

90
YEARS

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

5

Poste Italiane S.p.A. - Postal subscription - Leg. Decree 353/2003 (subsequently Law 46 of 27 Feb 2004) - Art. 1, Para 1 - Auth. GIPA/C1 / PG.06/2012

INTERVIEW WITH SR. CAROLINA IAVAZZO

**“Father Puglisi wanted
to make young people free”**

TRACES OF RITA

Jesus as a model

FEATURE ON SAINT AUGUSTINE

**Political commitment
according to the Patron Saint**

THE COMMITMENT OF A CHRISTIAN

Contemplate and act in society

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A special thanks

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

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

Thank you all!

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

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FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

BIMONTHLY OF THE MONASTERY
OF SAINT RITA OF CASCIA.
NO. 5 SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2013



Italian edition: Year XC.
English edition: Year LII.
French edition: Year LI.
Spanish edition: Year XLI.
German edition: Year XLI.

On the cover:
The commitment of the Christian.

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FOR SWITZERLAND

Post Office: Account No. 69-8517-0
Made out to: Monastero Santa Rita Agostiniana
06043 Cascia PG - Italy
Bank: IBAN CH830900000690085170

Printed in the month of July 2013 by Litografodi srl on behalf
of Tau Editrice srl - Via Umbria 148, 06059 Todi (PG).



From the Bees to the Roses
is printed on environmentally-friendly
FSC-certified paper

The truth calls for work

«The truth has never been asserted by violence” (M.K. Gandhi). The International Day of Non-Violence is celebrated on 2 October, the date of birth of Mahatma Gandhi. This is an occasion from which we took inspiration for the theme that we propose in this issue: the civil commitment of a Christian. A subject that is close to our heart, on which we have reflected several times through the pages of “From the Bees to the Roses”.

Pope Francis says: “to contemplate and to act, ‘ora et labora’, St. Benedict teaches, are both necessary in our Christian life” (General Audience, 17 April 2013).

Contemplate and act. As we are taught by the saints, including our beloved St. Augustine, dear Saint Rita and Blessed Mother M. Teresa Fasce. As the examples closer to our times show us, like: Blessed Pino Puglisi. But, please, do not get me wrong, we’re not talking about “things of saints” or rather, we’re not talking about things that only the saints can do and from which we would be very far away. Each of us can do, act in and for society, following the example of Jesus Christ, the First Model, as Father Giuseppe Caruso rightly reminds us on pages. 10 and 11 of this number. This is how a saint can become a saint.

What is important, when we are at the crossroads of choosing “which side to take”, is to keep in mind that the alternative to violence is not non-violence, understood as its simple negation. The choice before us is between violence and life. And life has to do with truth. It sounds simple, it’s clear that we all choose life. In reality, however, the history of mankind proves the opposite.

It shows that, at the time of making the decision, faced with that crossroads, man more easily chooses violence and hatred than respect for life and truth, which – on the contrary – call for much work and commitment, because they presuppose solidarity, respect, questioning.

And, above all, courage.

Like that of Agnese Moro, daughter of Aldo Moro, kidnapped and killed by the Red Brigades in 1978. Agnes has forgiven the murderers of her father. And she did along a way that led her to meet Franco Bonisoli, a former member of the Red Brigades who decided and implemented the kidnapping and murder of the President of the Christian Democratic Party and was one of the gunmen that massacred the men of Moro’s bodyguard. The latest meeting to date took place on 16 June in Oristano. Agnes and Franco face to face. “It was beautiful,” says Agnes, “I discovered people who are no longer those they were before. And this makes it even more difficult “.

Yes, because choosing truth and life calls for work. But, remember: “The Crucified and Risen Lord guides us. We have with us a multitude of brothers and sisters who, in silence and concealment, in their family life and at work, in their problems and hardships, in their joys and hopes, live faith daily and together with us bring the world the lordship of God’s love, in the Risen Jesus Christ, ascended into Heaven, our own Advocate who pleads for us” (Pope Francis, General Audience, 17 April 2013).

Cascia, Cloister of the Monastery of Saint Rita. The vine is a symbol of the obedience, patience and humility of Saint Rita.



On 25 May 2013, Don Giuseppe Puglisi (known as Father Pino Puglisi), the parish priest of Brancaccio killed by the mafia on 15 September 1993, was beatified. A crowd of about 80 thousand faithful attended the ceremony which took place at the Foro Italico of Palermo. Let us remember, along with Sister Carolina Iavazzo who worked with him in the Brancaccio neighbourhood, the value of a man who, through his meekness, showed true strength, an example for every Christian.

Sr. Carolina: “Father Puglisi wanted to make young people free”

by Monica Guarriello

Don Giuseppe Puglisi was beatified on 25 May at the Foro Italico of Palermo, his hometown. “He was an exemplary priest,” said Pope Francis the following day, “teaching young people according to the Gospel, he snatched them out of the hands of organised crime, and so they tried to defeat him by killing him. In fact, however, he is the one who won, with the risen Christ”.

On 28 June 2012, Benedict XVI had decreed that the execution ordered by the bosses, which took place on 15 September 1993, the day of the 56th birthday of Father Puglisi, in front of his parish (San Gaetano, in the neighbourhood of Brancaccio, Palermo), was “in ha-

tred of the faith”. This fact, explains Sister Carolina Iavazzo, “did away with the need to prove a miracle through the intercession of the Servant of God”. Don Giuseppe, or rather, Father Pino Puglisi as everyone knew him, was a diocesan priest known for his efforts to combat the mafia, in particular through vocational training of kids and street children, for whom he

Father Puglisi wanted to take the Gospel to the extreme

founded the “Padre Nostro” Centre, right in the Palermo neighbourhood of Brancaccio. Sister Carolina Iavazzo was a collaborator of Father Puglisi and head of the Centre. She currently lives in Locri, committed with the Good Samaritan Society that aims to offer consolation and hope, struggling against injustice and abuse. As Sister Carolina says:

“For the first time in the history of the Church, a man who openly challenged the mafia, and paid with his life the highest price for his commitment to the defence of legality, has become Blessed. Father Puglisi was a really inconvenient priest, who wanted to take the Gospel to the extreme”.

THREE QUESTIONS TO MONS. DI CRISTINA

Monsignor Salvatore Di Cristina attended seminary and priestly ordination with Father Pino Puglisi, sharing the pastoral commitment with the Blessed, as well as a deep friendship. In 1999, he took part in the Diocesan Commission for the preliminary investigation of the process of beatification of the parish priest of Brancaccio. On 26 April 2013, he became Archbishop Emeritus of Monreale.

What is the message that lies behind the beatification of the first martyr of the mafia? Initially there was no talk of martyrdom as the supreme proof of that specific holiness. Only during the Roman phase of the process did awareness mature of the great significance that the martyrdom of Father Pino was taking on for the Christian conscience: the anti-Christian characterisation of the mafia.

How has the Church's action in the area changed, in particular against the mafia phenomenon, after the work of Don Pino? In the aftermath of his murder, there were some ecclesiastics who wanted to point out that, in any case, that killing itself was redeeming the clergy from the embarrassment of not yet having had among its ranks a priest gunned down by the mafia – as had been the case for years for judges and other servants of the state. Aside from the slightly cynical, slightly revanchist flavour of the idea, there's no doubt that, among the clergy, the death of Don Pino gave rise to the pedagogy of awareness of the ecclesial communities of Palermo and Sicily in general about the absolute incompatibility of the mafia with the faith and Christian practices and the consequent fight against all forms of thought and behaviour derived from or influenced by mafia culture.

Excellence, you know the reality of the Brancaccio neighbourhood and of Palermo very well. What can you tell us about the social context in which the Blessed lived? As always in these cases, it is neither wise nor fair to generalise: in Brancaccio, like in Scampia, there were and now there are even more really good people. That said, the mafia was at home there like in few other neighbourhoods of Palermo, with the almost lack of civic institutions a more or less conscious accomplice. The absence of a junior secondary school – an absence energetically denounced by Don Pino – is the most well-known proof of this lack, and obviously not the only one. In fact, Don Pino's "Padre Nostro" Centre, besides its deliberately symbolic value and the polemical allusion of its name, acted as a substitute for the institutions and responded to the lack of places in the neighbourhood for coming together and points for listening to the needs of so many people. But it was the cultural and civil degradation, even more than the albeit extremely serious socio-economic degradation, that was the most glaring problem for Don Pino and the people who assisted him. (GDL)

In collaboration with "In His Image", the programme conducted by Rosario Carello, broadcast by Rai Uno on Saturdays at 17.10 and Sundays at 10.30.

OUR FATHER

Father, my godfather, You are a man of honour and you must make yourself respected. He who errs, we know, has to pay. Do not forgive, otherwise you are a villain and villain is he who speaks and is a spy. This is the law of this fellowship. I recommend myself to you, my godfather, free me from the cops and from the police free me and my friends.

It will always be this way, and those who have done, have done.

This is the mafia version of the Catholic "Our Father", recited by Rosario Carello during the episode of 25 May this year, dedicated to the beatification of Don Pino Puglisi. Guest of the programme was Giuseppe, a judicial witness who grew up in the Brancaccio neighbourhood with "3P" as the children called him, which stands for "Padre Pino Puglisi". Giuseppe wanted to "be a mafioso" when he grew up, but an encounter with Don Pino changed his life. Thanks to his contribution, it was possible to identify and condemn the instigators of the murder of Don Pino, that is, the Gra-



viano family of Palermo. On this "prayer", Father Puglisi had shared a profound reflection with the young people of the parish on the link between the Catholic faith and the mafia: "It stems from the fact that Cosa Nostra steals and tries to put on nice clothes," explains Joseph, "exploiting the values of Sicilian culture, such as honour, respect ... and also some aspects linked to

the world of the faith, like in the classic oath. We reached the conclusion that, as Christians, we could not let Cosa Nostra appropriate for itself something that is outside of mafia violence. Cosa Nostra alters everything that is good in Sicilian culture". Although Puglisi was a diocesan priest, therefore a 'don' not a 'father', "in Sicily it is normal to recognise in the priest the figure of the 'good father'," says Giuseppe, "and for this reason, we called him 'Father'." In fact, the main reason why Don Pino posed a threat to the mafia was in his role as a "point of reference" alternative to Cosa Nostra.

"He wanted to shake consciences. He was a priest who above all loved God greatly, but transformed this love of God into love of his neighbour. He is often called the anti-mafia priest but it is more correct to say that he was a priest who posed an alternative to the mafia. His concrete commitment created a nuisance for the mafia because Father Puglisi wanted to promote not only spiritual and Christian develop-

He wanted to promote, not only spiritual but also moral development

ment, but also moral, human development".

"The story of Puglisi's last years is intertwined with that of the faces of the boys and girls that walked the same streets as the parish priest of Brancaccio

and who, at the bottom of their hearts, had and have the same hope and the same desires that Don Pino pursued. I met them together with Father Puglisi, we loved them. He had a great dream for them: 'set them

A man who openly challenged the mafia has become Blessed



Don Pino Puglisi was beatified on 25 May this year.

each of them he had a different attitude, sometimes sweet, sometimes strong and unshakable, depending on who was in front of him or on the educational circumstances of that moment”.

“Kids need fathers. Unfortunately, never before as today, are children experiencing *orfananza* (the condition of being an orphan, *ed.*) of mothers and fathers, and this absence has a terrible impact on talk of the models that now more than ever are missing. Often I ask myself a question: but I, we, what are we doing for these kids? Where are the alternatives to all of this? Where is the State? Where is society? Father Puglisi tried to do something creating the “Padre Nostro” Centre. Often he was alone. The creator of alternatives risks remaining alone, often paying the price of good with soli-



Sister Carolina Iavazzo was one of Don Puglisi's collaborators and head of the “Padre Nostro” Centre, founded by the Blessed in the Brancaccio neighbourhood of Palermo.

tude. The message that he has left us as street educators is the importance of acting as travelling companions, more than teachers, for children; experience the wonder of what they can give you even if our expectations are always too low”. ■

free’ as Jesus says in the Gospel: ‘The truth will set you free!’ (Jn, 8:31). Street children are the sons of no one; they have no goals, no teachers, no models, they only have the street, the only teacher for their journey in life. For them, Father Puglisi is dead. For them, he gave life and he knew them one by one, and with



SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

If you wish to receive the prayers of St. Rita or know more in real time about the charitable works of the St. Rita Monastery, send an e-mail with your name and surname to newsletter@santaritadacascia.org

THE WORD

by
Fr. Vittorino Grossi osa

**"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you ...Be merciful,
just as your Father is merciful".**

Luke 6, 27 and 36



Like small drops

Interview with Chantal, 60,
supporter of the Santa Rita Beehive
by Giulia Di Lauro

Chantal, you have a touching story of devotion to Saint Rita of Cascia. Can you tell us? In 1968, at the age of 67, my grandmother was hit by a cerebral haemorrhage and totally paralysed. The doctor decided not to admit her to hospital because the situation was desperate. At that point, my aunt took off the chain with the medal of St. Rita and

I decided I had to do something, however small, but concrete

put it round the neck of my grandmother, asking for the grace to give her back speech and the use of her legs, promising to go on pilgrimage to Cascia. My grandmother regained self-sufficiency and lived until she was 92. As soon as it became possible, we set out for Cascia and since then, as a family, we have made Saint Rita partaker of our joys and our sorrows, and our Saint never abandons us.

Some Saint Rita's Little Bees, together with Sr. Melania De Luca, a point of reference for all the girls of the Beehive for more than 50 years.



How did you learn about the Beehive of Saint Rita and how did this tie, almost as part of the family, with the Little Bees come about? I learned about the Little Bees of the Beehive reading the work of Mother Teresa Fasce (founder of the Beehive, *ed.*) in "From the Bees to the Roses" and I thought that I, at their age, was living in a family, humble but where I had everything. I decided I had to do something, however small, but concrete.

In the email that you sent us, referring to the donors of the Beehive, you call them "small drops in the sea". What do you mean? Sometimes when you send a little help, it seems so minimal as to make you think "but with so little, what can I manage to do?". However, even a small contribution is a start, because what we give, added to what many other benefactors give, becomes a large sum of money. To carry the Beehive

*To the Little Bees,
I would like to say that
every day they should
thank the Lord*

forward, it is essential to help the Little Bees, both in their daily life and in their studies, so even the smallest "particle of water" helps form the "sea". Supporting the Little Bees is like having many grandchildren to think about and from whom it is nice to receive news. We seek in an infinitesimal way to help them and make them smile, because what could be more beautiful than the smile of a child?

Would you like to say something to the Little Bees? To the Little Bees, I would like to say that every day they should thank the Lord, Saint Rita and the whole community of Sisters for having had the good luck to find a welcoming structure like the Monastery of Saint Rita in Cascia. There are many people that they do not know, but who love them a lot and hope that they have joy, love and success in what they do, and that they realise of all their desires.

SUPPORT THE BEEHIVE PROJECT WITH US

12€

buy a textbook for a girl in need.

20€

provide one hour of educational support to youngsters taking after-hour schooling.

50€

is the cost of one week's meals for girls in difficulty.

100€

provide professional medical care to a youngster in need.

200€

allow us to buy a complete kit of teaching materials for a girl.

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

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

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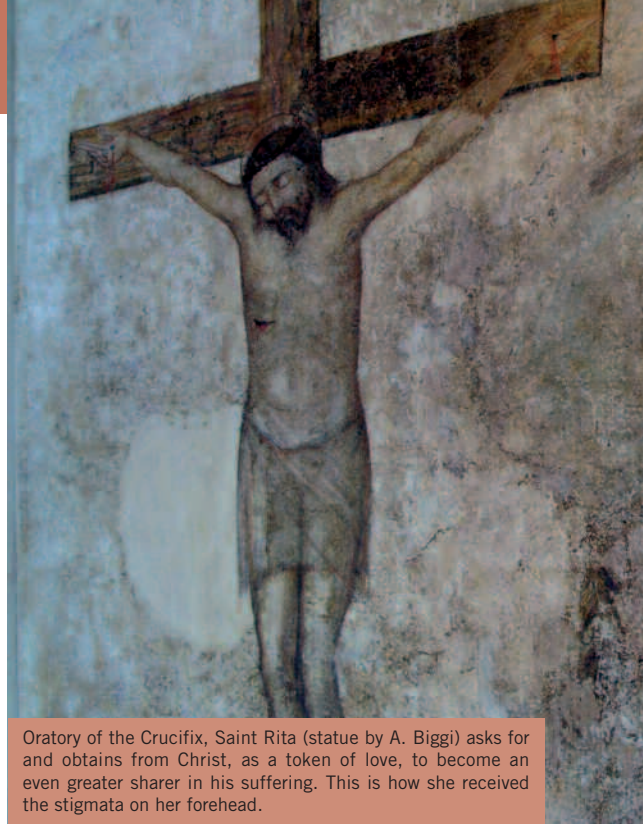
I also help the Little Bees

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

The model

by Fr. Giuseppe Caruso OSA

When we think of the lives of the saints, we are often inexplicably led to placing them in a time that is distant and different from ours, almost as though a very special period in history had made their extraordinary experience possible. This is a mistaken way of seeing things: even though different, the reality in which the saints lived was never easier than the one in which we live. Let's take Saint Rita: the era in which she spent her days was in no way easy and conciliatory: diseases threatened the existence of everyone, especially those who, because of widespread poverty, could not feed themselves sufficiently; faced with these objective difficulties, as unfortunately often happens, instead of making common cause to the benefit of all, the population of Cascia was divided into factions, leading them against each other into a bloody war that only added sorrow to sorrow. Given a framework that, even if wanting to soften the darkness, was full of dense shadows, Rita, instead of losing heart or closing herself in a private universe, rolled up her sleeves and began to act with strength to respond to the needs of her time. Tradition refers to her concern in helping the sick in the hospital of Roccaporena, and the attention she paid to the hungry who knocked on her door for a bit of food, always



Oratory of the Crucifix, Saint Rita (statue by A. Biggi) asks for and obtains from Christ, as a token of love, to become an even greater sharer in his suffering. This is how she received the stigmata on her forehead.

believing in the providence that never abandons those who place all their trust in her. Even in front of the fratricidal conflict between the people of Cascia that led to the killing of her husband Paolo, Rita responded by invoking and obtaining mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. Holiness is never disengagement and taking one's distance from the suffering of people: Rita understood this, like all the other saints of the past and the present. The Gospels give us the vivid representation of the Lord Jesus sensitive to the sufferings of humanity, to the point of taking upon himself, an innocent person, the sins of the entire world: He is the real model for

THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

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

Sr. Angela Lorenzini OSA. (Holy Cross Monastery, Figline Valdarno, FI - Italy)

Angela Ines Puglierin (Pove del Grappa, VI - Italy)

Bice Braghiroli (Ceresara, MN - Italy)

Eduardo Falletti (Ariccia, RM - Italy)

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Maria Baldini (Agazzano, PC - Italy)

Sante Di Curzio (Cascia, PG - Italy)



every Christian and, more so, for the saints, who were consistent disciples to the highest degree. The Saints love in a concrete and industrious way, giving joyfully and freely, without expecting anything in return, except the sweet awareness of having acted in imitation of the master, the Lord Jesus.

PRAYER

My path
is made up of colours.
Flower petals
are my thoughts.
And the sadness
I heard yesterday
Has become joy
because you are with me.
My Lord,
who has given me love,
now I sing for You
my heart.
And loving You
I will live from flower to flower
like a butterfly,
happy towards the blue.

(Prayer written by Pietrina Dolis, loyal reader of "From the Bees to the Roses")

TESTIMONY OF ELISABETTA
TATTI (ROME, ITALY)

To tell my story, I have to go back to 2009, when I was pregnant. The pregnancy came about when my husband and I were by now considered infertile. At the beginning of the 6th month, I was admitted to the Gemelli Hospital in Rome due to strong uterine contractions. I was found with a dilatation of 2 cm. All means had to be used to prevent the birth, because the child I was carrying would have had difficulty in surviving after birth. I was asked to undergo an emergency cerclage because the birth was imminent. I had no choice. If the child had been born at that moment, at 23 weeks, she would have had almost no chance of survival. The surgery was scheduled for 22 May and as soon as I knew the date that had been fixed, I felt a sense of confidence in my heart: I trusted in Saint Rita immediately. But things were not to be so simple. The cerclage was performed, but there was the feared complication: rupture of membranes and loss of amniotic fluid, which could have at any time induced premature labour. I turned to Saint Rita, asking why ever, on the day of her feast, she would have allowed the beginning of the death of my daughter. Meanwhile, on the 22nd, my sister Valentina had gone to Cascia to take part in the celebrations in honour of the Saint and, finally, she had come to me in the hospital in Rome to bring me the blessed roses. On 24 May, I began the Novena to Saint Rita for desperate causes. I put the rose petals on my tummy and prayed. I felt Saint Rita very close. The second day, the losses of amniotic fluid disappeared and the doctors were amazed. After two weeks, against all the odds, the premature delivery had been averted. Nevertheless, no one expected that the pregnancy could proceed much longer, but instead the baby was born in the 36th week, when she was perfectly capable of surviving. Today, my little girl, who is called Mariam, is beautiful and I have already taken her to the sanctuary of Saint Rita for the first time! Praise the Lord who, by means of the saints, does wonderful things.

GRACE RECEIVED

APPOINTMENTS

edited by Fra Paolo Zecca OSA

**Cascia (PG), 9 to 12 October
Feast of the Blessed Mother Fasce**

We await you in the Lower Basilica for the preaching of the Triduum, which prepares us for the feast of the Blessed Mother Maria Teresa Fasce on 12 October.

From 9 to 11 October: 17.00, Holy Rosary; 18.00, Holy Mass.

On 12 October: 18.00, Solemn Celebration presided by the Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, Mons. Renato Boccardo.

**World, 20 October
World Mission Day**

"On the streets of the world" is the theme for the 87th edition of World Mission Day. In line with the Year of Faith, called by Benedict XVI, the act of faith of every Christian must take shape in the metaphor of journey, coming out from our communities to meet men and women who hunger and thirst for God. The testimonies of faith of many of our missionaries in the world remain a tangible sign of a constant commitment of the Church, for the cause of the Kingdom.

**Cascia (PG), 26 September and 31 October
Year of Faith in the town of Saint Rita**

Thursday 26 September at 18.00, do not miss the celebration of Holy Mass in the Basilica, presided by Card. Angelo Comastri, Vicar General of His Holiness. After that, you can pray in the

chapel of Saint Rita, next to the urn. At 21.15, Cardinal Comastri awaits you for the meeting in the Hall of Peace entitled "How Mary lived the Faith".

Finally, on **Thursday 31 October at 18.00**, Holy Mass will take place in the Basilica, presided by Mons. Lorenzo Chiarinelli, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Viterbo.

**Cascia (PG), from 1 to 3 November
Convention of the Friends of St. Augustine**

The Friends of St. Augustine await you for the traditional November appointment, which will take place in Hotel delle Rose. This year, the title of the meeting is: *Tenderness and Christian faith today, in the footsteps of Pope Francis.*

**COURSES OF THE SAINT RITA
SPIRITUAL EXERCISES HOUSE**

Come to Cascia, to participate in the courses of the Saint Rita Spiritual Exercises House. The participation fee, which includes room and board, is € 40 per day. Infoline: Directorate, Spiritual Exercises House tel. +39 0743 71229 (number only active during the courses) or +39 0743 75091 - fax: +39 0743 76476 email casaesercizi@santaritadacascia.org

Courses for lay people

9 to 13 September. Guide: Fr. Francesco M. Giuliani OSA

16 to 19 September. Guide: Fr. Ludovico Centra OSA

Course for friends and collaborators (also potential) of the Augustinians

Courses for priests and deacons

23 to 28 September. International College of St. Monica
Course open to all Augustinians

21 to 26 October. Guide: Mons. Giovanni Scanavino OSA
Theme: "We strengthen ourselves believing, to confirm our brothers"

Course for religious and consecrated

2 to 7 September. Guide: Mons. Giovanni Scanavino OSA
Theme: "Faith and consecrated life". Course open to the entire Augustinian Family



Saint Rita in the Cosenza area

PPU Group of Marcellina (Cosenza)

edited by Natalino Monopoli

The presence of the saints in the life of the Church is a sign of God's continuous love for all humanity. For this reason, even in Marcellina in the Upper Tyrrhenian Cosenza area, the cult of the beloved Saint of Cascia now lives well defined and motivated ecclesial goals. It was 1952, when the Sisters of the Sacred Heart



acquired the statue of Saint Rita: on 24 May the following year, the feast in honour of the saint was celebrated for the first time, and this year its 60th anniversary is commemorated. The cult has continued over the years, even though the statue disappeared.

In 2012, stimulated by other confreres, the current pastor wanted to give vitality and substance to this devotion, bringing together numerous devotees of the Primary Pious Union, aggregated to the

Primary of Cascia during the national meeting of the PPU in March this year. On that occasion, a cause for the great joy of the faithful was when, during the return trip, the pastor announced and showed the great gift received from the hands of the Mother Abbess, a relic of the Miracle-working Saint, which is now guarded in the Parish, in a valuable reliquary. On 7 March 2013, in the presence of Father Orazio Greco, Regional PPU Delegate for Sicily, and a large crowd of faithful, a new artistic representation of the Saint by artist Antonio Papa of Surano (Lecce) was blessed and exposed for public vener-

ation. The statue (pictured) was then present, on 15, 16 and 17 March, during the national meeting of the PPU in Cascia. And it was nice to see the small statue tower over the large crowd carried in triumph by porters through the streets of the Umbrian town, looked upon with admiration and devotion by many faithful and pilgrims. The presence of the Bishop of the Diocese of San Marco Argentano-Scalea, Mons. Leonardo Bonanno, also served to highlight the love for the great saint. The days in Cascia ended with the great joy of continuing this work of God in the service of the Church.

PPU EVENTS

The Saint Rita Primary Pious Union, the association that unites the devotees of St. Rita, awaits you to share special moments together with the St. Rita-Augustinian family.

Cascia (PG), 21 September: Lazio-Umbria-Campania Interregional Meeting

Open to all. Infoline: Fr. Ludovico Centra c/o Information Office, St. Rita Sanctuary - tel. +39 0743 75091 - Fax +39 0743 76202 - email infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org

Trani (BT), 29 September: Puglia Regional Meeting

Open to all. Infoline: Don Francesco Lanotte - mobile +39 349 7563007 - email xcicciox@libero.it; Giovanna Canaletti - tel. +39 0883 583997.

Cascia (PG), 25-27 October: Meeting of PPU leaders

Dedicated to the heads of the Saint Rita of Cascia Primary Pious Union.

Reservations (by 18 October): Information Office of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita - tel. +39 0743 75091 - email infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org

On 28 August 2012, the Feast of St. Augustine, the Augustinian Family of Cascia recalled the Patron of Rita. Of him, Paul VI said, "If St. Augustine were alive today, he would speak as he spoke a thousand and more years ago. Why? Because he really personifies a humanity that believes, that loves Christ and our beloved God". Born in 354 in Thagaste, in today's Algeria, Augustine experienced how much it costs to search and find the truth. His times were like ours: times of breakthrough and of decadence those of the fourth and fifth centuries, that saw the decline of the Roman Empire. Augustinian scholar Father Remo Piccolomini, accompanies us in the reflections made by the Bishop and Doctor of the Church on the political commitment of the Christian, discovering the profound relevance for today.

The political commitment of the Christian

by Father Remo Piccolomini OSA

Augustine did not write any treatises on sociology or politics, but he was interested in both, because he and his people lived in a society and in a political context, and they could not be disinterested. Man has a social nature, seeking others for dialogue; he is not an island (see *The City of God* XIX, 12, 2). In fact, he lives in a *civitas* (city, *ed.*), which in an extended sense means State. The State is a people living in a given territory, united by bonds of laws (see *The City of God* II, 21). Because they are imposed from the outside, laws are always coercive and restrictive. Augustine left us another definition of people, wider, more open: men come together for the harmonious communion of the things they love (*The City of God* XIX, 24). With this definition, Augustine wants to tell us that the link between men is not imposed from the outside, but comes from within, from the heart, from love. People are diversified by the diversity of love: there is the love between spouses, between parents and children, the love of friendship, the love of the homeland, and so on. This fact allows us to dialogue

Rome, Basilica of the Sacred Heart, the statues of Christ the King and St. Augustine.

with everyone, without exception. Nationalisms, the cause of rivalries, struggles and wars, disappear. We are citizens of the world. All men are equal in dignity, but different in culture, traditions, colour, warning that diversity does not mean opposition, but dynamism that makes society more prosperous and less monotonous. Diversity is wealth.

All together, we are committed to building the *earthly city* in view of the *heavenly city* which, on earth, lives its phase of pilgrimage amid the *persecutions of the world* and the *consolations of God*.

The different loves we have referred to are joined by a few truths – the first: the quest of the Supreme good, as a constitutive element of human society. The second: the search for peace, sought after by all, like happiness. The third: love as a bond of social life. All three of these truths not only affect the individual, but also the entire community. The search is common to all. If ancient Rome and the other modern Rome are not able to stay on their feet, it is because of

The bond among men comes from the heart

the lack of love, the cohesive element of society itself. The Rome of the past blamed Christianity for its disastrous fall, because it preached forgiveness and love, which were considered signs of weakness. Rome falls, as all “cities” (States) of the modern world fall, if there is no cohesion between peoples. Christian meekness is not at all contrary to the State (see *Letter 138, 2, 9*). In addition, Christian morality ensures the State prosperity, well-being and peace (see *Letter 138, 2, 15*). It is love that modulates all history, including the history of Rome and our history; Christianity does not cancel it, rather it broadens it because it is based on the Supreme good.

Relevance of the Augustinian message today. A strong appeal is being invoked today on all sides, even from politics, for a sense of responsibility, respect for the dignity of

SMILING AT LIFE

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

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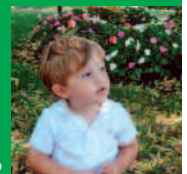
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1. Alex Vallenari, Sant'Anna d'Alfaedo (VR) - Italy
2. Ben and Aaron Tuite, Ireland
3. Chiara Viola, Cavedago (TN) - Italy
4. Enea Vidili, Tramatzia (OR) - Italy
5. Francesca Argiolas, Sestu (CA) - Italy
6. Giulia Ferrario, Valmorea (CO) - Italy
7. Elena Rita Vespucci, Trepuzzi (LE) - Italy
8. Letizia Morrone, Taranto - Italy
9. Maria Antonietta Adelaide De Santis, Olbia (OT) - Italy
10. Mariam Tavazzani, Rome - Italy
11. Rita Bondavalli, Brescello (RE) - Italy
12. Sebastian Gaffey, Belmont, Massachusetts - USA

the person, the morality of costumes. Times are bad, or as Augustine would say better: men are bad and make the times bad. In the *City of God*, especially in Book XIX, you will find several reasons for the message that is relevant today, bearing in mind the following points: 1) the inseparability of politics from morality; 2) the primacy of good over just; 3) the testimony of love.

1 - The inseparability of politics from morality. The word *politics* takes its meaning

from the Greek word *polis*, which means city, which in a broader sense means the *State, Republic*. In other words, politics interests the citizen and the search for his good.

Moral comes from the Latin word *mos*, which means behaviour, costume, which concerns man. The same man that is involved in politics, that is, who is concerned with the common good of the citizen, must act honestly with respect for his dignity and that of others. Having separated politics



Tolentino (MC), Basilica of St. Nicholas, St. Augustine.

MOTHER FASCE

DECLINING THE VERB DONATE

by Cristina Siccardi

"She did not want to turn back unheard who had knocked on the doors of the monastery for help. I heard the people of Cascia talk about the breadth of her charity, after the death of the Servant of God: there were those who remembered the material benefits, those the moral ones, those the advice with doubts and those the relief with falls". This is the testimony of one of the companion sisters of Mother Teresa Fasce, Sister Agnes Ciaruffoli. The "Mother" knew how to decline the verb donate, donate in the spirit of charity. During the Second World War, her generosity was magnificent, she became the anchor for hundreds and hundreds of people. She welcomed people with affection and motherly care. According to Irma Moretto Salvatori: "We literally needed bread and what was necessary for daily sustenance". Although the Monastery of Saint Rita did not go through certain moments of prosperity either, it did not let that mother's pleas fall into the void and, through the nuns, sent some groceries as well as clothing for her children.

from morality has been one of the causes of the current crisis.

2 - The primacy of good over just. The difference between the good and the just is fundamental. The *good* is founded on justice and love; justice and love do not oppose each other and work together. Justice alone "gives to each his own". To be clear immedi-

Having separated politics from morality has been one of the causes of the current crisis

ately: what is "his" for he who has nothing, except hunger and the sky for shelter? In this definition: he who has nothing keeps his nothing andstarves and freezes to death. Wonderful justice! To justice must be added love that respects the human dignity of all, the starving and the President of the Republic. It is unjust that when a worker, an honest family man, works he must be con-

tent with 1,000 euro, while others higher up the social ladder receive 15,000 and more. Perhaps men do not have equal dignity? Give the common worker what he needs to live with dignity. You see how important it is to consider the primacy of the *good* over the *just*.

3 - The testimony of love. Love is not like the ambulance that "collects" the injured along the way, but asks: Why are there so many injured? And it answers: because among men there are grudges, hatred, violence, hunger and war. It is not so much a question of healing the injured as of how to remove the causes that have led and are leading to so many injured. It is not enough that the Big Powers come together always to take stock of the situation, while people continue to die. Only if men pick up the Gospel of Jesus again will they understand that the service of charity will save the world, that to command does not mean "power" but service, that you act with deeds not words. In this way, civil society will be able to renew itself and to live better seasons. This is the message of Augustine's *City of God*, which is the message of the Gospel of Jesus. It is up to us to accept it, if we still want to change. ■

Saint Rita, Patroness of Chihuahua

by Giulia Di Lauro

Chihuahua is a city in northern Mexico, characteristic not only because it is the place of origin of very small dogs, but because of its extraordinary devotion to St. Rita of Cascia. Elected “Patroness of the city” by popular demand, the Saint is the centre every May of the big celebrations at the baroque church dedicated to her. The history of this church is very special.

According to tradition, in the 18th century, the farm where the building now stands belonged to Don José de Aguirre

The empanadas of Saint Rita are a specialty



Chihuahua, church of Saint Rita.

RITA IS ALSO HERE



Country Mexico

City Chihuahua

Worth knowing The city of Chihuahua is the main town of the homonymous municipality and the capital of the Mexican state of Chihuahua, the largest in the country. Founded in 1709, it now has 809,232 inhabitants; it is the seat of the Archbishop and is an important commercial and industrial centre. By popular demand, St. Rita of Cascia was named patron saint of the city.

and his wife, Nicolasa. When the latter became seriously ill, she ordered in her will that, after her imminent death, a chapel dedicated to Saint Rita should be built on the land. Miraculously, Nicolasa regained her health and, in 1731, the church was built. However, the devotion to the saint of Cascia only spread in the following century, when, in 1837, the farm and the church were used as a hospice for the poor. From then on, every 22 May in honour of the patron saint of impossible causes, the city's most popular festival – *Feria de Santa Rita* – takes place. Throughout the day, mass is celebrated in the chapel dedicated to the

THE OTHER FACE

THE MYSTERY OF THE DISAPPEARED

On 26 May 2013, 11 young people aged between 16 and 34 years, were "picked up" from a club in the "zona rosa" of Mexico City, the tourist area of the capital. The victims, 7 men and 4 women, were last seen in one of the rooms of the club, The Heaven, before being stopped by a group of masked men who forced them into 3 vans. This is the story of an alleged witness, who after a first contact with the police, has no longer been found. Since then, there has been no further news of these young people. The families staged a small demonstration and, together, travelled to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe to pray for the fate of their loved ones. The news, which caused a great sensation because it occurred in broad daylight and in a normally quiet area, is not, however, new in Mexico. Unfortunately, in fact, over the last few years, there have been about 26 thousand "disappeared" in the country, people seized by the narcos, the drug trafficking clans, or by the police and then disappeared into thin air, suddenly becoming like ghosts.

saint. *Matachines*, dancers who interpret ritual dance, dance all day and people come from all parts of the city to thank Saint Rita, spend a day of celebration together and eat the famous *empanadas* of *Saint Rita*. These special *empanadas*

(crescent-shaped dumplings, stuffed with meat, *ed.*) are a very famous and much loved specialty in Mexico. Too bad that 22 May is the only day of the year when it is possible to enjoy them, unless you have the recipe!

Empanadas of Santa Rita. Recipe

Ingredients for the filling

4 tablespoons of olive oil
500 g minced meat
3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
250 g potatoes, cut into cubes
90 g peas, cooked
90 g raisins
30 g pecans, chopped (you can also use almonds)
Salt, pepper, cinnamon, clove powder to taste
1 cup sherry

Ingredients for the dough

3 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 packet of butter, softened
1 cup warm milk
Extra sugar and cinnamon for decoration

Preparation

For the filling: stir fry the minced meat in a pan with 2 tablespoons of oil. In another pan, fry the garlic and onion with the remaining oil and add the potatoes, peas, raisins and nuts. Season with salt, pepper, cinnamon and clove powder. Add the meat and sherry, and cook over low heat for 10-15 minutes.

For the dough: Mix the flour and salt together. Stir in the butter and milk, without forming lumps. Let the dough rest for an hour. Create discs with the dough, placing the filling in the middle, and fold to close. Fry the empanadas in hot oil until golden brown.



Going towards the other

by Sr. M. Giacomina Stuani OSA

We all know how more important witness is than words. As Paul VI said, “modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers. and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (*Address to the members of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, 2 October 1974*). To be good witnesses, you must have experienced first-hand what you say, you must know what is being transmitted to be credible.

He who loves suffers because he sacrifices himself for the other

The daily commitment of Christians is to imitate the Lord, meek and humble of heart, to enter into relationship with each other with love and tenderness. The apex of

the tenderness and gentleness of God is the incarnation and the Cross, there where Love sacrifices itself up to death for the other, that is, for us. Being the tenderness of God for humanity constitutes the Christian; tenderness is the driving force of love and represents its most profound and authentic expression.

The commitment of the Christian is to imitate the Lord

Not everyone experiences this feeling because it is becoming increasingly difficult to find the courage to experience the suffering of love. He who loves suffers because he sacrifices himself for the other. Confidence in oneself and in the other, knowledge and consciousness of one's reactions, the ability to promote the good of the person without imposing, the disposition to protect and to love unconditionally and freely, and welcoming are fundamental in the basic setting of our way of being *a person in relationship*.

Pope Francis exhorts us so in one of his daily homilies: “The other grace is to overcome with love. There are many ways to win, but the grace that we request today is the grace of victory with love, through love. And this is not easy. Love consists in the meekness that Jesus taught us. And that is the victory!”. And on another occasion, to the meekness that should characterise the Christian, he adds benevolence: “This is the secret of Christian benevolence that always goes together with meekness. A Christian is a person who opens up his or her heart with this spirit of benevolence, because he or she has all, which is Jesus Christ. The other things are nothing. Some are good, they have a purpose, but in the moment of choice he or she always chooses all, which is Jesus”.

A legacy is a gift of love

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

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

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

The Christian is he who goes towards the others because they are worthy of love, not because they serve a purpose, who loves in a generous way, who is capable of welcoming and re-welcoming, who lives a love that

The Christian is a person who opens up his or her heart

gives confidence and freedom, is not possessive and selfish and for this reason is in a continuous process of growth in love, a process that is often arduous but exciting and fascinating. It is that of going beyond, that of tending towards a "something more",

Being for the other reciprocity, passion, life

towards the summit, open to the Infinite, with the knowledge that there is something to be achieved for which it is well worth struggling: the God of life.

To the love of God, which knows no limits, we only answer with an equally generous, mature, sincere and free love.

Being for the other reciprocity, passion, life: this is our commitment, on the frontline, every day, to witness to the world the good news of divine salvation. ■

Plan with God, live in the present.

**Come visit us
to discover yourself.**

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

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

We are waiting for you to live a few days with the Friend Jesus, in prayer, in friendship, in silence.

Monastery of Saint Rita, Cascia (Perugia)

For information:

Tel. 0743-76221

e-mail: monastero@santaritadacascia.org



A special thanks

Mike wanted to create a website as a gift to Santa Rita and all her devotees around the world, to share the joy of having saved his dear mother from a very severe accident. This is the story:

On May 23, I was informed that my mum had had a very serious accident. Running, I arrived on the spot and found her bleeding all over and unconscious, completely blocked. She had a broken leg, perforated liver and the brake pedal had

moment of clarity after the accident, her gaze fell on the medal on the dashboard: at that moment, she said she felt that Saint Rita would intervene and save her. Those coincidences taken together convinced me that Saint Rita, invoked by all as the Saint of impossible causes, had intervened from heaven and saved my mother, who is highly devoted to her, from certain death. And what gratitude more beautiful and bigger is there, besides imitating life, than creating for her many devotees around the world a website dedicated to her, to make her known and make her even more loved?" Here is the website: www.saint-rita.com.



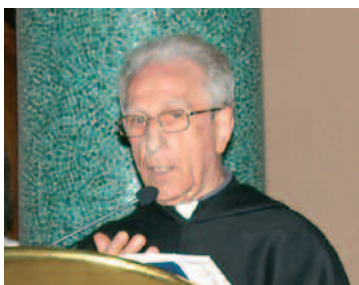
"My mother, a devotee of Saint Rita, never spent a day without a prayer to the Saint. Having to travel to go to work, every time she got into the car she turned to a small medal placed on the dashboard.

pierced her foot. She reached hospital in very serious conditions. A blood transfusion was necessary and the first woman to come forward was called Rita.

When she came out of the coma, she told me that, in a

Dear Mike, thanks for telling us the story to the glory of the Lord and Rita and thanks again for your gratitude in praise of the Nuns and the Holy for how they honour and give splendour to the home of Saint Rita, her Basilica-Sanctuary.

*Father Mario De Santis OSA,
Rector, Basilica of Saint Rita*



WRITE TO FATHER MARIO

Every pilgrim who comes to the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia undertakes a journey on the right track of Rita's values. Send testimony of your pilgrimage to Fr. Mario De Santis at padrerettore@santaritadacascia.org, giving us your consent to publish so that we can reflect together on the values that Rita transmits to us.



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Lets give
a nest to
those that
have none.

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

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

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It is our
task to let
them grow
serenely.

espresso

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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