

NO. 4 JUL-AUG 2019

BIMONTHLY
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
MONASTERY
OF SAINT RITA
OF CASCIA

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine
of Saint Rita of Cascia

Poste Italiane S.p.A. - Postal subscription - Leg. Decree 3553/2003 (subsequently Law 4/2004) Art. 1, Paragraph 1, April 2004 - P.006/2012

FEAST OF SAINT RITA

*Report on the most important solemnity
for devotees of Rita worldwide*



SUMMARY

- 3 *Editorial*
Saint Rita chose me
- 4 *Feast of Saint Rita 2019*
May 22: a world feast
**We are the branches of the vine,
which is Christ**
We need humanity
Be holy, forgive, learn from the cross
- 18 *Augustinians*
Bill Atkinson
- 20 *Stories from the Sanctuary*
The Papal Guards visit Saint Rita
- 22 *Saint Rita Foundation*
Open doors at the Beehive
- 24 *Primary Pious Union*
Holiness is young

SUPPORT FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

To continue spreading the hope of Rita's message, help us to support "From the Bees to the Roses", the voice of Saint Rita worldwide. Even just a small donation through:

• **Bank:**

IBAN IT14T0311139240000000001781
BIC/SWIFT: BLOPIT22

• **Post Office:**

postal a/c 5058 - payable to the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia specifying "Subscription".
Thank you for what are able to do!

MESSAGE FOR BENEFACTORS

To all those who wish to make an offer to the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia Monastery: please do not put money in envelopes because, unfortunately, they often reach their destination opened and with their contents missing. To be sure that your offer reaches the Monastery of Saint Rita, we suggest you use safe channels (alongside: post office, bank and credit card). Thank you so much.

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

Bimonthly of the Augustinian
Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia
No. 4 July-August 2019



Auth. Court of Spoleto No. 9 of 26.06.1954. ROC Registry No. 29665
Italian edition: Year XCVI. English edition: Year LVIII.
French edition: Year LVII. Spanish edition: Year XLVII.
German edition: Year XLVII. Portuguese edition: Year VI.

On the cover: Feast of Santa Rita in Cascia on May 22. Photo by Giovanni Galardini.

Executive Director
Pasquale Grossi

Editorial Committee
Sr. M. Giacomina Stuari (editorial director)
Monica Guarriello (editor-in-chief)
Fr. Bernardino Pinciaroli, Fr. Giuseppe Caruso, Roger Bergonzoli

Registered office
Monastery of Saint Rita, viale Santa Rita 13 - 06043 Cascia (PG)
tel. + 39 0743 76221 - fax + 39 0743 76786

Operational headquarters
Via Francesco Massi 12/D - 00152 Rome
tel. + 39 06 39674099 - fax + 39 06 39637399
www.santaritadacascia.org/dalleapiallerose
redazione@santaritadacascia.org

With thanks to
Sr. Maria Rosa Bernardinis, Sr. M. Natalina Todeschini, Alessia Nicoletti, Marta Ferraro, Alessandra Paoloni, Augustinian General Postulation

Photos
Giovanni Galardini, Massimo Chiappini, Stefano Dal Pozzolo, Lamberto Manni

Graphic design and layout
Bruno Apostoli graphic designer - www.brunoapostoli.it



monastero@santaritadacascia.org
www.santaritadacascia.org

If you wish to make an offer to the Monastery of Saint Rita in Cascia to ask for a subscription, prayers, Masses, for the charitable works of the monastery, for graces received and for devotion, you can do so through:

bank: IBAN IT14T0311139240000000001781
BIC/SWIFT: BLOPIT22

post office: a/c 5058 – payable to Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia to make a postal transfer:
IBAN IT85R076010300000000005058

credit card: www.santaritadacascia.org/donazioni

FOR SWITZERLAND
Post office: a/c 69-8517-0
payable to: Augustinian Monastery of Saint Rita
06043 Cascia PG - Italy
IBAN CH8309000000690085170

FOR GERMANY
Post office: a/c 14421706
Payable to: Superior of the Monastery of Saint Rita
06043 Cascia PG - Italy
IBAN DE11600100700014421706

Finished printing in June 2019 by Litografotodi srl on behalf of Tau Editrice srl, Via Umbria 148, 06059 Todi (PG).



The *From the Bees to the Roses* magazine is printed on paper certified with the FSC mark

Dear friends of Saint Rita, in this issue dedicated to the Feast of our beloved Heavenly Patroness, I joyfully leave the editorial to the words of this touching and complete testimony of devotion. It was sent by Antonella from the province of Cosenza.

"I will always remember the moment I came into contact with Saint Rita. It was 2017 when, after a number of dramatic years (a former violent companion, a serious car accident and an abortion due to medical negligence) I entrusted her with my life amid tears and with my heart devastated. In actual fact, however, I firmly believe that it was not I who elected her as my Guide, but it was Saint Rita herself who chose me. I say this because after the first abortion, which was followed by three surgical procedures due to medical errors, and a second abortion, Saint Rita appeared to me in her simplicity on several occasions. For example, I began finding prayer cards of her everywhere, in my home and at my parents, without any of us knowing where they came from. We even found one from the 1940s, which presumably belonged to my grandmother who has not been with us for over twenty years. She seemed to be telling me that I was not alone and that, in any case, she would have supported me. Thus, with my husband Stanislaus, we began a spiritual journey as a couple. We prayed a lot and finally decided to go to Cascia. Our intention was not so much to ask for the grace of having a child, even though this was our greatest desire, but to embrace "our" saint of impossible cases. On September 16, 2017 we entered the Sanctuary for the first time, and something happened that marked me deeply. While I was praying, I noticed some tourists posting videos on social media showing scenes of them lighting candles or taking selfies. I was so shaken that I burst into tears. In tears, I asked Saint Rita to forgive the lightness of the human being and also forgive me for my mistakes. At that moment I felt a sort of

spiritual fullness, I would dare to say beatitude. I left the church with the certainty that our child would arrive and that, if it was not to be so, we would still have been able to accept the fact. It was the moment in which I also realised that the Lord had already given me a gift ... my husband. Meanwhile, the feeling that Saint Rita was always with us never left us. On every trip or simple move, there was never a time when we didn't have a sign. Then, I discov-

Saint Rita chose me



ered I was pregnant. At every check-up we found letters that came from the Sanctuary of Cascia or prayer cards in the most unlikely places. Our little Rita, our little miracle, was born on July 19, 2018 and even that day my husband found a small prayer card of Saint Rita in the letterbox. Despite a sometimes dramatic and decidedly preterm birth, our daughter made it because she was entrusted to the loving care of Saint Rita well before her conception. And above all now there is Rita with us, small but strong, the daughter we so desired, who will be taught the love of God and the meaning of her glorious name". ■

FROM THE BEES
TO THE ROSES

MAY 22: A WORLD FEAST





by Alessia Nicoletti

May 22, the day of the solemn feast of Saint Rita of Cascia, could be an international holiday on the calendar, because that day more than ever, almost in every house, parish or sanctuary, she who is celebrated like the Mother of an immense family unites the peoples of the world in love and in faith. That day, every year in Cascia is the time when this family of devotees embrace each other and there are no differences of origin or language, social or work background, because we are all children in her eyes, witnesses of a devotion with no limits of time or space. May 22 is a world feast, the feast of a family, the greatest miracle performed by Saint Rita, which has been repeated for over six centuries. A miracle realised also this year, which saw the gathering of the immense people of Rita, those who in thousands lived the feast in her land between Cascia and Roccaporena and those who were unable to be there but participated in communion of faith and joy in their heart.

The celebrations began on May 20 with the "Saint Rita International Recognition Award" which, since 1988, has gone to women living according to the values of Rita. Journalist Gianluigi Basilietti, director of Umbria Radio, presented the testimonies of the four 'Women of Rita': "It was emotional, because the four women made us live four stories of life, of suffering, of dedication to the family and of forgiveness. Four testimonies that touched the many present who listened in silence to the pain and strength of the women, taking example from their dramatic stories: that of a mother, Elisabetta Forlenza from Pavia, who forgives the man who, drunk driving, hit and killed her


almost sixteen-year-old son; that of Fabrizia Felici from Norcia, who spoke of what it means to embrace the cross, she who has been a mother to Rosa Valentina for 28 years, suffering from a rare disease, but that Fabrizia sees as a gift from God; that of Rosanna Serantoni from Cascia, whose life has always been dedicated to the family, her son Giovanni suffering from autism, her husband in the hard years of his illness until his death, and her other son Fabio, who lost full autonomy in a serious accident; finally, that of Nunzia Addolorata Epifania from Matera, known to everyone as Tina, who carries in her heart the suffering of a widow after a marriage of joys and sorrows, which she always defended". The women received the Recognition Award parchment on May 21 from the Vicar General of the Augustinian Order, Father Joseph Lawrence Farrell. On the eve of the big feast, there were two very emotional moments. First, the celebration of the Transit of Saint Rita, presided over by Don Luciano Avenati, Archbishop Vicar for the Vicariate of the Sibillini, during which Rita's passage from life to death is relived.

Marking the moment of the detachment of Saint Rita from earthly life were sweet perfume and light emanating from her body and the sudden sound of bells moved by an-



90 YEARS OF RITIAN LOVE

Carmela Frontino (photo alongside) lives in Dianella, a suburb of the city of Perth, in Western Australia. For many years, Carmela has been a devotee of Rita and has supported the Monastery of Saint Rita with generosity and affection. On the occasion of her 90th birthday, she asked relatives and friends not to give her gifts but to donate what they would have spent to support the works of charity performed by the Augustinian nuns of Cascia. Our heartfelt thanks go to Carmela, her daughter Luisa Durkin, who informed us of the wonderful initiative, and to all those who accepted Carmela's proposal in the name of solidarity and love for Saint Rita.

A photograph of the interior of a church. A large, dark green column stands in the foreground. The ceiling is a dome with a blue background and various religious figures in red and gold robes. The walls are also decorated with frescoes. People are visible in the background, some standing and some sitting.

gelic hands. The latter aroused the people who, led by torchlight in the night, rushed to pay their last respects to Sister Rita, already a saint to everyone. Linked to this image was the second evocative moment lived on May 21, with the commemoration of that spontaneous procession, in a Cascia illuminated by thousands of torches and awaiting the arrival of the Torch of Peace and Forgiveness, symbol of the feast, lit in Matera, the town twinned with Cascia for the celebrations. For the first time this year, local authorities, neighbouring municipalities, citizens and pilgrims gathered in the square to start the torchlight prayer procession for reaching the Basilica. To seal the commemoration, the ar-

We are all children in her eyes

rival of the Torch which, after having crossed part of Umbria in the hands of numerous athletes, lit the votive tripod in the churchyard, illuminating the night before the feast.

Announced at dawn by the sound of bells, May 22 was the day when emotions hit their peak. Starting with the special message from the Augustinian nuns, with the voice of the Prioress Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis: "It is the feast of Saint Rita of Cascia. We would like you who invoke her, to you who feel her as a friend, to you who follow us with your heart, to you who are perhaps meeting us for the first time, to live this day of feasting in communion with us". A wish and a blessing to wish all devotees a great feast, but especially to those who could not be in Cascia. With the aim of cancelling distances, this year for the first time, the Augustinian Communities have not only wanted to broadcast the various moments of the celebrations live through the Augustinian Saint Rita of Cascia YouTube channel, but also to recount the feast, the figure of Rita and give voice to various testimonies, precisely because the real protagonists are the devotees of Rita. With great strength and devotion, the story of the little four-year-old Rita Siciliano, from

the province of Reggio Calabria, whose parents Bruno and Maria Rosaria met each other nine years ago and fell in love in Cascia, where both were on a pilgrimage. Their first daughter, Chanel, was born and then Rita, who shows difficulties with mobility. The difficulty of diagnosis and suffering make the first period very difficult, but the parents do not lose hope, praying to Saint Rita. "When I was pregnant," says the mother, "I received Saint Rita in a dream, who told me 'I'll help you this time'. And so it was, Saint Rita never left us. After years of specialised therapies and prayers, Rita started to move a few months ago and yesterday in Roccaporena she climbed the Scoglio alone. We are witnesses of the greatness and love of Saint Rita". Their story struck Luana Moretto, a family friend, for the first time in Cascia on May 22: "I have known Saint Rita for ten years and come to Cascia every year. For me she's a star in the sky. It is enough to

A devotion with no limits of time or space

have faith and everything is possible".

The feast became alive with the arrival in the churchyard of the Basilica of the procession from Roccaporena and of the historical parade which, in fifteenth-century costumes and with two hundred figures, recalls the important moments of Rita's life. The description of historian Omero Sabatini is very beautiful: "The procession of people already started spontaneously on the night of the death of Saint Rita and did not stop for days and days, so much so as to prevent the nuns from burying her body. Every year the spontaneous procession continued, until the town council regulated it in 1562 and today, out of all the divisions of the municipality, only Roccaporena maintains the tradition. The historical parade, on the other hand, was born in 1957 on the seventh centenary of the death of Saint Rita and over the years has grown, becoming enriched with characters and precious costumes. Today, the procession visually repro-



THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

To you, Lord, we humbly recommend these our dead because, as in their mortal life they have always been loved by You of immense love, so now, freed from all evil, may they enter by Your grace into eternal rest. Amen.

Benilde Maria Nava (Menaggio CO - Italy)

Benito Bellini (Foligno PG - Italy)

Carmela Di Salvo (Ribera AG - Italy)

Caterina Morin (USA)

Elda Laurini Pasin (Rimini - Italy)

Elio Nisi (Rome - Italy)

Emanuela Di Vita (Gela CL - Italy)

Lamberto Marcelli (Perugia - Italy)

Lorena Nuzzote (Casarano LE - Italy)

Pasqua Catalano (Marsala TP - Italy)

Pietro Morelli (Solarolo di Goito MN - Italy)

Rodolfo Marangotto (Rodigo MN - Italy)

Sestilia Montanari Polidori

poses the life of the saint and recounts it, providing a universal reading, understandable by any person. This is its value". The procession and the parade carry with them the relic and the statue of Rita which, along the way, is adorned with thousands of roses, the universal symbol of the saint, who received a rose as a gift from God in the middle of winter just before she died.

The Supplication to Saint Rita, a beautiful prayer of invocation and thanksgiving, preceded the Solemn Pontifical celebrated by Cardinal Angelo Giovanni Becciu, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, supported by Monsignor Renato Boccardo, Archbishop of the Diocese of Spoleto-Norcia, by Monsignor Giovanni Scanavino, by Father Farrell, by the Prior of the Augustinian Province of Italy, Father Luciano De Michieli and by the Rector of the Basilica of Cascia, Father Bernardino Pinciaroli, together with the Augustinian priests and those of the diocese. To close the feast, the emotional blessing of the roses, which coloured the entire avenue of the Basilica in red, raised by the thousands of faithful present who, in vast numbers, then entered the Sanctuary to be even closer to Rita.

FROM THE BEES
TO THE ROSES

WE ARE THE
BRANCHES
OF THE VINE,
WHICH IS
CHRIST



From the homily of Father Joseph Lawrence Farrell, Vicar General of the Augustinian Order, on the occasion of the Solemn Eucharistic Concelebration of the Augustinian Family, on May 21 at the Basilica of Santa Rita in Cascia.

Jesus told his disciples: *"I am the vine, you are the branches"*. Each of us is a branch of that vine. All the disciples, in the same way, are. Saint Rita, Saint Augustine, Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce are the branches. Those alongside us in this sacred space are the branches. The members of our families are the branches. But we know well that the branches can live only when they are tied to the vine. Alone, they cannot survive. The vine is necessary for life. How do the branches separate from the vine? In our sins in everyday life. The temptation to sin comes when we think we can live alone. Separated from the vine that gives us life. The temptation to act as if we were the authors and creators of our lives. The temptation to be instruments of war rather than peace. The temptation to be proud rather than humble. The temptation to live for ourselves, instead of realising that we are all together in this world.

ONE only gives us life. ONE only feeds us with the food of life. ONE only loves us with such a great love that he sent his Son to save us. And we find this ONE in the Eucharist. This ONE is the bread of life, is our salvation. It is the vine in which we find life. The gift we received from God is his great love, in which we have the opportunity to live as ONE. Like a vine ... with Him. In one of his expositions in Psalm 30, St. Augustine said: *"A body is one single unit, with many members, but all the members of the body, numerous as*



'THE SUN' ROCK GROUP IN CASCIA

The Italian Christian rock group "The Sun" (photo ALONHSIDE) was received by the Augustinian nuns of Santa Rita in Cascia on May 22. Led by their leader Francesco Lorenzi, who is also founder of the band, "The Sun" closed the Ritian celebrations in Piazzale San Francesco, with the musical show "Every blessed day".

they are, constitute one body; and it is the same with Christ. Many members, one body: Christ. All of us together with our Head are Christ and without our Head we are helpless. Why? Because united with our Head we are the vine, but if cut off from our Head (God forbid!) we are only loppings, of no use to the vine-tenders and fit only for the bonfire".

This also applies to Saint Rita: without the Lord, she is nothing. But in the Lord, Saint Rita is everything and continues to help us in miraculous ways. Rita's life, in the imitation of Christ, is a life worthy of imitation. We pray that we too can be imitators of Christ and, in this way, remember that we are the branches of the vine, which is Christ. The vine, which helps us to be a people of peace, a people of reconciliation, a people of great love. The vine, which gives us the possibility of being Christ. ■

PRAYER

I greet you, Rita, vase of love,
woman of peace and model of every
virtue,
faithful disciple of Jesus.
Saint of the family and of forgiveness,
help us to believe that for God
everything is possible
and always help us in every need.
Amen.





AN EMBROIDERY FOR SAINT RITA


Rita Lucio is a supporter of "From the Bees to the Roses" and also one of the devotees (almost all named Rita) who are part of the group for the celebrations in honour of Saint Rita, in the parish of San Giacomo Maggiore in Soleminis, province of Cagliari. "Every year," our reader friend writes, "we organise at our best to solemnly celebrate the saint, whose statue was donated to the church in 1957 by the grandmother and mother of two members of the group. This year we wanted to give a cross-stitched image of the saint made with the collaboration of all of us as a gift to Saint Rita and to the parish". In the photo alongside, the day of the blessing of the banner, which was given on May 22, 2019 by the parish priest Father Cristian.

WE NEED HUMANITY

Text of the homily of Don Luciano Avenati, Archbishop Vicar for the Vicariate of the Sibillini, on the occasion of the Transit of Saint Rita (that is, her holy death), celebrated on May 21 in the Basilica of Cascia.

We are gathered here to celebrate the blessed Transit of Saint Rita, that is her holy death, seal of a life lived in fidelity to the Gospel of the beatitudes. We are here to once again reap the lesson of an exemplary life. All of us here, without exception, put ourselves at the school of Saint Rita, each with their personal story, with the most varied situations of life, whether joyful or painful, with various responsibilities in the church and in civil society. What did Rita present to the Father at the time of her death? She presented her filial faith, nourished by constant prayer. Rita presented her sharing of the cross of the Lord in patience, in the face of and within the various sufferings that accompanied her life. Rita presented her strength and sweetness as a woman anchored solely to the Gospel of Jesus. At the time of her death, Rita presented her commitment to humanising the society of her time. She did so with the strong weakness of forgiveness. She was therefore a small, great woman. And it is lovely that on this occasion some women who have lived by the example of Saint Rita and are living life ex-





actly like this (the women presented with the Saint Rita International Recognition Ward, ed.) are being honoured. And so we want to linger on this point, a small great woman, because the woman is the symbol of humanity and symbolises humanity. Today there are many - especially those studying social phenomena, transformations in society and in the world and cultures - who say that if the world, society, politics, economy and various bodies were guided more by women, they would be more human and would further humanise social life. Besides, it is the woman who welcomes, preserves and supports human life. There is a human life of the entire social body, indeed of the whole of humanity, which needs to be welcomed, nurtured and supported at all times. We need to humanise our days, as Rita did in her days, because we are running the risk, at the bottom and at the top, among people and in the authorities, of a barbarisation of thought and words, a process of making behaviour immoral, almost playing at who can be the most immoral. We are running the risk of a dehumanisation of power and, at the same time, the rejection and refusal of those who are the weakest, of those who are different, and in this way we run the risk of denying the primacy of the human person and, therefore, of every person, without any distinction or discrimination. We urgently need an awakening of humanity. On the other hand, towards the end of *Gaudete et exsultate*, the Apostolic Exhortation on Sanctity, the Pope responds to an objection: "Does being holy mean living outside the world, being sad, or living a heavy life?" And the Pope responds: "Holiness humanises people and holy people humanise the world". We need to go back to choosing being humans. And who is more human than a woman? Santa Rita assures us of this. On the other hand, when we speak of the salvation that Jesus came to bring into the world, seeing it from two different but converging angles, there are those who say that Jesus came to deify man, and it is true, making him Son of God. But it is equally true that Jesus came to humanise man who otherwise risks becoming inhuman. Tonight, Saint Rita gives us this testimony: being more human; rediscovering a more human vision of society and a presence of us Christians that humanises society, not lending ourselves to the clearly present risk of going along with what the mass media propose, as if humanity is changing, society is improving to the extent that it is strong and almost violent. Let us entrust to Saint Rita our prayer, our intercession, for the whole of humanity, ourselves, our families, the responsibilities we have, the Italian society in which we live, Europe, the entire world; let us entrust this to her, believing woman, wounded woman, complete woman, fully woman, woman of daily life, fertile woman of sanctity and of the faithful who continually turn to her, social and supportive woman, peacemaker woman like so many women of that period of Umbrian history, pacifying woman, free woman. The more we are human and the more we are there, the more society is human and the more it is free.

FROM THE BEES
TO THE ROSES

BE HOLY, FORGIVE, LEARN FROM THE CROSS



From the homily of Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Becciu, Prefect of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints, pronounced during the Solemn Pontifical on May 22, 2019 in the churchyard of the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia.

The message of Saint Rita can be summed up in three recommendations: *be holy, know how to forgive, love the cross*.

Be holy. Faced with the radical demands of the Gospel there may be the temptation to think that the call to holiness is only for some, for saints like Rita. But the Gospel is for everybody. In addition to splendid models of saints that have passed through the centuries in every nation and continent, there is also the encouraging example of very many unknown and anonymous witnesses of our communities, our families and our parishes. Men and women who have taken the Gospel seriously and have embodied it in the concreteness of daily life.

Know how to forgive. There is no holiness without love. And love requires forms of behaviour marked by patience and gratuitousness, tolerance and expectation, understanding and mercy. We know what the attitude of Saint Rita was faced with the killing of her husband and the temptation that her children could have had: that of avenging their father's blood with the blood of the killers. What an amazing lesson of forgiveness! Only with prayer does our heart soften and we can obtain the grace of forgiving small and large insults.

Love the cross. From the biography of Saint Rita, we have learned how life did not save her from pain. Just think of the initial stormy cohabitation with her husband, of the tragedy suffered through his death and that of her two children. Convent life itself was marked by suffering. One Good Friday, after following a sermon on the Passion, enraptured by love for Christ Crucified, she was pierced by a thorn of the crown in the forehead, down to the bone. She transmuted the pain into an incredible expression of love, which transforms every limit into an overwhelming force of spiritual elevation. It is Saint John Paul II who describes the singularity of Saint Rita in living the dimension of pain: "She learned to understand the sorrows of the human heart. Rita thus became the advocate of the poor and the despairing, obtaining countless graces of consolation and comfort for those who called upon her in the most varied situations" (Audience of May 20, 2000). May Saint Rita listen to us and intercede for us!

Bill Atkinson

The servant of God who embraced his cross

The Servant of God William (Bill) Atkinson was born on January 4, 1946 in Upper Darby (Pennsylvania, USA) and was baptised on January 27, 1946. He attended the "Sant'Alice" parish school and served as an altar boy in the parish church. He was a very athletic and active boy. The Atkinsons were a working-class family. He entered the

"Monsignor Bonner" High School in Drexel Hill, where, by all accounts, he was an average student, diligent in studies and well disciplined. He played baseball and was considered a talented athlete. It was in Bonner High School that Bill came to know the Augustinians. With them he began to understand his religious vocation.

On September 9, 1964,

he received the white habit of the Augustinian novice. On February 22, 1965, not exactly in the middle of the novitiate year, Bill and other novices went out to play with a sled on the snow. As they went down the slope, they lost control of the sled and crashed into a tree. Unlike the other novices, who immediately got up on their feet, Bill remained on the ground unable to move, with his spine broken. He remained paralysed from the neck down.

An excellent athlete who

***Bill remained
on the ground
unable to move***

had been fast, agile, muscular and determined, and had always played to win, was now forced, immobile and silent, into great suffering. He made his profession of vows on his "death bed" on March 1, 1965, in the hands of the novice master, on one of the occasions when it was not clear whether he would survive. During his long hospital stay he often asked to listen to the words of Saint Paul: "I have been cruci-





as an excellent teacher, an encouraging moderator and a compassionate confessor.

Teachers and students always saw him as an example of perseverance and courage. Faithful to community life, he was known to spend many hours in the chapel in preparation for Mass and before retiring for the evening. Many have emphasised the simplicity of life that he lived. His physical needs could be immense, but his material needs were spartan. Often clothes given to him were not used or were given to the poor.

He died on September 15, 2006, a Friday afternoon. His reputation for holiness, already attested in life, grew immensely after his death, and on April 24, 2015 the diocesan tribunal opened for the cause of beatification. Many people have entrusted themselves to his intercession, knowing perfectly well that he was a man of God. Like Saint Rita, the servant of God William Atkinson learned to carry the cross in a Christian way, transforming the thorns of suffering into beautiful roses. Like her, he knew that it is only by sharing the sufferings of Christ that we can reach fullness in resurrection. ■

fied with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me". Bill's desire to continue his vocational journey was supported, in July 1966, by the will of the brothers. A motorised chair was purchased to facilitate his movements. Bill professed temporary vows on July 20, 1970 as a member of the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova. Before and after his second novitiate, he regularly attended university studies course, completing all his homework and exams on an electric typewriter, and earning his degree. On July 20, 1973, Bill made his solemn vows. To be ordained, Atkinson needed a papal dispensation, which he promptly re-

ceived and, a few months later, was ordained priest. After ordination he began teaching theology at Bonner High School, where he quickly became a reference point for athletic events and school plays, among others. At the same time, he served as a school assistant chaplain, retreat coordinator of the senior class and moderator of the football team. He was known for his wonderful sense of humour and was recognised

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

The Papal Guards visit Saint Rita

While the story of Santa Rita is very old, its message continues to be of great relevance and fascinate people of all kinds who are different in nationality, age and social status.

Hundreds of thousands of people come every year to this small village nestled on the peaks of the Valnerina; each of them arrives in Cascia with the aim of externalising their concerns, requests and difficulties, gathered in prayer in front of the uncorrupted body of the Saint to receive consolation and help. She is there, apparently waiting patiently for each of them and, like a friend, she listens.

Some time ago the saint of the thorn and the rose also received the prayers of the Commander of the Swiss Guards, Colonel Christoph Graf. Besides being responsible for the safety of the Holy Father, the officer is also a man of great faith and very devoted to Saint Rita. His devotion has lasted for thirty years and for this reason, as a good former instructor of the new generation, Commander Graf wanted the Swiss Guards to know more intimately the story of this ancient, yet modern woman who continues to teach much with the example of her long and fruitful earthly existence.

Accordingly, three teams of young recruits travelled to Cascia and on February 9, on the first day of the pilgrimage, Colonel Graf wanted to personally accompany 16 of his men to the town of Saint Rita. On that occasion, this group of special pilgrims, who in life deal with the se-

curity of the Pope, his residence as well as the entrances to the Vatican City, was welcomed by the Rector of the Basilica of Santa Rita, Father Bernardino Pinciaroli, who had a brief meeting with the Guards to whom he proposed a catechesis in which he deepened the sense of the spiri-

The saint received the prayers of the Commander of the Swiss Guards

tuality of the Umbrian saint. Two other pilgrimages saw the Swiss Guards in Cascia: one with 14 Swiss Guards on February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and the 90th anniversary of the institution of the Vatican City with the Lateran Pacts, and the other on February 23 with the participation of 21 Swiss Guards.

The young guards were fascinated by the story of the saint, which they already knew in part. "There are several passages that caught the attention of the young guards," said Sergeant Anton Kappler who accompanied the young guards to Cascia. "Rita as a woman of prayer, who with this powerful weapon was able to obtain the impossible from God on several occasions. Rita as a woman of forgiveness, who with her tenacity prevented her children from staining themselves with a sin as great as the death of their father's murderers out of revenge. Rita as a woman of



patience, who did everything to enter the Monastery, a beautiful example for young people who should pray and work for fulfilment of their dreams," continued Kappler. The sergeant placed great stress on the value of prayer: "What fascinated the young Swiss Guards more than any other teaching was the power of prayer which, if persevering and just, can achieve everything".

Even the Commander, Christoph Graf, according to Sergeant Kappler, went on a

Three teams of young recruits travelled to Cascia

pilgrimage to Cascia to deliver his personal prayer to the saint, to ask for the protection of the Pontifical Swiss Guard Corps and for a positive outcome to all ongoing projects, recruitment and construction of new barracks. ■

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PILGRIMAGE

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



Open doors at the Beehive

The Little Bees and
Wildflowers
welcomed more
than 350 supporters



On Saturday June 8 and Sunday June 9, the Little Bees and the Wildflowers, or the girls and children who are guests of the Beehive of Santa Rita, met more than 350 benefactors from all over Italy in Cascia.



Now in its 7th edition, "Open doors at the Beehive" has now become a regular event and appointment for those who want to get to know the project up close and for those



who want to have the opportunity to experience first-hand all the good that the young guests receive from their supporters.



On this occasion, volunteers, Beehive educators, staff of the Santa Rita da Cascia non-profit organisation, nuns and Augustinian fathers worked side by side to realise the two-day family celebration designed to thank the many friends who follow the project with affection and dedication during the year.



Thanks also go to Hotel delle Rose, for having offered the Saturday evening buffet dinner, which also saw the presence of Mayor Mario De Carolis in the front row to watch the dance, song, theatre and poetry show prepared by the youngsters with the theme of "All peoples smile in the same language".



by Marta Ferraro

Holiness is young

More than 1,500 at the PPU general meeting in Cascia

“**H**oliness is young” was the theme of the recent General Meeting of the Pious Union of Saint Rita, which was held in Cascia on April 6 and 7 and attended by over 1,500 members. A great success, therefore, and a strong sign of participation shown by the devotees of the Umbrian saint, scattered throughout Italy, in these two days of intense meetings and



exchanges among themselves and with the Monastery of the Augustinian nuns of Cascia. On this occa-

sion, four new groupings made their official entry into the large family of the PPU, three from Sicily and one





from Lazio: Sciacca (Agrigento), Marianopoli (Caltanissetta), Bisacquino (Palermo) and Arce (Frosinone).

An interesting catechesis on the theme was held by the Chaplain of Terminillo (Rieti), Benedictine Father Mariano Pappalardo. In our society, youth seems to be a myth, an idol to follow and reach. In this age it seems that we are all constantly in search of the elixir of eternal

youth; in reality, according to the priest who echoed the words of Pope Francis, youth is a “state of the heart”.

Thinking back to his youth, to that of his friends and that of today's young people, Father Mariano borrowed seven words – dream, daring, joy, friendship, cre-

gious of the monastic Fraternity of the Transfiguration of Monte Terminillo pointed out that these terms can be found in each of them.

Ultimately, therefore, all the saints remained young, at least in their hearts, because they approached earthly life by living these



ativity, love and beauty – to explain this state. In his opinion, these terms explain how turning these words into concrete acts can become an instrument for holiness. In fact, in analysing the biographies of the saints, the reli-

principles.

For example, St. Joseph who is remembered as the “dreamer” because of the many premonitory dreams he had, always believed in them and trusted them, transforming them into the very mean-

ing of his existence. In fact, said Father Mariano, “the saint is he or she who dreams with God”. The saint is a man or woman open to the future just like young people who dream. From the dream to daring, the step is short. Who is more daring than God? If young people are often over the top, who more than God was not, for example in the Creation? He did not create what was enough. God wanted to exceed, do more. All this he did with joy, for the simple



desire of giving. And so we come to the third point: those who love halfway, those who love “enough but not too much”, those who hold themselves back are not happy. It is not by chance that the first word of the New Testament is Re-joice. In the words of Father Mariano, “joy, light-heartedness, cheerfulness, the will to live and happiness are characteristic traits of youth





chance the saints were the most imaginative and creative men and women. What demeans holiness, according to Father Mariano, is ultimately the most common expression “it has always been

and that is what God wants for each of us”.

Then, in close relationship with joy, there is friendship. Young people love company. As Thomas Merton claimed, “no man is an island”. Holiness, therefore, is a journey made together that gives great space to creativity in a constant explosion of newness. Young people have a great desire to experiment, to know, to discover new things that they did not know before and not by



done this way”.

At the end of his reflection, the Chaplain commented: “Holiness is young because it is always new, always different, always evolving, always contagious, full of surprises, each time unique. Holiness seduces if it is not repetitive, if it is fanciful, if like God it *can make all things new*”.

*We safeguard their future.
With joy.*



THE BEEHIVE OF SAINT RITA IS A FAMILY WHERE HOPES ALSO FEED ON LOVE. Founded by Blessed Mother Fasce in 1938, the Beehive of Saint Rita has become home, school and assistance for many young girls. A real family that includes all our supporters who, with their help, continue to give a future to thousands of young people in difficulty. Stay close to us, your love is the most solid foundation on which to build new hopes. alveare@santaritadacascia.org • www.santaritadacascia.org/alveare

PROTECT THE BEEHIVE

BANK IBAN: IT4010311103246000000000483 • BIC/SWIFT: BLOPIT22
POST OFFICE: c/a 1010759072 made out to: Fondazione Santa Rita da Cascia onlus
In both methods specify "Alveare" (Beehive) as the reason

