of St Rita, whose life is very close to that of the saint of Cascia, chosen to receive the award, are: **Elisabetta Parmegiani**, for having pardoned and prayed for the boy who raped her daughter and left her dying outside a dis-

tro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Augustinian Order.

17.30: Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2014. Father Moral hands over the recognition Parchment to Elisabetta Parmegiani, Mariella Cantamessa, Maria Teresa Caviglia and Anna Maria Brizzi, for having put into practice Rita's values of forgiveness, care of the sick and acceptance of the cross.

18.30: Solemn Celebration of the Transit of Saint Rita, which commemorates the passing of our Saint from earthly life to that of Paradise, led by the Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, Mons. Renato Boccardo.

21.30: Arrival in the churchyard of the Torch, symbol of the **Twinning of peace and faith** that this year unites Cascia and Cariati (Cosenza), from where the torch left before arriving in the town of Saint Rita.



cotheque near L'Aquila; **Mariella Cantamessa**, for forgiving the man who ran over and killed her daughter while she was busy on the roadside helping a young man who had been stabbed, in Chiuduno (Bergamo); married couple **Maria Teresa Caviglia** and **Ruggero Badano** from Sassello (Savona), for having been by the side of their daughter Chiara during the painful ordeal that ended with her death at the age of 19 (Chiara was beatified on 25 September 2010); **Anna Maria Brizzi** (Collestatte, Terni), for having faced the trials of life with determination, entrusting herself to the Lord.

21 May, Basilica of Saint Rita

16.30: Solemn Eucharistic Celebration of the Augustinian Family, led by Fr Alejan-

22 May, Feast of Saint Rita

5.00: start of Holy Mass in the Basilica of Saint Rita, with the joyful sound of all the bells of Cascia to honour the day of the Feast of Saint Rita. Masses will be celebrated at 6.00, 7.00, 8.00 and 9.00.

10.15: Arrival of the Historical Procession at the Basilica churchyard. Having left Roccaporena, the birthplace of Rita, at 9.00, the procession joins up with of Cascia at the foot of the town to reach the Basilica churchyard together.

11.00: start of the Solemn Pontifical in the Basilica square, celebrated by Cardinal **James Michael Harvey**, Archpriest of the Papal Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls; (after the homily) **Supplication** to Saint Rita.

12.30: Blessing of the Roses (churchyard).

18.00: Last Mass for Benefactors of the Sanctuary, with the choir of the Little Bees of the Saint Rita Beehive.

Lets give
a nest to
those that
have none.

SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE HIVE OF ST. RITA WITH A DONATION

It is here that every day the nuns and educators lovingly take care of our young Bees. Girls between the ages of 6 and 18 who have a left difficult past behind them and for whom, thanks also to your help, we can ensure the warmth of a home and a better future.

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edited by Natalino Monopoli

On Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 April 2014, the Sanctuary of Cascia hosted the General Meeting of the Saint Rita Pious Primary Union. The pastoral theme chosen for this year is "Go in peace, celebration and mission", and the aim is propose to the devotees of Saint Rita an itinerary that starts from the Mass and leads to the evangelising mission that every Christian should feel as his/her own.

The meeting saw the participation of hundreds of PPU affiliates, living prayer with intensity and emotion. Relive with us the best moments of the event which once again brought together the great family of Augustinians and followers of Rita.

Relive the PPU General Meeting with us



Another great experience of faith and fellowship was experienced during the days of the general meeting of the Saint Rita Primary Pious Union in Cascia, on 5 and 6 April 2014.



The heads of the different groups affiliated to the PPU met the Mother Abbess, Sister M. Natalina Todeschini, and sisters, to rejoice together, and take stock of activities carried out at regional level and of the new affiliations of Palagiano, Coccaglio, Olevano Romano, Riposto and Viagrande.



Rita called her devotees to the Eucharistic table, welcomed them and caressed them, led them to worship and reflect, and led them through the streets of her town so that they might meditate, sing and pray.



At the end of a long day on Saturday 5 April, the vespers united us with the Augustinian communities for the intense prayer vigil.



In the Hall of Peace, the widely followed catechesis was held by Mons. Felice Di Molfetta, Bishop of Cerignola-Ascoli Satriano, on the annual theme of the meeting: "Go in peace, celebration and mission".



The group from Viagrande (Catania) joins the PPU.



The Primary Pious Union also reaches Riposto (Catania).



The group from Coccaglio (Brescia) receives the rosette of PPU affiliation.



The Sunday Mass was an intense moment, which saw us gathered around the table of the Eucharistic banquet.



Group photo, before returning home. We take with us the testimony of Saint Rita, a spiritual treasure that we will share with anyone who meets us.

THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

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

Alda Brizzi and Giovanni Sartori (Thiene VI - Italy)
 Mother Angela Tamanti, OSA - Monastery of St. Catherine of Alexandria (Urbino PU - Italy)
 Antonia Romanelli (Brindisi - Italy)
 Bruno Latorre - Livorno
 Carlo Alleva (Rieti - Italy)
 Francesco Cormio (Trani BT - Italy)
 Gabriella Bragantini (San Biagio di Callalta TV - Italy)
 Gaetano and Rita Chirico (Reggio Calabria - Italy)
 Gianna Siragusa (Palermo - Italy)
 Giovanni Adriani (Campi TE - Italy)
 Giuliana Galliera (Dugliolo di Budrio BO - Italy)
 Ivonne Chiatti (Rome - Italy)
 Luciana Montini (Alessandria - Italy)
 Luciano Piccolomini, (Montorio Romano RM - Italy)
 Natalia Friolo and Renato Petracca (Latiano BR - Italy)
 Onetto Romano and Giuseppina Citro (Salerno - Italy)
 Patrizia Lucchini (Suzzara MN - Italy)
 Teresa Segato (Carmignano di Brenta PD - Italy)



The new PPU group from Olevano Romano (Rome).



After the lecture by Father Remo Piccolomini, ready like every year to lead the entire PPU in the footsteps of St. Augustine and make all one soul and one heart, the PPU procession took to the streets of Cascia.



Among the new affiliates (standard on the right), there is the group from Palagianò (Taranto).

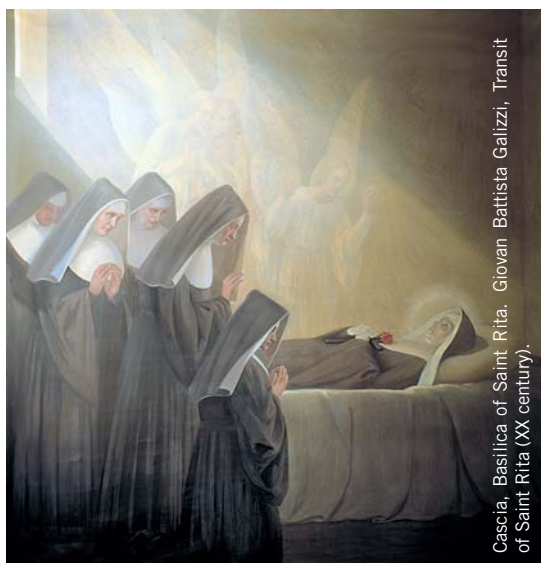


This year's Pious Union procession carried the statue of the Saint from Orta Nova (Foggia) through the streets of Cascia

Meaning of the Transit

by Sr. M. Giacomina Stuani OSA

As part of the Feast of Saint Rita which will take place at the Sanctuary of Cascia from 20 to 22 May 2014, there will be a Solemn Celebration of the "Transit of Saint Rita" on Wednesday 21 May, to commemorate the passage of our Saint from earthly life to that of Paradise: the moment in which the suffering of the woman is transformed into peace and her name becomes part of history ...



The term "transit" means "passage" and can be used both in a general sense and in the physical, astronomical and medical fields. We are interested in applying it to the spiritual field and here it takes on the meaning of "death, as a transition from earthly life to eternal life". Every year, on 21 May, we celebrate the Pious Transit of Saint Rita, that is, we commemorate her transition from earth to Heaven, from Kronos (Cronus, hence chronometer), the time that runs and governs human life in the space in which we live, to Kairos, the time of God, of grace, the measure of which is eternity, that is, it is without measure ... This moment which is so strong and deep, is celebrated in the Basilica of Saint Rita (those who wish to go further into the text of the entire celebration can go to our website www.santaritadacascia.org/preghiere - in the

section on "Rita's Prayers", you will also find the Transit).

Remembering the death of a person, perhaps even a saint, it is not just a matter of celebration, it makes us think of something High, of Other and Beyond our human life. Why is life is given to us if we then have to give it back to Him who gave it to us? The Church of the first centuries reflected much more than we Christians of the 21st century about the meaning of the time-death relationship, starting from the Sacrament of Baptism. The water of the baptismal font marks the "passage" from death to life, from darkness to light and makes us become new creatures. The Christian should be the one who is not afraid of death because in front of him/her is the new, true life, turned towards the Father's house, open to the meeting face to face with God ready to embrace. With her most blessed Transit, Saint Rita encourages us to look at Jesus Crucified and she asks us not to stop at Good Friday because the existence of man does not end with his earthly life. After the Friday of the Passion comes Easter Sunday. The man Jesus is risen! The same wonderful fate awaits us in the epiphany of life. The body of Saint Rita herself, exposed to the veneration of the faithful, give us a message. It speaks of a waiting for communion in the new heavens and the new lands at the end of time, of a faith that broadens horizons, of a Love that gives warmth to life; it testifies to the hope that comes from the encounter of God with man, it leads us towards

Thinking

"It is life that prepares us to die:
it knows its job well.

Just listen to it, see it, follow it. [...]

In this repeated encounter with death,
It's a question of learning to meet life.
It's a question of turning to the eternal,
like in photographic negatives
where all the blacks become white."
(Madeleine Delbrêl)

Someone who loves us ... It is fascinating and at the same time mysterious how the consolation of the Lord passes through the visibility of a Saint, which is not only corporeality, exteriority, but together interior and spiritual calling that is about resurrection. ■

GRACE RECEIVED

TESTIMONY OF ALESSANDRA (ANCONA - ITALY)

My son Emanuele was born on 22 May 2006 at the Salesi (children's hospital, ed.) in Ancona. He was our first child for us, and we never believed that anything similar could happen.

A pre-natal monitoring showed a hypertonia, so it was a race to do a Caesarean section. The child was dressed by a midwife who then realised that he had brain death ... I still remember her words: "I've never seen anything like it, he was nice and chubby but he was dead. (Emanuele) lived for a period in the afterlife and had a great desire to live, he fought with all his strength to survive". He was intubated in a rush, given a cardiac massage, placed in an incubator and taken to the hospital's resuscitation centre. My husband and I were under shock. The next day, (the child) also had an epileptic fit. In passing, I managed to read the report of his electroencephalogram, it was terrible ... I kept to myself what I had read and carried on as if I had lived a life that was not mine. I didn't imagine that the day of his birth was the day of Saint Rita, the saint of impossible causes. I could only touch him through the gaps in the incubator, he was soft, and full of tubes ... But he was so, so beautiful. The first time I took him in my arms, I couldn't hold him because he was hypotonic, he didn't even have his "tiny muscles", my poor love. Now, however, he is eight years old, he is as beautiful as the sun, he has a nice body but, above all, he is as fit as a fiddle, and each day, when I look at him, I thank Saint Rita ... Thank you, Saint Rita, continue to protect my angel and the family that I love.

FEMALE VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION COURSE

Open yourself
to the Truth,
you will bring Life

from 18 to 23 August 2014

Monastery of Saint Rita, Cascia (Perugia)

Your vocation is witness of the Truth,
discover it ...

Dear friend and sister, how many times have you repeated or wanted to repeat with the psalmist: Send out your light and your truth, O Lord: let them guide me?

The main way to rediscover the Truth is that of the heart. Widen your heart, give back space to what can help you indulge in a real and deep reflection on yourself, so that your vocation becomes the witness of the truth and leads to life. We are waiting for with your Bible, so that you may discover the Truth, meet it, welcome it and love it, together with other girls searching like you ...



For more information:

Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia

tel: + 39 0743 76221

email: monastero@santaritadacascia.org

Being a widower

I am a 55-year-old man, a widower for 15 years, with four children aged 20 to 34. I follow the sacramental life, the daily Eucharist helps me to overcome loneliness. Since 2000, I have a sort of girlfriend in her 50s, eternally undecided, one of those women from the south who is all hearth and home, single for life, who look after their elderly parents in our agricultural towns in the south ... Our relationship has been broken off and started up again several times, sometimes we broke for years and then came back: she has always responded negatively to my repeated proposals of marriage... Of course, marrying a widower with four children is not easy. A woman once told me that what I needed was a Red Cross nurse. So be it, Red Cross nurses are also women ... Sometimes I think that maybe the Lord wants to leave me like this, a widower for life, dedicated to the Lord. (Francesco)



Representation of the widowed Rita, during the historical procession of 22 May in Cascia.

Dear Francesco,

it really seems that the Lord wants you all to Himself, like Saint Rita who, after having been wife, mother and widow, “gave all to Him”. You know, it would not be so bad! I think that few have the privilege of having experience of all states of life. It is richness, grace, life and fullness, because to be healthy and happy even the family must give priority to Jesus, and let itself be guided in daily choices by the light and love of His Spirit. I would leave your girlfriend in peace ... and if I were you I would constantly open up to the divine plan. Let Jesus continue to light your life. Accept all the gifts that he makes each day to guide the steps of your children so that they are good Christians and have a bright future, confident that they can rely on a wise father who lives for their good and who gives his own life as a gift to the Lord to grow and make grow in the Love that there must be for

our whole life. Listen to the Holy Spirit who dwells in your heart and that is all the Love of the Father and of the Son, and is the best Counsellor and Comforter. And with all the love that the Lord has put in your heart, love all those you are given to meet each day. By doing so, you will never suffer loneliness but there will be a crescendo of life and love for you and your children, for all of your loved ones and for the whole world. The most painful trials that are donated to us can, like Saint Rita, open up vast horizons of goodness and hope for many. I wish you all good and I greet you with friendship in the Lord, exhorting you to pray with the words of our spiritual Master, St. Augustine, who wrote to Proba, a widow of his time (and that can also take the masculine form ...): “Strive in prayer to overcome this world: pray in hope, pray in faith, pray in love, pray earnestly and patiently, pray as a widow belonging to Christ. For although prayer is, as He has taught, the duty

of all His members, *i.e.* of all who believe in Him and are united to His body, a more assiduous attention to prayer is found to be specially enjoined in Scripture upon those who are widows” (Letter 130, 16, 29).



THE ABBESS RESPONDS

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

A bequest, a gift of love

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

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

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

Write to us at monastero@santaritadacascia.org and you will receive information on how to help the children in difficulty that need you.



It is our
task to let
them grow
serenely.

estrogeni

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

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

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