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FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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On the cover: The symbols of Saint Rita: the rose, the prayer, the wedding ring.

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Thank You

n the day of my solemn profession, in October 2003, I addressed a prayer to the Lord. Long ago, I came across these words and I thought how beautiful and still, more than ever, true what I had felt that day twelve years ago, before Him. Thinking about what was written by Sr. Maria Ilaria, on pages 14 and 15 of this issue, I realise how much I need and fervently desire to be marvelled by and give thanks for this life, for my life. Why don't you also write down your personal thanks. And keep them guarded over time, so that one day – perhaps when things become more familiar, when habit takes over, when everything is known to your eyes – you can recall that fervour and how to rekindle it.

Thank you, Lord, for life, because in your goodness as Father, you have come to take me back in the places of my remoteness with the embrace of Your tender mercies; there where my selfishness of ungrateful daughter had taken me to wander alone and where I walked lost in dispersion after leaving Your hand. You gave me the gift of Your prayer and lit the lamp of my desire with the burning fire of Your Love. Do not allow me to let it go out, but help me to feed it every day with the oil of humility and charity, of zeal and meekness, of thoughtful service.

Lord, as of Mary Magdalene, you also ask me: Women, who are you looking for?
I seek You, Master, because I thirst for the infinite, for communion with eternal life; because I want to grow in Your love to take the world and save it with You; because I bowed my head on your chest and I was touched by the love of your heart and now I feel nostalgia for that sweetness that I have tasted. May my whole life be to say to you "My Lord and my God" ...

We present four ways of living Rita's example in everyday life, concretely, with love. These are testimonials of real life, narrated for us by the women chosen for the 2015 edition of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award which will be consigned on May 21 in the Basilica of Cascia, on the occasion of the Feast of Saint Rita.

Reconciliation, to go back to living

Claudia Francardi, Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2015, interviewed by Rita Gentile

laudia, what does it mean for you to pardon Matteo? Understanding pardon has always been an obsession. I always felt I was a person who makes mistakes and the fact of having a God who is so merciful has always fascinated me. I have always believed that, as we wish to be pardoned, you must in turn pardon others. The first time I saw Matteo in the courtroom, it brought up all the pain ... I thought that for him to go through his pain, he should know mine, he should know who my husband Antonio was, he should know really what he had done. Gradually, I felt that he (Matteo, ed.) needed to ask for pardon. Then Antonio died and I felt that his death should save another life, that of Matteo.

You must in turn pardon others

... So that the path of Matteo would be, yes, justice, but also his redemption ... Certainly, I firmly believe this. Justice must take its course. Unfortunately, prison is often a place where there is no humanity. So people cannot better themselves. We really feel the need to go beyond the desire for revenge. Today, there is thirst for justicialism not for justice. Justice is to serve a sentence, but so that the person can be rehabilitated to life.

Pardon, however, goes beyond justice ... I feel so well in this situation of reconciliation, peace is so great that it reaches your heart, that there is nothing more rewarding than this ... At the same time, I see people who fail to make this transition, they live in hate and brutalise their lives. When you



CLAUDIA FRANCARDI

Woman of Rita 2015

Claudia Francardi is the widow of Antonio Santarelli, the carabiniere corporal who left home on the morning of 25 April 2011 to go to work and never returned. That morning of celebration, in fact, at a checkpoint in the area of Pitigliano (Grosseto), Antonio stops the young Matteo Gorelli, little more than 18-years-old, for a control. The young man assaults the carabiniere, who suffers severe brain injury. He dies after about a year in coma, on 11 May 2012. For that aggression, which became fatal, Matteo is serving twenty years in a Don Mazzi facility. But from the depths of pain, Claudia manages to climb back up, transforming the tragedy that has struck her into a storv resurrection. In fact, the young widow, along with Irene Sisi, mother of Matteo, sets out on a path of pardon and reconciliation. With courage, the two women set up the "AmiCainoAbele" association to help others in the same situation.

For this, Claudia Francardi will receive the Saint Rita International Recognition Award on May 21 in the Basilica of Cascia.



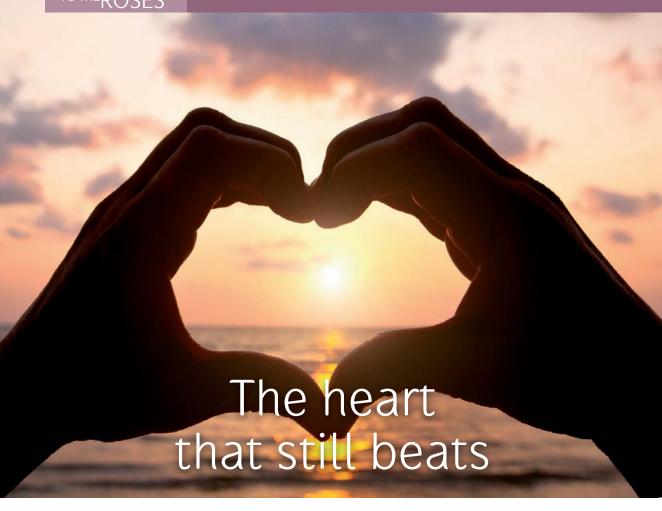
feel good in your life and manage to escape that excruciating pain, to go back to living with an awareness and a peace different from before, then understand. Loving Jesus, I have a great love for men, and if you believe in man, in his ability, you do not stop to judge. Or, at least, if you have a judgment, it is of love, not of condemnation. And from there, there is this need to understand, to penetrate. I had a desire to make him understand my pain because it is through this awareness that he can heal. So I also felt the need not to stop at the incident, but to understand what was behind it.

With the mother of Matteo, you have created the AmiCainoAbele association. What are its goals? The purpose of the association is vast. Currently we are doing only testimonial work to talk about this conciliatory justice. It is not simple, people close themselves in pain. The invitation is to open up, because only then you can go back to living, improving and building a better society.

EXTRAORDINARY HOLY YEAR

An extraordinary Jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy, announced the Pope on March 14: "I have decided to hold an extraordinary Jubilee," said Francis, "that is focused on the mercy of God. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy. We want to live it in the light of the Lord's words: "Be merciful like your Father [...]. This Holy Year will start on the forthcoming Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and will end on 20 November 2016, Sunday of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the universe and living face of the Father's mercy".





Testimony of Lucia Fiorucci, Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2015

here are pains that you cannot imagine, pains that never leave you. I was born in Gubbio (Perugia, ed.) on 13 December 1954 into a normal family. At 24, I marred to Vitaliano Barbetti and, through our love, two beautiful children were born: Elisabetta and Giacomo. But around the corner lay a tragedy that disrupted our whole family. In 2001, on Christmas Eve, Elisabetta was killed in a car accident on her way to buy presents. She was 23 years old, studying for a law degree and was engaged in volunteer work. Since that December 23, the light has gone out in our home and Christmas, which I loved so much, has become dark and sad. But the example of Saint Rita, to whom I am closely linked, spurred me on not to stop, to help others, even though my life had changed dramatically. Having ascertained her brain death, my husband and I agreed that her organs could be explanted, as Elisabetta had expressly wanted, making a gift of our precious daughter in every way. Her organs went to four people. Her little heart is still beating. But it is it right that we now begin to talk about good things. Two years after her death, Elisabetta's friends set up the "EL.BA. Onlus" Association (Elizabeth Barbetti non-profit organisation) to support concrete initiatives aimed at filling the gaps in the social and healthcare sector, to continue what Elizabeth had already done. Among the various

Since that December 23, the light has gone out in our home



"Pardon is not automatic, but a slow, progressive process, involving the whole sphere of the person". In the preface of the book "Il perdono. Quando tutto tace, solo l'amore resta (Pardon. When all is quiet, only love remains), Mother M. Natalina Todeschini, Abbess of the Monastery of Saint Rita in Ca-

Il perdono. Quando tutto tace, solo l'amore resta (Pardon. When all is quiet, only love remains).

Giustino Perilli
Ed. Palumbi, € 7



scia, focuses on what should be understood when we speak of pardon. The pardon granted to the killers of loved ones or to those who have used violence against one. Tragic events that mark the life line. A pardon with an unexpected clamour that is sometimes not even understood. Some symbolic stories which, in recent years, have affected public opinion and helped to arouse emotions, become food for thought on the why of life and its ultimate meaning.

initiatives, we promoted a fellowship in oncology at the Hospital of Gubbio and the "Guida la vita" (Drive Life) road safety project for schools in the area. Four years ago, the Lord wanted to test me with the evil of the century, a breast cancer. The extraordi-

The example of Saint Rita spurred me on not to stop

nary thing is that the oncologist who treated me is the very same doctor who specialised by winning the scholarship made available by "El.BA. Onlus"! He is very capable, so much so that the local health authority has taken him on. Pilgrimages to Saint Rita fill me, pushing me to turn my gaze to the Lord and to be available for the needs of others, offering smiles to those who have only had difficulties and suffering in their lives. I felt the affection of the Augustinian fathers of Gubbio and all the other people of the parish. My world now no longer exists, it is now this. If I can relieve the pain of someone it gives me great pleasure, as well as knowing that Elisabetta's heart still beats in the world. Although I did not want to know who has received it. I know that it is beating.

LUCIA FIORUCCI

Woman of Rita 2015

Tenacity, acceptance of the cross. charity and service to others. These are the values of Rita embodied by 60-year-old Lucia Fiorucci from Gubbio, in the province of Perugia. On May 21 in the Basilica of Saint Rita, Lucia will receive the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2015. To motivate this choice by the commission made up of the Municipality of Cascia, the local Augustinian Family and the Archdiocese of Spoleto-Norcia, is her experience, that of a woman who has transformed the suffering caused by the death of her daughter Elisabetta, victim of a car accident, into hope for other lives, through concrete actions, such as the donation of the young woman's organs, the works of solidarity carried out with the "EL.BA. Onlus" Association (Elizabeth Barbetti nonprofit organisation), the abandonment to God in the pain caused by a breast cancer.



he Sisters of the Holy Family of Spoleto were established in Cannaiola di Trevi (Perugia) in 1888, thanks to the generous heart of their founding father, Don Pietro Bonilli, beatified by Saint John Paul II a century after the birth of the Institute. Today, we work for the family in 28 communities in Italy and in 15 communities spread across the Americas (Guatemala, Chile, Honduras, El Salvador, Brazil), India and Africa (Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo). The motto that has encapsulated our charisma for years is Being, giving and building a family, in places where the family lives broken ties, rough and interrupted terrain, and physical, moral and spiritual fatigue. All this is made concrete through

Building family also means working for a peaceful coexistence with peoples

Today, the elderly are the people most in need

the taking in of needy women with dependent children, education of the smallest children in nursery schools, hospitality and assistance for the disabled, counselling centres in collaboration with specialised volunteers and rest homes for the elderly. Today, these latter are the people most in need. The elderly are alone, except for the most recent period in which many have "come in handy" because of the economic crisis, to the extent that having a pension in the home is helpful. For them, we have one rest home in Spoleto (Perugia, ed.) and two in Sicily, where, as well as welcome them, we try to rebuild the family unit, because the elderly need to continue to feel part of a family. Building family also means working for a peaceful coexistence with peoples of other faiths and religions: in Libya, the mission opened in 1921 by the same Pietro

We announce the Gospel of the Kingdom, so that the world will become one family

Bonilli, the sisters have lived peacefully with Muslims in the silent industriousness of hospitals and in the testimony of a life completely spent for God and for sick brothers and sisters, up to the risk for their lives. We left in 2012, when the "storm" was unleashed (after the fall of the regime and Gaddafi's death, in 2011, Libya plunged into a long period of instability, caused by internal conflicts and, most recently, by the advance of Islamic State militias, ed.). Also like the sisters in India, living in the same neighbourhood with Muslims and Hindus, sowing hopes of peace and opening up pathways of integration and communion. In every pastoral sector whether family, youth and vocational, social and health care, educational, charitable or missionary – we announce the Gospel of the Kingdom, so that the world will become one family, where everyone recognises themselves as children of the same Father and brothers among each other.

SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF SPOLETO

Women of Rita 2015

Like Saint Rita, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Spoleto place the family, with its joys and sorrows, at the centre of things. Like Saint Rita, they endeavour to be bearers of peace. "When I learned that our institute had been chosen to receive the prestigious award dedicated to the saint of Cascia," explains the Superior General, Mother Agnese good and positive sense of the term: it is very nice for our institute, and it is also a way to say 'yes, you're on the right road, go ahead'." On May 21, in the Basilica of the Sanctuary of Cascia, Mother Agnese will receive the parchment of recognition on behalf of all the Sisters of the Holy Family. "The family and charity are values of Saint Rita," she continues. "What she did is extraordinary but it is something that can be done; it's difficult, but it can be done".

E 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.

Alessandro Melis (Sindia NU - Italy) Anna Prete (San Vito dei Normanni BR - Italy) Anna Maria Cancellieri (Pieve Torina MC - Italy) Antonella Masi (Acquaviva delle Fonti BA - Italy) Argentina Grisanti (Montefalco PG - Italy)

Astolfa Baroni (Terni - Italy)

David Raggi (Terni - Italy)

Elda Bronzino (Sant'Ambrogio di Torino TO - Italy)

Federico Perez (Rutigliano BA - Italy)

Fernando Mattei (Dangio-Torre - Switzerland)

Francina Cupertina (Capurso BA - Italy) Genoveva Radu (Luncasi - Romania)

Giuseppa Giglio Bellipanni (Cefalù PA - Italy)

Lino Caprioli (Rome - Italy)

Luisa Esposito, widow of Di Mauro (Rome - Italy)

Luisa D'Onofrio (Taranto - Italy)

Marino Ponselli (Ocosce di Cascia PG - Italy)

Melina Furnari (Biancavilla CT - Italy)

Mirella Mengo (Cascia PG - Italy)

Palmina Galli (Isola del Gran Sasso TE - Italy)

Rosetta Bistrusso and Filippo Addabbo (Cagliari - Italy)

Sante Ciani (Cascia PG - Italy)

Vito Campobasso (Bari - Italy)

Zaira Pintus (Rocca Massima LT - Italy)

My miracle

Franca Pergher, Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2015, interviewed by Marta Ferraro

ranca, you experience difficult trials daily, as did Saint Rita of Cascia ... I went to Cascia as a child, but I don't have clear memories. Saint Rita was a complete woman: mother, wife, widow. What impressed me most is that, for the soul of the children not to be stained, she asked God to "take them". A mother who comes to this is close to God. I constantly ask her for strength.

What is happiness for you? I am happy even though I live in the house. Happiness is knowing oneself, seeing inside. I do not miss going out for dinner. When I see Alessandro, his smile repays me. It seems impossible, but for me it's normal. I don't ask why, why Alessandro. I don't ask, because my mind cannot compete with God. And then I should also ask why not me. I accepted. I told myself: "Let's turn the page to find a new road". And the new road was the encounter with God. This was my

Saint Rita was a complete woman

miracle. I didn't ask for Alessandro to walk. I tell young people to look up. Pain makes you grow and understand many things. Pain is like going to university.

Despite the tragic nature of your experience, you transmit great serenity. What vou to live with abandonment? Faith. Every day I go to Mass. I give up everything, but not Mass, the Rosary and prayer. Every day, in church, I meet my Father. I have pardoned. Pardon means conversion. And conversion means changing oneself. This gives me serenity. And then, I am constantly helped by God. Once, at dawn, Alessandro was ill, I couldn't bear to see him so sick ... and I left the house. I remained in the courtyard of the building. It was January. It was 5.30. It was dark. I kept telling Saint Rita and God: "Take him. But don't let me see him like this. " I looked down and near my foot there was a rosebud.

You have said "I knew Alessandro healthy and then disabled. If I could, I would choose Alessandro disabled". What do you mean? We are not used to seeing

These youngsters are angels with broken wings

the truth. We Have forgotten purity. These youngsters are angels with broken wings that have no place in this society, but with their steady hands work more than anyone, they work the soul and feelings. Alessandro tells me, "Mum, let's pray". What more could I want? If we manage to understand that life is precarious and fragile, we will be able to live the immediate. I live the present. Whatever will be. We'll make it.

PRAYER

O Immaculate Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus and my mother, through the intercession of Saint Rita, shape my heart in your image and make my children see in me a reflection of your virtues, so that, having learned from me to love you and follow you in this life, they may come one day to praise you and bless you in heaven. Mary, queen of saints, through you may they have the protection of Saint Rita.

(May, the month of Mary)

FRANCA PERGHER

Woman of Rita 2015

On the eve of the feast of the saint of the impossible on May 21, Franca Pergher will come to the altar of the Basilica of Cascia, to receive the Saint Rita International Recognition Award from the hands of Father Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Order of St. Augustine. Franca, 64, lives in Udine. She was chosen as a "woman of Rita" for having pardoned the person responsible for the incident that forever changed the life of her son, Alessandro, struck on the head at the age of 6 by a concrete beam. She was chosen because she has taken care of him for 42 years and for having faced with trust in God both her husband's death and her own illness, leukoencephalitis. "I thank the Lord and Saint Rita," says Franca, "for giving me the strength and courage to live the pain and suffering without ever saying: 'Lord why?' But I have asked myself a reason: why did the choice of the recognition fall right on me? Maybe here there is also the hand of God: because the life of my Alessandro, the centre of my experience, encourages me, strengthens me, spurs me to praise God".

Twinning of faith and peace

by the Editors

bayeh in Lebanon is the town which is the protagonist of the 2015 Twinning of Faith and Peace.

Located 15 km north of Beirut, the town was chosen for the 57th edition of the twinning which, every year for the Feast of Santa Rita, unites Cascia with another town in the world in shared devotion to Rita, the saint of dialogue and pardon.

Between March 12 and 17, on the occasion of the lighting of the Torch of Peace which starts the twinning, Lebanese religious and civil authorities received the delegation from Cascia led by the mayor, Gino Emili, and the rector of the Sanctuary of Santa Rita, Father Mario De Santis.

The traditional lighting of the Torch of Peace took place at the church in the Mariamite Maronite student complex dedicated to Santa Rita, *Ecole Sainte Rita*, on May 13, at a ceremony officiated by Apostolic Nuncio Gabriele Caccia, in the presence of local civil and religious institutions, including Father Chawki Raffoul, director of the school, and father Charbel Mhanna, who followed the preparation of the twinning as

a representative of the Maronite Patriarch of Lebanon, Card. Béchara Pierre Raï.

There was great participation of devotees to Rita from the Lebanese town, which has a mostly Christian population, also thanks to the evocative moment when the delegation from Cascia - on behalf of the Mother Abbess of the Monastery of Saint Rita, Sr. M. Natalina Todeschini, and sisters - donated an illustrious relic of the saint to the "Ecole Sainte Rita" school in Dbayeh. Here, the patron saint of impossible cases is so beloved that the Municipality of Cascia will receive a gift of an imposing statue of the saint made by artist Nayef Alwan in Ayto and which will be placed at the entrance to the "hill of hope" this autumn.

To seal the union of the two peoples in the name of Rita, the Lebanese delegation will be hosted in Cascia for the solemn feast in honour of the saint from May 20 to 22 (the calendar of events is on page 17 of this issue). The Torch of Peace, lit in the land of cedars, will reach Cascia on May 21 at 21.30 in the church square of the Basilica of the Sanctuary.







ear devotees of Saint Rita, in this issue we try to accompany you through the everyday life lived by our consecrated male and female friends. Being and making family is, for all of us who are consecrated, a constant effort and quite similar to what there is in a family — probably slightly less numerous — consisting of a father, a mother and children. But whatever happens, it's always the family that is the motor by which we should let ourselves be guided.

Happy reading.

Father Vittorino Grossi Executive Director, "From the Bees to the Roses"

The example

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

n the month of May, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, let us remember that God wanted his Son Jesus to be born into a family that had experienced joys and difficulties, made up of "pure and simple" human beings, with all the limitations and defects that characterise our species. Certainly, great faith in the Lord was able to guide Mary and Joseph, as well as the Holy Family which remains the beacon for all families in the world today, including my own.

I believe that living in a religious community hides a special challenge. This is because we religious persons, more than others, should be "carriers" and an example of behaviour that demonstrates how to overcome difficulties, daily sins, small or big egos that we cultivate more or less consciously, narrowness of views, missed horizons. But this is precisely the point on which Holy Father Francis takes us in reflection ("Wake up the world!", Meeting of Pope Francis with the Superiors General, November 2014): the

point is that we need to understand what it means to "be an example".

Example of what, exactly? Of holiness? Of honest, healthy, upright behaviour, full of grace and far from sin? We are infinitely small, grace is in us, just as sin. We are of example in recognising ourselves as such.

I am of example insofar as I try and try again to get closer to all that is good and beautiful, to holiness, honesty, humility, solidarity, charity, love.

I am of example, in the repeated attempt to overcome my limits, admitting them, not denying them, not ignoring them, but recognising them as part of me. Of this, I have to be of example. In this way, should I fall, I will not be ashamed to pick myself up, and I can talk about Him. In this way, should I crash, I will not be embarrassed to keep quiet, and I can talk about Him. Where I run away, I can ask pardon to come back and talk about Him.



The legend of the three stonemasons

Sister M. Ilaria Magli, Augustinian of the Monastery of the Four Crowned Saints (Rome), is interviewed by Monica Guarriello

ister Maria Ilaria Magli, a 46-year-old from Bologna with an ever-present smile on her face, has been a nun for 20 years at Four Saints, as we in Rome call the Monastery of the Four Crowned Saints. I met her because I really wanted her to explain to me what "being a family" means for a monastic community and if something is changing, in view of the constant messages about the Holy Father. Sister Maria Ilaria looks me in the eyes and begins to talk...

Pope Francis gives consecrated persons the task of consoling the people of God. What does this mean for you nuns of contemplative life? In this form, which is the so intense community life, all the cries, all the needs of the people are collected. Many ask to be heard through emails, messages that are left in the church, phone calls ...

Physically we cannot reach all of them but, trusting in prayer and adherence to God with our daily



Sister Maria Ilaria Magli.

yes, we can still reach and really console a people that is crying, even though we don't know the face of the person who is receiving a caress of blessing from us.

Does the monastery "function" in all respects as a family? The Monastery is really one big family, with the day well-ordered and measured by prayer and work.

There are problems, there will always be, but, as you do in a family, we seek the solution with love. I think of my parents, my mum chose my dad and vice versa. None of us has the choice, everything is in the hands of the Lord, but apart from this, the dynamics are the same.

What's more, being family has a very special connotation for St. Augustine, because the value of friendship is basic even in our personal relationship with God, so if I want to be *consolation for the people* I have to learn to live well with my sister who is beside me. But, above all, the relationship must be based on a style of beauty: community life is possible if I can enjoy it, that is, if I can look beyond those difficulties that there may be in relationships.

Gratitude and responsibility make community life beautiful: living with gratitude the fact that there is a community that welcomed me, that welcomes me every day, that shares my black days, my efforts, my wounds ... and living the responsibility of sharing the burdens and fatigue of my sister ... The Pope is right to say "the monastery is not Purgatory" ... but I must be the first to put in this ingredient, made of sympathy, which also means learning to play down on the "pettiness" that sometimes becomes so important ...

In this sense, do the calls of the Pope addressed to consecrated persons have a reason for being? I think so. Consecrated life suffers from a somewhat distant vision, a kind of perfect world into which one enters and is sort of





Guided by the Abbess, Mother M. Chiara Palmosi, the Monastery of the Four Crowned Saints consists of fifteen nuns of contemplative life, two postulants, two novices and two sisters in temporary vows.

"above" lay people. But this way of seeing has made relationships sterile, threatening to empty the consecrated life of its being guardian of humanity and of possible communion, of dialogue, of participating in the joys and sorrows of mankind.

The call of the Pope is precisely that of saying "let's break this glass box", into which the consecrated have comfortably tucked themselves and learn to live a true communion which is that which the world cries to us ... let us reclaim relationship, confidence in the other, sharing, also baring our fears ... and so, with great courage, the Pope recalls this authenticity of life.

Regarding authenticity, one of the main photos on your website portrays the sisters lying on a lawn having fun with a ball.

Does playing and having fun also exist in seclusion? Before becoming a nun, I imagined that only sepeople entered the monastery ... people who were a bit sad ... who already had the "face of a nun" ... And I came up against reality which instead presented the face of a monastic community made up of "normal" people, so with the capacity of laughing and having fun. I think it's also still a struggle to grow in the playful and joyful dimension of life. There is a desert father who is interrogated by a young disciple, who asks him: "How does your day start?" and this old desert father replies: "I begin with being happy". It seems a trivial thing, but in fact it is the firm decision to say: I start my day by going into this mystery of freeness that is the love of God, that God prepared for me

today. The same efforts, misunderstandings, unknowns ... They are all gifted to me by God. This should be enough and I have fun.

Furthermore, it is written in the healthy order of our day, so after lunch and after dinner there is a recreational moment and it's never a waste of time: playing is freeness and does good.

I would like to clarify one thing: I'm very happy to be here. No one is here because they didn't find a job or didn't have a "boyfriend" ... We are here because the Lord has called us and one of its features is precisely happiness. To have fun, to learn to live with the grateful look, is possible if every day is a new day for me, learning to be thankful even for the things that seem obvious.

Maybe the secret is to be surprised, not to lower the level, not to assume that the other is there. that the sun is there, that the buds are already sprouting in the garden. There is this legend of the three stonemasons: A man meets a stonemason and asks: "What are you doing?" and the stonemason replies: "I'm struggling, pounding this stone so that I can take food home for my children." The man meets another and says, "What are you doing?" and the stonemason says, "I'm carrying stones because I have to work". He meets the third who replies: "I build cathedrals". Saying that you're building cathedrals means going beyond to a lowering of monotony and heaviness and looking at the big picture great, no? It's a suggestion for living the everyday.



Being like and with others

The Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ are lay women consecrated to God, belonging to the Franciscan family, who live the Gospel in the world. To date, there are slightly more than two thousand members of this Institute, most of whom live in Italy. Here we share the testimony of one of them who, while remaining anonymous, agreed with joy to tell us what this choice of life means to her ...

or women and with other women, we are committed to supporting the value of the woman in society and in the church. We are lay persons!

And we want to remain that way: that is why we have no outward sign that can distinguish or identify us. We consider the work we do, and we carry out any type of work, as a mission but also as a grace. Secularism is one of the reasons that leads us not to make public our belonging to the institute: with reservation about our vocational choice, we want to overcome that way of thinking in which it is a priest (or religious or consecrated person) who is held to determined attitudes and the person who is not (the "simple" Christian) is exempt from these. We want to announce with our lives that we all have the same dignity and each one of us, despite diversity, is called on to show the same love to our Father. Chastity, poverty and obedience are expressions of that love of God that we want to make visible in the world with our lives. Together, we form a secular institute, that is, an institute of consecrated life recognised by the Church as a place and an instrument for testifying to the possibility of living the Gospel in the secular condition following Christ. As Franciscans, it is essential for each of us to feel as a

creature and as a creature loved by God. All life is mission. There are no specific activities that materialise my mission but everything I do, my work, my commitments, my holidays, my relations with colleagues, family members and friends, everything is for me the opportunity, in fact the way, to realise my vocation.

With this vocation I like being like and with others, being that salt which dissolves so that you do not see or recognise it, but which gives so much flavour! The institute came to meet me because of Franciscan spirituality. For me, full secularism and Franciscan spirituality are ... my life!

Vocational choice, consecration, belonging to the Institute of the Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ make me happy, happy to be alive, happy to be Christian, happy to be consecrated! With that happiness that makes you a woman that is full, satisfied and pacified, and therefore joyous! Yes, I believe that this is precisely this that belonging to the institute gives me: the taste of life, at every opportunity, in every place, with each person, the certainty that life is beautiful because it is founded on a great Love, that which I have experienced and continue to experience every day, whatever the cost!



MAY 20

HALL OF PEACE

21.00 - Presentation of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2015.

Simona Branchetti, journalist from Tg5 - Mediaset, presents the "women of Rita" to the community: Claudia Francardi, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Spoleto, Lucia Fiorucci, Franca Pergher (read about the recognition award from page 4 of this issue).

MAY 21

TOWN ROSE GARDEN

• 11.30 - Planting of roses

Planting of roses, the symbol of Saint Rita, by civil authorities, religious figures and women honoured with the Saint Rita International Recognition Award plant roses.

BASILICA OF SAINT RITA

• 16.30 - Solemn Mass of the Augustinian Family

Officiating: Father Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Augustinian Order.

• 17.30 – Consignment of Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2015.

Father Alejandro Moral consigns the parchment to the "women of Rita".

• 18.30 - Solemn Celebration of the Transit of Saint Rita

Officiating: Mons. Renato Boccardo, Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia.

CHURCH SQUARE OF THE BASILICA OF SAINT RITA

• 20.15 - Celebration of the 57th Twinning of Faith Cascia-Dbayeh.

In the presence of civil, religious and military authorities from Cascia and the delegation of Dbayeh, thousands of little flames light up for the traditional luminaria. Exhibition by flag-wavers and parade of the mayors of the municipalities of the Nera Valley, each with the banner of their city, accompanied by the Drummers of Cascia.

• 21.30 - Second stage of the Torch, with lighting of the Votive Flame.

Having left the town twinned with Cascia (this year, Dbayeh in Lebanon), the Torch arrives on the "hill of hope" on the eve of the Feast of Saint Rita.

MAY 22, FEAST OF SAINT RITA

HALL OF PEACE

• 8.00 - Holy Mass.

Officiating: Father Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Augustinian Order.

CHURCH SQUARE OF THE BASILICA OF SAINT RITA

- 10.30 Arrival of the Procession, with the Historical Parade.
- 11.00 Solemn Pontifical.

Officiating: Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, Archbishop of Perugia and Città della Pieve. Afterwards, Supplication to Saint Rita and Blessing of the Roses (around 12.30).

BASILICA OF SAINT RITA

• 18.00 - Holy Mass for the Benefactors of the Sanctuary.

Officiating: Father Mario De Santis, Rector of the Basilica.



edited by Alessandra Paoloni, PPU Secretary General

site www.santaritadacascia.org/piousunion email piaunione@santaritadacascia.org

n 21 and 22 March, about one thousand people met in Cascia for the PPU General Meeting. In this special issue, we offer a photographic journey for reliving the best moments in which the great Augustinian Family and the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita of Cascia were the protagonists.

Special General Meeting photo album





In the Lord's blessing and the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of our dear Saint Rita, the members of the PPU walk together to expand the good perfume of Christ throughout the world.



Anyone can be part of our family, either as a group or individually. Each year, under the guidance of the General Chaplain, Father Ludovico Maria Centra, we follow a path of prayer and charity based on a theme. For 2015, the theme is: Family in Christ to be holy in love.



As per tradition, we carry an effigy of Saint Rita from a local group in procession through the streets of Cascia. This year the statue came from Augusta (Syracuse).





The Sanctuary of Saint Rita was illuminated by the faith and devotion of the members of the Pious Union who came from all over Italy to venerate the saint of the impossible, despite the whims of the weather that the weekend had held in store for us!

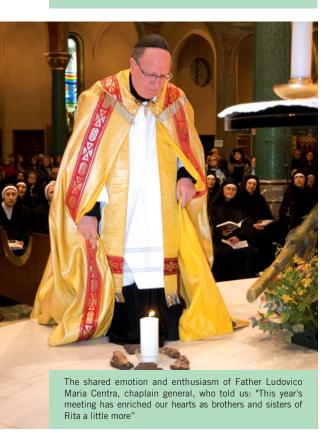
FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



During the meeting with the nuns, Alessandro Staiano, the Palermo silversmith who made the new reliquary, handed over the precious reliquary to the Abbess, along with his own personal gift: a silver chalice enriched with an heirloom: a gold plaque depicting Saint Rita.



Dear Saint Rita, I think of how much joy and security it gives me knowing that you are always close to us, in our family, united by love for Jesus Crucified.





The new reliquary, which houses the belt belonging to the saint of Cascia, has our coat of arms of the Saint Rita Primary Pious Union.





The ceremony of new affiliations in the Basilica of Saint Rita featured the group from Sant'Agata Irpina (Avellino) and that from San Ferdinando di Puglia (Barletta-Andria-Trani). Welcome among us!



In this period, the Church is reflecting on a major theme that is not and cannot be alien to anyone: the Family, primary and irreplaceable cell in which "divine and human love is born and develops".



Father Luciano De Michieli, Prior Provincial of the Italian Augustinians, shares the joy for the new PPU reliquary.







he Beehive of Saint Rita and the non-profit Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation have launched the "Beyond Horizons" project: an innovation in the field of educational strategies that will allow us to develop new approaches for supporting the Little Bees. How? By setting sail on a ship: the schooner that the non-profit Tender to Nave Italia Foundation is providing to promote the culture of the sea as a means of education, rehabilitation and social inclusion. Pursuing the main goal of the Beehive, which is to bring our Little Bees out of social exclusion, the project will enable young people to discover themselves, in their fragility and potential, going beyond their horizons to discover each other. The navigation, programmed for June 23 to 27, will support the construction of group skills, cooperation, motivation and self-esteem. After all, the sea is the place par excellence where

The affection of supporters of the Beehive is never missing

the participation of everyone is necessary and essential for the survival of the crew and the construction of these skills will be very natural. Besides the centrality of the person, the Beehive has at heart the environment, proposing it as a space for respected growth, to be protected. Everything will be done through the activities offered by the ship and the workshops designed by us during the school year. Our workshops will one on manual dexterity, one for the "Journal of the Beehive" (the newspaper written by the girls) and the experience gained in the

BELARUS CHILDREN'S PROJECT

For more than ten years, the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia has been supporting the solidarity holiday project for children from Belarus, organised by volunteers from Cascia of the Forum for the Rights of Chernobyl Children non-profit organisation. Dozens of

people work free of charge to help many children who are victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986. The young guests of the nuns, who are aged between 8 and 17, spend a month in summer in Italy, between Cascia and Porto Recanati (Macerata), in the holiday house that the monastery already provides for the Little Bees of the Saint Rita Beehive; they spend a whole month breathing air that allows their bodies to be purified for the whole year from radiation. In addition to



the Monastery, various local institutions and bodies have embraced the project to support the Belarusian children, including: the Municipality of Cascia, which provides transport, and Hotel delle Rose, which provides a lunch room.



photography course. The activities offered by the ship include the workshop on sailors' knots, sail manoeuvring, climbing ashore and activities of ordinary maintenance. The methodology ranges from the "logbook" to cooperative learning (together, learning to work for a common goal), collaboration between peers, etc. We are certain that it will be a unique and important experience for the human growth of the Little Bees. All that we do for our children and girls is fuelled by the great generosity of the Beehive's supporters whose affection and support, as in a large family, is never missing. So we will keep you updated on the approach of the Little Bees to boarding, on what happens on board and, finally, on the results obtained.

All was given to him

by Sister M. Giacomina Stuani OSA

hat you have promised me heaven does not move me, my God, to love you. Neither does hell so fearful move me

not to offend you. You move me, Lord. It moves me to see you nailed to a cross and mocked. It moves me to see your sufferings and your death. It moves me in the end, your love, and in some way, even if there were no heaven, I would still love you, and even if there were no hell, I would still fear you. You don't have to give me anything so that I may love you, because even if what I hoped for wasn't there, the same way that I love you, I would love you still". This sonnet is a jewel of Castilian literature, which is attributed by some to St. Teresa of Avila, by others to an anonymous sixteenth century poet.



Only turned to the Lord can we become like Him

"He demands everything of you He who created you ... Turned to the Lord, Almighty Father, to him, with a pure heart, as far as our smallness can, we give widest thanks" (St. Augustine, Sermon 34,7,9). Only turned to the Lord (conversi ad Dominum, says Augustine) can we become like Him in everything.

"Man is truly himself, and is fully realised, to the extent that he lives with God and of God," said Pope Francis in Assisi. This means opening the heart to the most perfect model of man-God, Jesus Christ, and putting oneself at his disposal with the hands of will, the steadfast knees of prayer, hearts wide open to Infinity.

The vocation of our sister Saint Rita fits between these "examples" which, like her, lived the contemplative ideal of *soli Deo*, God alone, infinite Goodness and Beauty, in their lives, and operated the works of God. Rita, once a widow, did not enter the Monastery under constraint but because as a girl she had tasted the beauty of living united heart to heart with the Lord. And from that Heart, she drew on the Love which was the base on which she built her entire existence.

On the Solemn Case, in which the body of the Saint was placed in 1457, we read these words, written in poetic form in the language of the time: "... she believed she had no other treasure than that in which all was given to him". All was given to Him: the reason for her life was the others she loved. The ultimate reason was the living God, within her and among the sisters of the community, the Lord Jesus free man ... real man ... man for us.

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.

It's beautiful with You...!

"It's beautiful with you" are words that we can imagine spoken by God about you or by you about God or, at the same time by God and you, by one about the other! "It's beautiful with you expresses a relationship, a journey that touches our gaze and turns it into a vision of faith, able to recognise the beauty of the Lord". Come and spend a few days in the company of Jesus, with other friends in search, with we Augustinian Nuns and Fathers ... And it will be ... surprise ... gratitude ... adoration ... journey ... beauty ... relationship joy ... We are waiting for you!

FEMALE VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION COURSE FROM 17 TO 22 AUGUST 2015



The love that makes a gift

by Sister M. Natalina Todeschini OSA, Abbess of the Monastery of Saint Rita

A book dedicated to all families

Santa Rita da Cascia per le famiglie"

("The Love that is a gift. The message of Saint Rita of Cascia for families"), dedicated to all families, to those that

already exist and to those that are about to take shape. It is a book for those who

love, the fruit of prayer and reflection that we shared from 2008 to 2014 in the meetings for the Pastoral family held by our dear friend, Don Sem Fioretti, in the Diocese of Spoleto-Norcia. In these reflections, Sister Maria Laura let herself be guided by the testimony and spirituality of Saint Rita, a woman and a Saint that we all love because she is the

Saint that we all love because she is the Saint of the family. In her life, Rita always put Jesus at the centre, to the point that "her life force was Love and by this she was always guided in the various states of her life". The saint of Cascia teaches us that it is possible to love as God loves us, we must believe that with all of ourselves! Fear not, dear parents! With the power of love that lives there, you can enlighten your children and take them by the hand along the way of

life, and in this way build a family that is

happy as God wants.

n response to the just demand that Pope Francis addresses to us, we nuns also dedicate a special thought to the family, increasingly called on by society of today to respond to new challenges. That's why, as contemplative Augustinians, we decided to publish a book on the subject, titled "L'amore che si fa dono. Il messaggio di

The saint of Cascia teaches us that it is possible to love as God loves us

ORDER THE BOOK FOR THE FAMILY Currently available only in Italian To order a copy of the book "L'Amore che si fa dono. Il messaggio di Santa Rita da Cascia per le famiglie" ("The Love that is a gift. The message of Saint Rita of Cascia for families"), just a contribution of € 8 plus shipping. Write to news@santaritadacascia.org or go to our site www.santaritadacascia.org



IN MEMORY OF SISTER M. ADDOLORATA



"My union with God ... I try to reach it through the gift of faith". Sr. M. A d d o l o r a t a Mignogna always had clear her vocation for the contemplative life, although not

approved by her family, and to realise it she did not hesitate to leave it in 1951. at the age of 23, to enter the monastery. "To achieve this union perfection", she said, "I always needed mortification of the senses, detachment from the world ... a total sacrifice united with Christ. love for the Cross ... spiritual nourishment, like the Sacraments, to ioin the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist with more momentum". Hers was always a pious soul and with much prayer. After having carried out the tasks assigned to her by the Superiors, and with responsibility and order, she ran to the Community's choir, a place of prayer. If we were looking for her, it was there that we found her. She offered her life and her prayer for priests and for the salvation of the world, which is why she was never surprised by the trials that often afflicted her, but lived them all with generosity. In her last years, she was much proven by disease but she was never heard to complain. She said: we must offer everything to Love, to Jesus, everything is little for him. In the silence, in the blink of an eye, she had gone to meet the Bridegroom, so wanted and loved every day of her 64 years of consecration . And we like to think of her next to Him, as she continues to whisper of her love: "What most engages me now is full uniformity with His will and a sincere love for my brothers".

- 1. Gaia Gasparoni (Barbara AN Italy)
- 2. Giada Rita Asnicar (Montecchio Maggiore VI Italy)
- 3. Ilaria Bonato (Fara Vicentino VI Italy)
- 4. Kevin, Kelly and Edwin Falcone (Taranto Italy)
- 5. Linda and Sofia Campedelli (Vallese di Oppeano VR Italy)
- 6. Ludovica Rita Cernera (Contursi Terme SA Italy)
- 7. Mariasole and Carlotta Negri (Vistarino PV Italy)
- 8. Melissa Rosa (Arzignano VI Italy)
- 9. Raffi Raouf (Cairo Egypt)
- 10. Renzo Racagni (Córdoba Argentina)
- 11. Rita Ebondza (Brazzaville Congo)
- 12. Rita Giannini (Chieti Italy)



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

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

POSTAL BANK ACCOUNT NO. 1010759072 INDICATING CAUSE BEEHIVE BANK ACCOUNT IBAN IT27T0200821703000102136901 BIC/SWIFT: UNCRITM1J35 INDICATING CAUSE BEEHIVE



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