

# FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

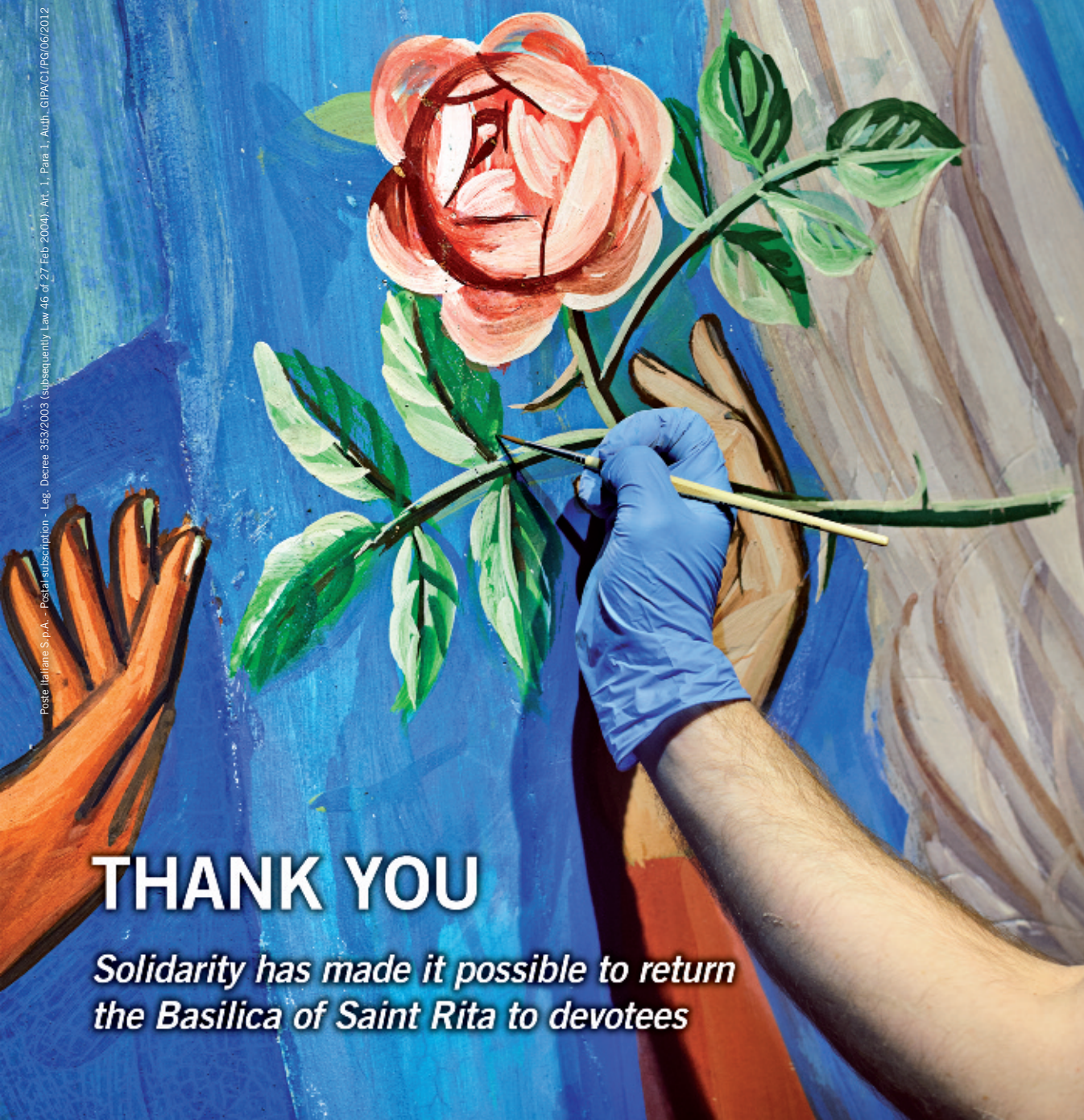


The Magazine  
of Saint Rita of Cascia

BIMONTHLY  
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN  
MONASTERY  
OF SAINT RITA  
OF CASCIA

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## THANK YOU

*Solidarity has made it possible to return  
the Basilica of Saint Rita to devotees*

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## FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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# Prayer

O' Saint Rita,  
Model of family life and consecrated life, I resort to your  
intercession in these difficult moments of my life.  
You know that sadness often oppresses me,  
because I cannot find the way out in so  
many painful situations.  
From the Lord obtain the graces I need,  
and especially serene confidence in God  
and inner calm.  
Allow me to imitate your sweet mildness,  
your strength in trials, and your heroic charity.  
Let my sufferings be of benefit to all my dear ones  
and that all may receive eternal salvation,  
with the blessing of the Lord,  
the Blessed Virgin Mary, and you, Saint Rita.  
Amen.

**Thank you for your support, may Saint Rita  
intercede with the Lord to protect you at  
all times.  
The Augustinian Family of Cascia.**



# Women of Rita

*For the great Feast of Saint Rita 2017, we have been very busy getting everything ready. Post-earthquake work in the Basilica has continued uninterrupted thanks to the valuable contributions of many, donors and volunteers. Above all, thanks to MSC Cruises, the cruise company which decided to fund the internal and external restructuring of the house of Saint Rita. Thanks to the solidarity received, we were able to welcome pilgrims from all over the world to celebrate our great patron saint from May 20 to 22. In this feature section, we present the feast starting from the Women of Rita, who received the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2017 on May 21 for bringing the message of Rita to the world ...*

## «I put my son's killer in the hands of God»

Antonella Leardi, Woman of Rita 2017, is interviewed by Rita Gentili

**A**ntonella, what relationship do you have with the Saint? I know Saint Rita because we were in Cascia last year for a project of the Umbria region; we brought the girls from Scampia who met the Rome women's team. I visited Cascia for the first time, and was taken to visit the monastery where it was explained to me that Saint Rita was a wife, a mum, and that she had also forgiven.

**Speaking of forgiveness, in your opinion, is it so incomprehensible that we can't forgive?** I don't think any human being is better before God's eyes. For someone who simply loves God or Christ in their life, they don't think twice about giving words of forgiveness. Having forgiveness in your heart is a gift of the Holy Spirit. For me it was spontaneous, I didn't think about it. Whenever we go to Rome for the hearings, I see the killer of my son, and I feel great pity for that man; I don't feel hate, I don't feel resentment, I've never wanted his death. I simply place him in the hands of God whenever I manage to pray for him.

**Your words remind me of another mother who also received the Saint Rita Recogni-**



Antonella Leardi.

**tion Award, who said that forgiveness was as a grace that God had given her to allow her to live in peace with herself. Do you share that feeling?** Yes, I agree. I always say that forgiveness is a gift that God has given to my life, to my heart. Thanks to God, I manage to live, survive, breathe, talk with others, still have human relationships, just because of this wonderful sentiment of forgiveness. And then I see that it benefits people who live around me, my children, my husband.

Even though they would perhaps have murdered the killer with their hands, thanks

to this astonishing gift that is forgiveness they manage to live serenely. I compare hate to an acid that corrodes what contains it and, when it leaks out, corrodes everything that surrounds it.

## *Having forgiveness in the heart is a gift of the Holy Spirit*

**After the death of your son, you set up an association bearing the name of *Ciro*. What messages does it convey?** The first great message I keep telling young people is to have respect for life, respect for others, to try to fight hatred with love. It's tough, but once you put everything into it, I think it could change so many things. It could even change the world. And this is the most important message I am conveying. *Ciro* was killed by hatred, by racist hatred. We do so many things ... We go into to prisons to support

mothers in oncology departments. The message is just one: love of God. Love is the greatest richness a person can have.

**Your son died during clashes between *Series A* football fans, but there is also an everyday scene of parents insulting the children of the opposing team on the football pitch. What suggestion can these parents be given?** The suggestion is always the same: love for your neighbour. If only a parent would imagine that his son's opponent is an opponent for the few minutes of the game but then is a child like just like their child ... that's always the point. The human heart has become arid precisely because of the lack of love and respect for fellow humans. In my opinion, we need to educate parents and then children. I have to tell the truth: I find fertile ground with children. When I go to football schools, the children open their eyes, open their hearts. Often they cry. It means their heart is predisposed. Growing up, we barbarise ourselves. So, the suggestion is to start teaching parents a bit of the school of life and then children the school of football. ■

SAINT RITA  
INTERNAZIONALE  
RECOGNITION AWARD

### ANTONELLA LEARDI

It's May 3, 2014, and there are just a few hours to go before the Coppa Italia final between Naples and Fiorentina at the Olympic Stadium in Rome. A group of Neapolitan fans is provoked by some ultras throwing stones and sticks at the coach heading to the stadium. A physical clash breaks out, some gunshots are fired and *Ciro Esposito*, a 29-year-old Neapolitan supporter, lies on the ground in a serious condition. The shot was fired by 48-year-old Rome ultra *Daniele De Santis*, who in turn is beaten up. Despite the situation, it is decided that the game will go on, sparking controversy. On June 25, after 63 days of agony, *Ciro Esposito* dies in the intensive care unit of the Gemelli hospital in Rome. "No violence in the name of *Ciro*", his mother *Antonella Leardi* appeals to fans. In 2016, *Daniele* is sentenced to 26 years in prison for the killing of *Ciro*.

On May 21, 2017, at the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia, *Antonella Leardi* received the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2017 for pardoning her son's killer and for helping to spread the seeds of peace and dialogue among young people through the "*Ciro Vive*" association.

# «Love and family are my mission»

Federica Lisi, Woman of Rita 2017, interviewed by Alessia Nicoletti

**P**ure love, this is what Federica Lisi is made of: example of wife, mother, widow and woman, who stands out for the love that has always guided her life. Her story begins in Rome, where her parents bring her and her three brothers up with love, understanding and friendship, creating a nest that will always be Federica's first example, the safe harbour, the outstretched hand, even in silence. At the age of nine years she finds her true love, volleyball, and at the age of only fourteen begins her competitive career.

## *Love shoots its arrow and lights the sparkle between them*

She is twenty-years-old when, after a match in Naples, she meets Bovo, Vigor Bovolenta, who is also a phenomenal volleyball player. Fate or rather "love, the power that drives the world," according to Federica; love shoots its arrow and lights the sparkle between them, in an ardour that is never extinguished. This deep and real love leads them to marriage, taking them to Ravenna. The great and visceral desire of the couple to have a child comes immediately. In order to dedicate himself heart and soul to this new project of life, Vigor decides to play in Series B2 and Federica leaves volleyball. Then comes Alessandro. But Fede and Bovo do not stop there. The idea of an only son is inconceivable for those who have grown up with brothers and sisters, and Arianna is born. The couple's happiness and love are so abundant that the two desire a third pregnancy, which leads to twins An-

gelica and Aurora. Between coping with and love for their four beautiful children, Fede and Vigor are ecstatic and finally complete. Nevertheless, in January 2012, an incredulous but happy Federica shares the discovery of a new pregnancy with Vigor.



Federica Lisi and her 5 children

At the first check-up, there is no heartbeat and she is forced to undergo cutterage. Together, the grief is overcome through the strength of love. The days pass by and March - the month of darkness and miracle - arrives. It is March 24, when Federica is called to Macerata, where Bovo was playing an away game and the doctors tell her that her hus-

band has not made it. A few hours earlier, while serving the ball, the champion's heart unexpectedly stopped beating. "Although it was short, Bovo won the game of life. He always joked, he was full of energy, he was good, and he won on the court, he won with his family". This is Federica's awareness now, that in that moment she does not give up, she takes heart, she finds strength in the

## *Grief is overcome through the strength of love*

family, in her children, in friends, because Bovo is no longer there but she feels it her duty to go on, also for him. After a week, she does not feel well and she puts it down to what has happened. But life is ready to shine a light on her, a miracle of love: she receives the news of the arrival of a fifth child, Andrea. Despite the torment, that heart beating inside her gives her the greatest strength,

that of love. "If this is not a sign, what is it?" thinks Federica, who understands her mission in life, namely love and family. "With my children," she says, "I have always talked clearly about Bovo's death and I try to talk to them about their father every day." Federica models the pain to turn it into hope, and not just for her. Every day she is engaged in spreading her story, the power of love and the strength of the heart. First with the book "Noi non ci lasceremo mai" ("We Will Never Be Apart") because, she says: "Bovo has gone, but he has never left me and his children." Then with the "Io e Lei" word and music project, which came about after meeting singer Pia Tuccitto from Arezzo. Today Federica is happy and in love, but with a different always special love. She is grateful for life and honoured to receive the Saint Rita Recognition; "example of a woman for women and not only," she says on seeing her mission of love rewarded. In saying goodbye, she leaves me with yet another lesson of life: "Today you exist and for this reason you have to love, help, fight. In short, you have to live." ■

### SAINT RITA INTERNAZIONALE RECOGNITION AWARD

#### FEDERICA USI

Forty years old, living in Ferrara, a career in volleyball and five children. The story of Federica Lisi is that of a woman, a mother, a wife, a widow. It is the story of immense grief, transformed into overwhelming strength. Five years have passed since March 24, 2012, when her husband Vigor Bovolenta, a volleyball player from Forlì and member of Italy's national team, collapsed to the ground after serving the ball. His heart has stopped and "Bovo" dies at the age of 37. The loss of her husband could have been seen by Federica as the conclusion of that project of life begun together fifteen years earlier - yet, only fifteen days later, Federica realises that she is expecting their fifth child. Love for her family and for life have pushed Federica to create the "Noi non ci lasceremo mai" ("We Will Never Be Apart") association, which takes its name from the book she has written to recount her experience. The association proposes funding projects to educate young people about the culture of sport and life: through events and meetings, to encourage and continue life even after having gone through a dramatic event; to spread the culture of cardioprotection in sport and schools.

On May 21, 2017, at the Basilica of Saint Rita of Cascia, Federica Lisi received the Saint Rita International Recognition Award for her example of woman and mother who is reborn in love for the family and for life.

# «Who are we to not accept death?»

Anna Montebruno, Woman of Rita 2017, interviewed by Marta Ferraro

Anna's life is so strongly linked to Rita's example that in some parts of the story of her existence it seems to be the saint that is talking. "I went down the street to pick him up. I did not yell, I only said quietly: 'Why did you kill him?' Then, gazing at the sky, I turned to the Lord: 'It was your desire, now be close to me, never leave me'." Does it not seem to be the scene in which Rita picks up her husband, Paolo, now lifeless, from the roadside? In Anna's words, "Maria, my little girl, was coming home from school on her scooter when a car ran into her. I was alone at that time, my husband was working abroad. I had done everything I had to up to the last for my little girl. I had bought her the wedding dress because she was ready for the Lord. She was 15 and I had organised everything as if I was accompanying my daughter to the altar." Anna tells how, during the funeral, the celebrant felt unwell and it was she who spoke, telling her family, from whom she had heard the words of revenge: "He (the car driver) has nothing to do with it. Maria was a flower of the Lord and he has taken her back. Let us accept death. Who are we to not accept?" Forgiveness is the most difficult and courageous decision a person can take. Undoubtedly this is the experience that makes Anna most like Rita. Some time ago, I read somewhere that

the saints did not have perfect existences, but they are the friends that the Lord gives us to be inspired by them. And for Anna, Saint Rita was the Friend to be inspired by and trust in. Way back in 1974, Anna and Gabriele, now her husband, were two young

people in love, opposed by his family which was well-to-do while she lived with her parents and 11 brothers and sisters in 60 square metres of council housing, but with so much love. To marry Anna, Gabriele gave up all rights to any inheritance and, after only two months of engagement, standing in front of the urn of the saint, the two promised eternal love with much faith. "I didn't ask her for anything," Anna recalls, "I just said, 'Saint Rita, make it happen and I promise you my wedding dress'." Saint Rita was not slow in fulfilling her wish and the two lovers got married. Today, Anna's wedding dress is carefully preserved in the Monastery of Cascia by Sister Laura along with Maria's First Communion dress, which her parents had wanted her to receive in Cascia. "It was a beautiful day," recalls Anna. "It was April 19, 1987, and I still get emotional

remembering it. There were just me, our little girl and my husband. At first our parish priest was reluctant but then he understood how important it was for us and he agreed that our little girl would receive the Communion right there. Then, the next day, we



Anna and Gabriele on the day of Maria's First Communion in Cascia.

celebrated with our relatives, but that day was just ours.” Illness has always been present in Anna's life. At the age of just 12, she was diagnosed with Sydenham's chorea, a rare infant disease that affects movements. Over time, Anna is cured, but the disease has been the source of much suffering that little Anna overcomes without rancour and with great strength of spirit. The disturbance causes paralysis of her right arm and her brothers tease her about it. A bit because of her precarious conditions and a bit to keep her away from the derision of her brothers, Anna's mother decides to send her to college. She comes back home only when, suddenly and without any clinical explanation, the disorder stops. Over the years, Anna has dealt with two heart operations and an ischaemia. “I remember, one day I was really unwell. I had a very strong headache. I went to the emergency department after the insistence of my husband. I didn't even want to go. There I met a female doctor who yelled. Today we are great friends, we have been to Lourdes together. But that day ... how exhausting ... She was trying to spur me on and yelled. Then, unable to keep my head still because of the pain, told her ‘If I have

to go I'll go, because there's an angel waiting for me. If He doesn't want that I'll stay here. I'm fine both here and there'.” That day, Anna was diagnosed with three hematomas of the brain, and then, once again, they disappeared mysteriously. Despite the difficulties of life, Anna has never given up. To those who ask how she manages not to lose heart and keep going, she says that her weapon is the crown. And, incredulous, she says, “Before my husband left, Maria gave him a crown and told him ‘Daddy keep it with you, it will help you’. And Anna always keeps it with her. “Not because I pray from morning to evening. But I need my quarter of an hour each day to be with the Lord, with my daughter, with the Virgin Mary and with Saint Rita. To thank them. Because my life has been beautiful. I have been a mum and I still am. My daughter has not gone away, I feel mum of everyone now and I'm ready to help. I also helped the children of the driver who ran into Maria. When you forgive, they say you're stupid; it doesn't matter. I always ask God to love and accept everything and everyone. I never stop, I work to give, to give to others.” ■

## SAINT RITA INTERNAZIONALE RECOGNITION AWARD

### ANNA MONTEBRUNO

Deeply devoted to Saint Rita, wife of a very beloved husband, mother of the little Maria, who died in 1990 at the age of 15, run over by a motorist close to home while coming back from school on a scooter. Anna Montebruno is 65 and lives in Sanbenedetto del Tronto (Ascoli Piceno). In the course of her life, she has had to overcome many trials. In addition to her daughter's death, illness and various health problems have sown pitfalls and difficulties along her path. “I thank God for the forgiveness I have in my heart, for my marriage, for the 42 years we have been together and we still love each other very much. Our marriage was blessed by Saint Rita: it was 1974 and my husband and I, engaged at the time, came to Cascia and in front of Saint Rita we promised Eternal Love. So even when illnesses have struck me (I have been operated on the heart and I have had an ischaemia and three hematomas) I have always felt it in the heart to say “Thank you Lord”.

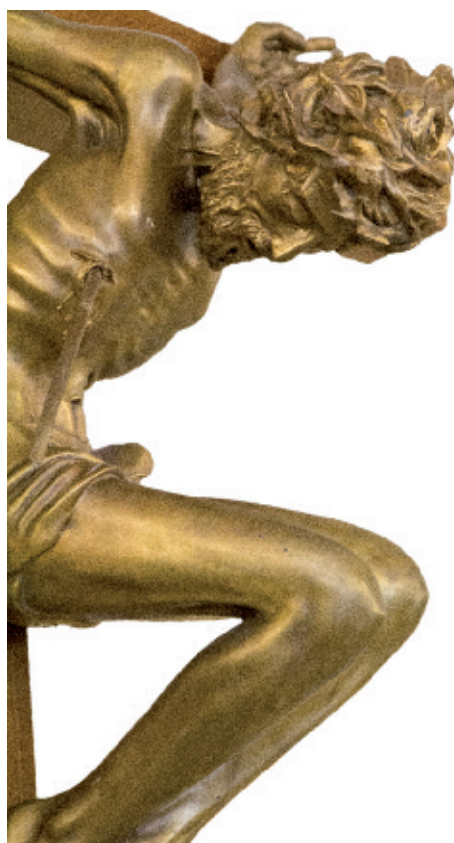
On May 21, 2017, at the Basilica of Saint Rita, Anna Montebruno received the Saint Rita International Recognition Award for pardoning her daughter's killer and for her spirit in search of dialogue and service to her neighbour.

# «My son has gone to the Father, but I too will reach him»

Luciana Mosciatti, Woman of Rita 2017, interviewed by Valentina Fabbri

**W**hat is your relationship with faith and with Saint Rita? Sincerely, I have a relationship with Jesus Christ in the sense that Jesus entered my life after my son's misfortune ... it was with the support of my priest of then that I began to read the Gospel. One day, I was reading the passage of the Gospel of John's which says "I am not leaving you, I am going to prepare a place for you, where I will go" (the exact verses are in John 14, 1-3, ed.) ... that triggered something inside me that made me think. My son may have gone before me to the Father, but I too will reach him, and that's where my faith started, sincerely. It started exactly like that. I am devoted to Saint Rita, Mother Teresa of Calcutta ... but the real ... my .. who I invoke most is Jesus Christ, I am being sincere. But I also have a good relationship with Saint Rita. So much so that once a year I, my daughter Marina and my husband Domenico, go to the Rock (at Roccaporena, Rita's birthplace, ed.), and we say a prayer together, every year. I don't know why you have chosen me, maybe because I have always said that I have forgiven the person who caused the accident.

**In fact, you forgave the young man who, in September 2000, caused the car accident in which your son Luca died, along with three other friends. Why did you do it?** I forgave to be in peace with myself. The Lord has managed to give me so much peace, which I would like to give to everyone because it's great to have peace inside, it's something that makes you feel really good. And I would like to be able to give it



to the others that I always see restless. I see so much restlessness around. You can feel it among people. I would like to gift that peace I have. I gained it above all by forgiving. I said to myself: "He (the person who caused the accident) is also a young man, he can also make a mistake". Jesus forgave. Even though I have never had anything from him, a letter. In my heart I forgave him and I love him as my son.

**Was the family important for you at that time?** Yes, a lot. I have to say that since I

was little I have liked the idea of family. Having children. I've always had a predisposition for the family. I went to teacher training college, I met my husband who was doing geometry, we fell in love among the college benches. We created a family very early, Luca came when I was 19, I was very young ... What I have with my husband Domenico is the story of a couple, we're always together. Without him I would be nobody and he would be nobody without me. Our love transforms and becomes fuller and more complete. More solid.

**In addition to forgiveness, I would like to highlight the second important link with Saint Rita - normality, simplicity. Do you find yourself reflected in this?** Yes. Like me, Saint

Rita also liked the family, children, and she too was a lover of simplicity. She forgave the person who killed her husband, she forgave and brought peace into the home.

**Would you like to leave a message for the readers of the Saint Rita Magazine?**

That you have to live life with simplicity and love ... Love ... If someone loves it is reciprocated. You have to open up the heart to others. If you give, you receive much more. Now, I'm engaged with family ministry and I tell young people that when the passion finishes you must always work for love to continue. That even in negative things there is always something positive, because if you take something away, the Lord always gives you something back. ■

## SAINT RITA INTERNAZIONALE RECOGNITION AWARD

### LUCIANA MOSCIATTI

She is active in the Parish of St. John in Baiano di Spoleto (Perugia). Married to Domenico Moretti for 39 years. A normal family, taken up with ordinary routines, and two children: Luca, born in 1979, and Marina, born in 1988. Believers, but not practising. In September 2000, following a car crash caused by a young man, her son Luca was killed, along with three other friends who were in the car with him. In that moment, Luciana's family plunge into despair: anger and anguish take over. Together with her husband, Luciana closes herself off by raising a wall; emptied of every feeling, but conscious that she must go forward especially because of the presence of Marina, to be raised with all the love she needs. The "conversion" of Luciana and Domenico is the result of the support of the then parish priest of Baiano, Fr. Renzo Persiani, now parish priest of Cascia, who brings them close to the Word of God.

Following the road accident that caused the deaths of the four young men, three from Baiano (Luca, Federico, Alessandro) and one from Pompagnano (Daniele), the "Genitori con i figli in cielo" ("Parents with Children in Heaven") group was set up. Invited to join, Luciana and Domenico, have become actively involved. This path of conversion path has helped them to interpret the tragic experience of the death of their son in a different light: the pain and the void left by Luca's physical absence have been attenuated by his live presence in the hearts, together with the hope that one day they will meet up again. Through faith, Luciana and her husband Domenico have managed to forgive the young man who caused their son's accident. They are now engaged in parish, in catechesis, and in the activities of the oratory and, at diocesan level, in family ministry.

On May 21, 2017, at the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia, Luciana Mosciatti received the Saint Rita International Recognition for pardoning the young man who caused the death of her son in a car accident and for her example of Christian life in the family and in the parish community.

# FEAST OF SAINT RITA 2017

## HERE IS WHAT HAPPENED IN CASCIA

### MAY 20

**Hall of Peace, 21:00: Presentation of the Saint Rita International Recognition Award 2017.** Francesca Fialdini, anchorwoman of Unomattina (Rai Uno), presents the women of Rita to the community: women whose life is close in example to that of the saint of Cascia. This year, the recognition is given to: **Anna Montebruno** from San Benedetto del Tronto (Ascoli Piceno), for pardoning the man who, in 1990, ran into and killed her 15-year-old daughter Maria Natali, and for her spirit in search of dialogue and service to others; **Antonella Leardi** from Naples, for pardoning the killer of her son Ciro Esposito, who died in 2014 during clashes that preceded the Coppa Italia final in Rome, and for helping to spread the seeds of peace and dialogue among young people through the "Ciro Vive" association; **Federica Lisi** from Ravenna, wife, mother and widow, who, after losing her husband, the well-known volleyball player Vigor Bovolenta, who died in 2012 during a game, picked herself up with tenacity for her 5 sons, being reborn in love for the family and for life; **Luciana Mosciatti** from Baiano di Spoleto (Perugia), who receives the International Recognition Saint Rita for pardoning the young man who caused the death of her son in a road accident and for her example of Christian life in the family and in the parish community.

### MAY 21

#### **Basilica of Saint Rita**

**16:30 - Solemn Eucharistic Celebration of the Augustinian Family**, presided over by Father Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Augustinian Order.

**17:30 - Handing over of the Saint Rita In-**

**ternational Recognition Award 2017.** Father Moral hands over the parchment symbol of the prestigious recognition to the women of Rita chosen for this year's award.

**6:30 pm - Solemn Celebration of the Transit of Saint Rita.**

#### **Square of the Basilica of Saint Rita**

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

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

### MAY 22

#### **SOLENNITY OF SAINT RITA OF CASCIA**

##### **Hall of Peace**

**5:00 am - start of Holy Masses.** The masses will also be celebrated at 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00.

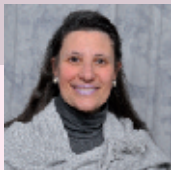
##### **Square of the Basilica of Saint Rita**

**10:00 am - Arrival of the Historical Parade** in 15th century costumes and of the **Procession** bearing the statue of Saint Rita. Departing at 8:30 from Roccaporena, the birthplace of Rita, the two processions come together at the foot of Cascia (9:30).

**11:00 pm - Solemn Pontifical Mass** presided over by Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo, followed by the **Supplication** to Saint Rita and the **Blessing of the Roses** (12:30)

##### **Basilica of Saint Rita**

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



## CRISTINA'S FOREWORD

Cristina Siccardi, biographer and historian of the Church

# A bunch of newsletters and a dozen “pastries”

One of the instruments that Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce used to build the citadel of Saint Rita in Cascia was the “From the Bees to the Roses” newsletter, through which she made the important projects of the monastery of the Augustinian nuns known throughout Italy and abroad, first of all promotion of devotion to Saint Rita. The inauguration of the publication took place in an amusing way. There was a certain Nino Angelini in Cascia, the child Mother Teresa Fasce sustained maternally in the Augustinian religious vocation (he would become Father Atanasio). One morning in May 1923 she asked him to do something for her: before going to school he had to go to the Post Office to deliver some copies of the newsletter. So, turning the convent wheel of the cloistered monastery, Nino picked up a bunch of printed newsletters, a sheet with some addresses and a dozen “pastries”, his favourite titbit ... That morning the adventure of the Ritian periodical, which carried the date of May 22, was launched. Today, with its hundreds of thousands of copies, the “From the Bees to the Rose” magazine reaches the five continents, continuing to be the most effective medium - also available online ([www.santaritadacascia.org/dalleapiallero](http://www.santaritadacascia.org/dalleapiallero)) - for informing, update, remembering. All you have to do is subscribe! This is the thanks that the first issue carried and still remains valid: *“To all those people who, from different parts of Italy and abroad, have responded to our circular, sending offerings and alms for the purpose of starting this newsletter, go the cordial thanks of the Reverend Augustinian Monks of the Sanctuary of Cascia, who will pray for all benefactors that they may always experience a special protection of Saint Rita”.*



### DID KNOW THAT...

The “From the Bees to the Roses” Magazine of Saint Rita of Cascia is so called because Mother Fasce wanted the title to encompass the entire life of Saint Rita: from her first miracle, that of bees entering and leaving her mouth a few days after birth, to the last miracle a few days before rising into heaven, that of the rose flowering under the snow that a relative had brought her, together with two figs, to fulfil her last wish.

# From The Bees to the Roses: 94 Years of History of Rita

Prepared by the Sisters

**T**he history of "From the Bees to the Roses" begins in May 1923, marking a point of no return in the life of Cascia and its inhabitants. For the town of Saint Rita, the 1920s and 1930s of the last century were among the most important moments.

How was Cascia 94 years ago? How was the Monastery and the church at that time?

Great devotion to Saint Rita begins during the First World War, affirming itself enormously in the following period. At that time, Cascia, is a hidden and unknown village more than a town. No one would come by chance, and religious tourism does not yet exist. Even today, you have to come to Cascia - wonderfully nestled in the Valnerina valley - on purpose.

In the wake of the war, territorial resources are the only wealth of the population. The Magazine of Saint Rita of Cascia sees the light at this time and leaves its trace in the transition from a peasant civilisation to the modern civilisation of tourism. Saint Rita and Cascia become part of the same vital body. Saint Rita is Cascia and Cascia is Saint Rita. Two souls, two worlds united in the creation of the new town of hope which is soon to have, in the collective



The cover of No. 1 of From the Bees to the Roses (May 1923)

Number 1 comes out with a print run of 200 copies, each consisting of 8 pages

## Ai buoni e cari devoti di S. Rita

*Eccomi a Voi, che tanto mi avete desiderato ed aspettato. Lo sapete, vengo dalla classica terra dell'Umbria, e propriamente dalla graziosa Cittadina, che tutta candida si adagia a ridosso di un monte e si chiama Cascia. Là dorme da quattro secoli e mezzo la cara salma di S. Rita Agostiniana, la Santa degl'Impossibili, l'Avvocata de' Casi disperati.*

*Prima di venire a Voi sono stato deposto sopra la sua bell'Urna, e sono ancora olezzante di quel soave odore, che emana da quel sacro Corpo.*

*Vengo a diffonderlo nelle vostre case, fra le vostre famiglie, insieme alla benedizione della buona Santa.*

*Quante cose dovrò narrarvi di Lei, del suo Santuario, dove visse per quarant'anni, e fin dalla sua morte continua ininterrotta la serie de' prodigi e delle grazie le più segnalate.*

*Vi darò conto di queste; vi darò le notizie de' suoi mille affari sparsi per tutto il mondo, ognuno de' quali ha una lunga storia di belle cose da raccontare.*

*Non vi annoierò con articoloni lunghi; nè vi farò dormire con cose scipite, nè sbadigliare con descrizioni noiose.*

*Accetterò quanto voi, cari Abbonati, mi farete sapere in rapporto a grazie e favori ricevuti da S. Rita, e quanto concerne il culto di Lei.*

*Per ora vengo a Voi in veste umile e solo in otto pagine, spero con l'aiuto della mia celeste Patrona di perfezionarmi di giorno in giorno, e così essere più accetto e ben voluto da Voi.*

*S. Rita, che mi benedice insieme a Voi, mi faccia prospero di vita perchè a maggior gloria di Dio, ad onore di Lei, possa recare frutti di salute eterna in mezzo al popolo cristiano.*

### IL BOLLETTINO.

imagination, the facade of the Basilica entitled to the saint of the impossible cases as its symbol.

It can be said that, consecrated as a church in 1947 and becoming a basilica in 1955, today the Basilica of Saint Rita is the symbol of this union and the town in the world.

But let's go back to 1923. "From the Bees to the Roses" was born as a religious newsletter by wish of Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce, who relies on the indispensable collaboration of Father Possidio Marabottini for this great project of spreading devotion to Saint Rita.

Number 1 comes out with a print run of 200 copies, each consisting of 8 pages. Today, the Maga-

zine of Saint Rita of Cascia has reached 28 pages with a print run of hundreds of thousands of copies, sent to every corner of the world in Italian, English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and German. Over the course of the years, both language and format have undergone various adaptations until reaching that of the present day, trying to reach the goal of proposing a product that is closer to our times.

From the very beginning, the pages of "From the Bees to the Roses" carried photos of the first pilgrimages and the first invitations to come on pilgrimage to the hill of hope, to visit these still unknown Umbrian landscapes. In this way, Cascia

gradually becomes the town of the spirit. The same 8 pages bring into homes images of the new temple desired by the faithful from all over the world, the Basilica that today houses the incorrupt body of our beloved Heavenly Patron Saint. Cascia is transformed into a Ritian-Augustinian town and sees many important works blossom around the Sanctuary: the hospital, Pilgrim's House (today the Hotel delle Rose), the Beehive of Saint Rita where we house the young Little Bees from families in difficulty and the little Wild Flowers, the children from the area who carry out after-school activities here and receive all the other daytime services we can make provide.

## After 94 years the newsletter is now a real magazine

Browsing through the issues of those early years, the history of the customs of Italy, or the mentality of different periods, the life of a people, pass before our eyes. And the small town of Cascia looks on, surprised, as the first pilgrims become a river of people, an unstoppable flow that last year, before the earthquakes of 2016, numbered 1.2 million devotees.

The first Augustinian to welcome and guide pilgrims was Father Camillo Butti. He was on his own and at the time that was enough. We called him Father "Romito" because he practically led the life of a hermit. It seems strange to think about him



today, seeing Cascia so rich in people. Today, the Augustinian community is made up of six fathers and a friar, engaged in services for pilgrims and supported by lay persons.

The initial management of the “newsletter” was homemade, it had something familiar about it. The mentality of the times, the lack of means, the availability of printers

and the few subscribers did not allow a “more advanced” periodical. In this regard, the time when, in order to avoid expenses, we nuns took care of thinking about dispatching during the free hours of recreation should be remembered. Even the young Little Bees also helped us! We gathered in the common room and together we worked until the small hours so that dispatching would take place regularly. After 94 years, the newsletter is now a real magazine and has grown enormously. Today, it is no longer we nuns who have to think about dispatching and the contribution of lay persons to content has become an anchor point. “From the Bees to the Roses” finds itself at ease in the midst of the great world of printed paper, in the vast family of famous newspapers, reviews and magazines, seeking to understand the civilisation of advertising and mass media which carry the thousand voices of the world and the spark of millions of images. It is a free voice. The life of the magazine depends on the offerings of millions of devotees. It has no sponsorship by small or large companies. Because a free voice knows no diaspora. All lands are a homeland. All homelands are an earth. The Far East, with Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, India; the Middle East, with Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt; Eastern Europe and Russia (part of the French edition), Africa, the Americas, Australia. The world looks at Cascia and pilgrims come to their sanctuary from all nations. ■

## Grace received

*I want to make known a grace received from Saint Rita and Blessed Teresa Fasce. This summer, my father-in-law had two heart attacks and seriously risked dying. Twice the doctors had given us no hope but, “miraculously”, he recovered and now, with patience, he has returned to his, let’s say, quite normal life. Of course, he is always under control, but he is back to life, to enjoying his family and to smiling. I say thanks to Saint Rita and the Blessed Fasce, because we invoked them a lot, asking them for support, help, for my father-in-law and for all of us who were experiencing a really difficult and trying time. Both me and my husband and our two wonderful boys of 18 and 12 years prayed with faith and perseverance, with sincere love and affection, to Saint Rita, who on other occasions has shown herself to be close to us ... Saint of desperate cases ... I remember my grandmother to whom I owe the faith towards this dear Saint ... She often repeated: “Never forget Saint Rita, even when I’m no longer here ... She is the saint of difficult cases, she will always be able to give you signs of hope and she will never abandon you”. Holy words! For the first time, I also turned my prayers to the figure of Blessed Teresa Fasce and I let myself be led by her person, her life and her love for Saint Rita, and I was listened to, I felt her close like a mother ... As a family we are also very close to the figure of Saint Francis of Assisi ... We love Umbria in a special way, it is a land that has been able to welcome extraordinary and holy people, examples of altruism, love, loyalty and forgiveness ... When we come to Assisi, we never fail to come to Cascia and Roccaporena which we love in a special way, and each time I don’t want to leave ... I really feel inside me a sincere affection towards Saint Rita and above all I feel that she loves us very much ... For me, praying is having an extra gear, a special petrol, for the engine of my life, and I do not pray for having something in return, I pray because I know she will never leave me alone, and because her example as a woman always helps me find the right way to solve situations of life that are sometimes difficult.*

# In Cascia, solidarity has also come from the sea

## The Basilica is ready for the Feast of Saint Rita, thanks to MSC Cruises

**W**ork continued unabated at the Saint Rita Sanctuary in Cascia to repair the damage caused by the earthquakes of 2016 and thus restore normality to the entire town, whose economy is based on welcoming pilgrims.

From the outset, the goal was to finish work on the Basilica in time for the great

Feast of Saint Rita on May 22, when the Augustinian nuns and the fathers, along with the municipality and all inhabitants of Cascia, welcomed the thousands of pilgrims who attended the celebrations from Saturday 20 to Monday 22.

It is not long until work is due to end but the greatest part has been done. One



## *So many people offered their help*

hope was to repair the home of Saint Rita for the Ritian celebrations, which was made possible thanks to the precious support of so many benefactors, in particular MSC Cruises, the cruise company founded by Gianluigi Aponte.

The Basilica of Saint Rita, home for millions of devotees who come to the hill of hope from all over the world, did not suffer structural damage but economically significant damage to both the inside and outside the building where the incorrupt body of the saint is preserved.

“Internal damage to the painted surfaces of the vault arches inside the Basilica of Saint Rita was significant,” explains



the works director, engineer Tito Castellucci, “particularly regarding the drum of the dome”. Just a few weeks before the seismic events of 2016, culminating in



*We feel the need to thank those who helped to repair the damage caused by the earthquake, to all those who expressed their solidarity. I feel all this is incredible providence and I thank God. It is beautiful to think that Divine Providence also passes by way of the sea, through MSC Cruises. I thank those people who have made it possible to return to the Basilica of Saint Rita as quickly as possible.*

*Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis, Mother Prioress of the Monastery of Saint Rita*



*It is wonderful to know that MSC Cruises has given us the opportunity to intensify works to repair the damage caused by the earthquake to the Basilica of Saint Rita. The second wonder is knowing that the necessary works have been done very quickly.*

*Father Bernardino Pinciaroli, Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita*



the major earthquake of October 30, a restoration cycle had been completed. In practice, work had to start all over again.

“Outside the Basilica, however, the element most damaged by the seismic events was the dome, at the level of linings,” Castellucci continues. Part of the



scaffolding was already mounted for ordinary maintenance work, while the second block of scaffolding was put up by a team of volunteers from various parts of Italy who worked non-stop in the days following the earthquake.

So many people offered their help for restoring the home of Saint Rita home, although it would have been impossible to speed up the work without the intervention of MSC Cruises. In fact, the cruise company generously decided to finance the costs of interior and exterior work at the Basilica, thus making it possible to realise the dream of having everything ready for the big feast of May 22. ■



edited by Marta Ferraro

# The first PPU twinning is Sicilian

A great novelty in the life of the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita of Cascia has come from the young PPU group of Menfi (Agrigento). The Sicilian group has come up with the first twinning between PPUs. Taking as the starting point the fact that both Menfi and Caltabellotta

name of the saint on February 11. The event - which follows in the footsteps of the traditional Twinning of Peace and Faith that the civil and religious authorities of Cascia realise every year with another Italian or foreign town where devotion to Saint Rita is particularly felt - was a significant moment of

Union of Saint Rita of Cascia. "A unique and unforgettable experience" is how organiser Maria Raia defined the event.

The devotees of Saint Rita in Menfi joined the PUP only in April, but have already made great strides in the devotion to the holy miracle worker. "Initially, for a variety of reasons, I was very sceptical," says Raia. "Today, I must say that I am very pleased with the journey undertaken, both as an individual and as a community. The Pious Union helps us a great deal in devotion which, in its deepest meaning, means imitation of the attitudes of one saint rather than another".

In the town of Menfi, the PPU came about by chance. Devotion to Saint Rita was already very much felt by the community, as is generally the case throughout Sicily, where love for Saint Rita has roots and traditions that are very ancient and strong; this devotion already existed prior to arrival of the prayer group devoted to the saint of Cascia. Before the PPU, it was customary for devotees of Rita in Menfi to gather in the parish of the Most Holy Con-



The PPP group from Menfi (Agrigento).

*In April, the number of members was eight, today there are forty-four*

worship a statue of Saint Rita made by the same artist, the two Agrigento communities decided to unite with a fraternal twinning in the

prayer and coming together for two groups committed to living the same values and purposes implicit in participation in the Primary Pious



ment, organise moments of community prayer, in which not only salient episodes of the life of Saint Rita are illustrated, but also those of other Augustinian saints, in order to understand Ritian spirituality more thoroughly and completely.

The strongest experience in the brief history of Menfi's PPU was the collection of essential goods for the earthquake victims of Cascia: "Although for a sad reason," says Raia, "for us it was a

## *The strongest experience for Cascia's earthquake victims*

solation, better known in the town as the Church of Purgatory, to recite the Fifteen Thursdays of Saint Rita. This tradition continued until the regional head of the PPU in Sicily, Lilla Buggemi, became aware of it and invited the group to join the great family of the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita of Cascia.

After a long period of deciding and only after the arrival of new parish priest Don Giuseppe Colli, the devotees



decided to accept the invitation. In April, when they were affiliated officially to the prayer group of the Cascia monastery, the number of members was eight, today there are forty-four. The result is certainly also due to the engagement and constant presence of the local head and parish priest who, with dedication and commit-

ment, organise moments of community prayer, in which not only salient episodes of the life of Saint Rita are illustrated, but also those of other Augustinian saints, in order to understand Ritian spirituality more thoroughly and completely. The strongest experience in the brief history of Menfi's PPU was the collection of essential goods for the earthquake victims of Cascia: "Although for a sad reason," says Raia, "for us it was a great opportunity to feel ourselves as a group. We met in the parish hall to gather together things that could serve the earthquake victims and it was a good opportunity to get to know each other and become really a cohesive and united group. Friendly relationships have been created that go beyond commitments in the parish".

### JOIN THE PPU

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

# Monica, Icon of the Church of God

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

**T**he Christian world dedicates the month of May to the Mother of the Lord; in the same month, in the Marian

context, the Augustinian family promotes two saints much loved by the faith of believers: Monica, mother of Augustine on May 4 (with

the liturgical reform of Vatican II, moved to August 27 to bring her close to her Augustinian son, celebrated on August 28); Rita of Cascia, the saint of roses, a symbol of the life of every creature that has the scent of its petals as well as the thorns hidden among the leaves along the branch. Such celebrations naturally lead to rethinking the figure of women in the Christian world as in the Church's proposal in today's society.

Let us look briefly at Monica, in the icon outlined in the Confessions by her son Augustine, especially in book IX, which narrates the epilogue with her death in Ostia on her way back to the paternal home in Tagaste (today Souk-Aras in Algeria). Describing in particular her maternity towards him, beyond motherly affection, Augustine writes above all of her maternity as a Christian believer who transmits to her son faith and love for Jesus our Saviour. In this interpretation of his mother,

***Monica was helped in the faith by her old housemaid***



## *She was a woman with strong hope in the paternal heart of God*

Augustine makes Monica the icon of the Church.

In fact, Monica is the woman who is conscious of having received the gift of faith in her family, then growing in the ecclesiastical community. However, in her family she is helped in faith not so much by her mother, but by her old housemaid who educated her master's children "with holy

### *Monica becomes the switchboard of faith, an icon for every woman*

severity, with pity and sobriety of actions" (Confessions IX, 8, 17- 18). Monica had a husband who was a non-believer and a child, Augustine, who, even if his studies were aimed at making it to the top in society, and for this reason abandoned Africa to go to Italy, and while he preserved the faith suckled at his mother's breast, had huge lapses that caused Monica to suffer. She helped him in every way, also seeking help from some bishops, but above all she prayed crying. Writing of his mother's suffering in the Confessions, her son says that she suffered the pain of childbirth whenever she saw

him move away from the faith of the Catholic Church (Conf. IX, 9, 22). With her chaste heart, in fact, Monica gave birth to the eternal salvation of her carnal son (Conf. I, 11,17). She was a woman with strong hope in the paternal heart of God, to which she remained attached throughout her entire life. Like every mother, she wanted to have her son near her, and on the departure of her son from Carthage to Rome, in tears she pleaded God to prevent the journey. But Augustine left, first reaching Rome, then Milan, where Monica joined him, living with her son the miracle of his baptism received from St. Ambrose (then bishop of Milan) on the night of Easter on April 24, 397. Narrating his registration in Milan among those to be baptised at the beginning of Lent, Augustine creates the intertwining between two mothers, his mother and the Church, generating it to faith: in transmitting faith to a new child (Augustine), the Church is helped by Monica who becomes the icon of the generative maternity of the Church. In the Confessions, Monica, humble daughter of the people, becomes the switchboard of faith. A woman with strong hope, a woman of faith, an icon for every woman who, through her children, sows the hope of always being able to return to God's embrace, which gathers all the good of the world. ■

## SMILING AT LIFE

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

1



2



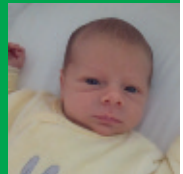
3



4



5



6



1. Davide Lamberti (Milan - Italy)
2. Filippo Biagetti (Castelverde di Roma RM - Italy)
3. Gioia Rita Santoro (Cerniola FG - Italy)
4. Giulia Gennuso (Avola SR - Italy)
5. Lucia Margherita Rome (Villorba TV - Italy)
6. Wetzel (France)

# Sr. Maria Rosa: «Each one of us is unique»

Let us get to know the new  
Prioress of the Monastery of Saint Rita better

*On February 15, 2017, one minute after 11:00, the bells of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia rang out joyfully to announce to the whole town that the new Mother Superior had been elected: Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis had become Mother Prioress of the Community of the Monastery of Saint Rita. Born in Udine in 1958, Maria Rosa Bernardinis is the seventh of eight children. For more than thirty years, she has lived her contemplative life as a nun in the monastery where Saint Rita spent 40 years of her existence until her death in 1457. In the last twelve years, Mother Maria Rosa has served as Vicaress to outgoing Abbess Mother M. Natalina Todeschini at the head of the community comprising 28 cloistered nuns. The two women and Augustinian nuns have now switched roles: in fact, Sister Natalina has been elected Vicaress of the new Prioress.*

**S**ister Maria Rosa, why did you choose the cloistered life and how was your life before that? Until the age of 18, I wanted to form a family and therefore it was obvious for me to go in that direction. It is true that from a very early age I was already seeking moments of meditation, a space for me in a meadow where you could see the mountains, on the outskirts ... I liked praying. My parish priest advised me to take a vocational course to understand my path better. During the course I



Sr. Maria Rosaria Bernardinis.

***St. Augustine says: what you have discovered about God, you must transmit to others***

understood something important: God entrusts a task to each one of us - and to no one else - and this means that for the Lord, each one of us is unique. So if you don't accept this, don't adhere to it, that space that was for you is not taken by anyone. That concept made me ask: what role do I have? And if the Lord asks me for something more?

## God entrusts a task to each one of us

**How does a "nun of Saint Rita" live?** We express the charism of St. Augustine, as Rita did before us, in seeking God through liturgical prayer, especially in the Eucharistic celebration. We have various moments of community prayer. The community is the expression of what animates the individual nun, becoming the unity of hearts in liturgy. Living unity in the community: this is the

### THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

*To you, Lord, we humbly recommend these our dead because, as in their mortal life they have always been loved by you of immense love, so now, freed from all evil, may they enter by Your grace into eternal rest. Take them into your Paradise, where there is no more grief, no pain, no tears, but peace and joy with your Son and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Adriana Marigo (Brugherio MB - Italy)  
Angela Montera (Corigliano Calabro CS - Italy)  
Domenica Versace (Cellatica BS - Italy)  
Elena Caticchio (Rome - Italy)  
Gabriele De Carolis (Cascia PG - Italy)  
Giuditta De Toni Della Schiava (Manzano UD - Italy)

Giuseppina Federici (Rome - Italy)  
Hans Rohrer (Frauenfeld - Switzerland)  
Jean Lucien Kelibi (Germany)  
Jeanne Berthelemy (Woippy - France)  
Leonardo Murari (Rome - Italy)  
Liana Gentile (Piedimonte Matese CE - Italy)  
Lina Cacciatore (Canicatti AG - Italy)  
Paolo Ianaro (Capracotta IS - Italy)

Augustinian charism. Being a nun of contemplative life in a reality such as our Sanctuary in Cascia, which welcomes more than a million pilgrims every year, may seem like a paradox, but St. Augustine says: *What you have discovered about God, you must transmit to others*. So, we communicate to pilgrims what we receive in prayer.

**What do you tell those who comes here to ask for listening?** Trust the Lord, just this. And the rest happens by itself. In front of your cross, you feel a dead person, but if you accept your cross you can resuscitate. Like Saint Rita did. Her experience was not fixed on Friday, or on Saturday, but passed on to resurrection. When we talk about suffering, we must understand that the Church does not tell us to be masochists. The Church is resurrection. This is the message that the Pope is re-launching. There are people who live in extremely difficult situations. The only thing I can do as a nun is to make that situation my responsibility, understanding it and praying to the Lord. We all try to make it clear to those in front of us that they are not alone.

## We all try to make it clear to those in front of us that they are not alone

**Mother, before you "Abbess" was the term used to indicate the Mother Superior of the Monastery of Saint Rita. But you asked for a step forward.** Yes, that's right. In continuity with the previous Mother Superior, in whose tracks I started and am continuing my mandate, I have chosen to be called Prioress instead of Abbess. This is because the meaning of "Prioress" best describes the mission I have before me: the Prioress is the first among peers, the first to give an example in service. This is a great responsibility that my sisters have honoured me with and which, with the prayer of all devotees for me, I will try to accomplish every day of my mandate.

# Franceschina, continue to make yourself felt from Heaven

In memory of  
Sister Maria Francesca  
Leontina Jurescia

by Sister M. Imelde Giovanna Sicari,  
Monastery of Saint Rita

**O**n February 17, the Lord came to visit us again to take our dear Sister Maria Francesca into the halls of heaven after a long life spent in constant search of the face of her Bridegroom and Lord, Jesus.

Let us summarise the life of our Maria Francesca with some snapshots by someone who remembers her, from the early years of her novitiate and period of training as a young woman with acute intelligence and healthy optimism, typical of the people of Molise. She was born in Tavenna (in the province of Campobasso) in 1925. Ever since she was a child, she had been very tried by her life, and even though her growth had stopped by a serious handicap caused by a violent accident in her family, Maria Francesca grew up in a Franciscan institute where she developed her intelligence and focused on the gifts the Lord had given her. After completing her studies and obtaining her diploma, she began to develop the idea of consecrating her life to the Lord, relying on the guidance of an excellent spiritual father who helped her seek entry to the Monastery of Saint Rita. We always remember her as active and engaged in fulfilling the various tasks that obedience imposed on her: correspondence, embroidery, and assisting the “little ones” in the welcoming house of the Beehive of Saint Rita, which helped her become a child and excellent educator.



Sister Maria Francesca.

She was fond of reading spiritual books that helped shape her soul in full adherence to the Will of God. When Maria Francesca held the embroidery frame in her hand, she knew how to make bunches of violets and other endless flowers blossom pieces of linen which were masterpieces. Then an eye disease (keratoconus) stopped her from dedicating herself to this, but she was always the soul of our recreation. When the disease confined her to bed, she was happy when we went to visit her and she expressed her affection for us with a smile and asking for a kiss. Sometimes, passing by her room, she could be heard singing, almost stuttering ... songs to the Virgin Mary or Child Jesus, songs that she knew well because, having a good voice, she had been part of the community choir in the years of her youth.

From heaven, Franceschina - as we sometimes called her - continue to make your presence felt among us and obtain for us give us the gift of so many beautiful vocations that will make up for your absence. ■

*I met her in the Monastery in 1951 and although there was an age difference of 13 years between me and her, we lived as equals in terms of the intimacies and experiences we communicated to each other as true sisters. Sister Maria Francesca Leontina Iurescia was very exuberant, not only from the physical point of view, but in all the trials of life she knew how to infuse optimism and joy in herself and in me. She had a prayerful attitude that was always fresh and without the slightest hint of being someone who was sad. She had told me about a child with a tumour who played down her mother's despair, telling her: "Mum, don't make a tragedy out of it". She was that child, every time she saw me worried about her serious illnesses and, above all, the series of interventions she had to endure in her long existence.*

*We had a great spiritual director in the years of our training - Father Stanislao Casali: it was not difficult for us to transmute everything his guidance passed on to us into filial abandonment to God the Father. And what serene joy I felt on hearing from a sister the dream in the night after the death of sister Maria Francesca: God the Father, dressed in white, with little Francesca calling out Daddy! And the Father clutching her in his arms.*

*Dear Francesca, now that you are in the Bosom of the Father pray for all of us, pilgrims in time. Goodbye dearest Checchina. Your little sister,*

*Sister Maria Cecilia Genati OSA*

## Get up, come and don't be afraid

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

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

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It is our  
task to let  
them grow  
serenely.



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

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

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