

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine
of Saint Rita of Cascia

BIMONTHLY
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
MONASTERY
OF SAINT RITA
OF CASCIA

NO. 5 SEP-OCT 2016

EDITORIAL

Let's fall in love

INTERVIEW

**The President of FAI
comments on the encyclical**

AT THE SCHOOL OF A FUNERAL

**Farewell to Father Luigi Giuliani OSA,
103 years of passionate life**



LAUDATO SI'

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for the common home in the
encyclical of Pope Francis.*

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Let's fall in love

Dear friends of Saint Rita, taking the cue from the 11th National Day for the Custody of Creation on September 1, in this issue of "From the Bees to the Roses" we have decided to meditate with you on the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* by Holy Father Francis on care for the common home. If you have not already done so, I suggest you read it, it is really worth it, and you can also download the PDF from the Holy See's vatican.va site. It contains so many ideas that it was difficult to isolate the arguments. Reflecting on a personal level, what struck me most is "the theory of falling in love" proposed by the Pope.

Everything in the world is intimately connected, says the Pope, who goes back to St. Francis of Assisi to give an example of the behaviour to follow, a model of "integral ecology" (all-round, so to speak): "Just as happens when we fall in love with someone ... his response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. That is why he felt called to care for all that exists ... Such a conviction cannot be written off as naive romanticism, for it affects the choices which determine our behaviour. If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs".

In short, the relationship that we establish with the surrounding environment (natural, artificial) implies a transcendental falling in love. Just as happens in human relations. Only by loving can we truly respect. It seems trivial, simple, but it really is not. This is why I think it is food for thought for all of us. Starting from small gestures, we can really change the world. Respecting the context that welcomes us. In other words: let us wonder at the beauty of having a home. Let us fall in love with the wonder of this life.

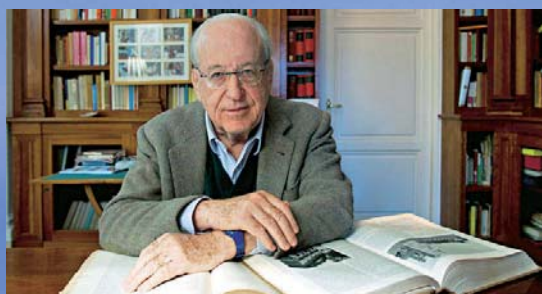


The cultural revolution of Francis

Andrea Carandini, president of the Italian Environment Fund (FAI), comments on the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis on care for the common home

by Valentina Fabbri

What is the added value of this encyclical, in your opinion? It is a circular document in it is as if Pope Francesco were speaking *urbi et orbi*. Only he, with his strong charisma, can address the whole world on issues that are at the same time earthly and otherworldly. *Laudato Si'* is an ecological and social encyclical, addressed



Andrea Carandini, President of FAI

to every person on the globe, which has started a dialogue with the whole world. New and innovative, it can be measured in both religious and “earthly” terms. It is an encyclical with the highest religious and historical value. As an archaeologist and president of the Italian Environment Fund,

I felt challenged by the Pope’s appeal; as an archaeologist, because of the strong sense of context, as president of the FAI, because only the environment is able to encompass nature, landscape and historical and artistic heritage together.

Are there some simple gestures that we can make concretely in our daily lives to feed this virtuous process? The Pope proposes a cultural, not just a spiritual, revolution. He stresses that it is desirable to invoke healthy and fertile human development, based on responsible administration of the globe. This way, we can start to talk about safeguarding the identities of cultures as a precious treasure of humanity.

Pope Francis says that everything in the world is of course intimately connected, and referring to St. Francis, takes him as an example. Do you agree with the Pope’s “theory”? Does the relationship with the environment imply a transcendental falling in love? His way of expressing himself becomes almost a form of self-criticism of the Catholic family. In this, he is also a Pope who is a forerunner. I come from a not ex-

THE PARIS AGREEMENT

On the occasion of Earth Day, 22 April 2016, representatives of 175 countries met in New York at the United Nations to sign the Paris Agreement on climate change and the fight against the devastating effects of global warming. Let's look at it in brief. First of all, why is it called the "Paris Agreement"? It all began with the conference in Paris in December 2015, where some important common goals were set, such as to limit the increase in global temperatures by 1.5 degrees Celsius. A small step, and there is still much to do, such as clearer engagement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Nevertheless a step. Unlike in Copenhagen in 2009, when the agreement was stalled, this time the whole world was party to the agreement, including the world's four biggest polluters: Europe, India, China and the United States also pledged to cut emissions (together, the United States and China alone account for over one-third of total emissions of carbon dioxide). How does the agreement work? First, a country becomes a party, then it is ratified_ these are two separate steps. On 22 April, 175 countries signed and 15 ratified the same day. Countries have one year of time, starting from 22 April, to sign. The agreement will enter into force when ratified by 55 countries (representing 55% of global greenhouse gas emissions), each according to their own national laws. At least 34 countries, corresponding to 49% of global greenhouse gas emissions, have ratified or have declared that they will ratify by 2016 (www.accordodiparigi.it). Italy has been a signatory to the agreement from the beginning and has begun the procedures for ratification. (MG)

actively curial Catholicism, I am agnostic and lay, so it gives me great hope to hear these words imbued with love for creation, for people and for their civilisation coming from a Pope who was elevated to role of father, especially of the poor and of the planet to be cared for.

Technology sometimes solves problems, but sometimes creates others. Here too, are you in line with the Pope's reflection? Technology develops and dominates with its own logic, without being accompanied by consciousness, responsibility and values. Humanity has values, but these values often

conflict. Take the example of the virtues he listed: justice, love, peace and beauty. Oddly enough, he does not speak of freedom. Taking as inspiration the values of justice and freedom, we must learn to dose them



IN A WORD

Edited by
Fr. Vittorino Grossi OSA

"God created the heaven and earth ... set the stars in the expanse of the heavens ... the earth he populated with living creatures. And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good, it was very beautiful". (Genesis, 1)

In the Greek version of the Septuagint, the author of the book of Genesis expresses the goodness/beauty of creation with a single term *kalòs* (good and beautiful) because, in Greek thought, what is good is also beautiful. Modern languages, however, have devolved good to acting ethically, beauty to aesthetics. In the biblical account of creation, the eye of God sees the good of heaven and earth as works born from his hand as artist of the universe. In contemplating it, the human being enjoys an attraction that is typical of those who fall in love. Nevertheless, the human gaze tends to become opaque when it is looked on as a good to be taken possession of. The hunger of possession thus covers the sight of its beauty, pushing the human being to become a murderer just to possess it.



INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

“Since everything is closely interrelated, and today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis, I suggest that we now consider some elements of an *integral ecology*, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions,” writes Pope Francis in Chapter IV of his *Laudato Si’* Encyclical Letter. When we speak of respect for creation, therefore, we must also refer to human ecology, making us human beings part of creation. Here is an extract of the testimony of Valeria Martano, a teacher in a school in the outskirts of Rome, who was at the press conference presenting the encyclical in June 2015:

“The big cities – and Rome – are taking on the face of the polarised city where anonymous suburbs stand alongside a privileged community and a tourist-business centre-showcase ... The outskirts of Rome are made up of neighbourhood-islands-quarters, poor in meeting places and often abandoned from the town planning point of view. People live between the workplace – if any – and shopping centres: human tissue, the true safety net for the weak, is impoverished. The difficulty of moving around takes time away from the family. The moans of sister Earth unite with the moans of the many weary in life.

Urban ecology, endangered by pollution, scarce services and pervasive individualism, is a challenge for we Christians. In the suburbs people live badly, their rage and sense of exclusion builds up ... The elderly are ‘expelled’ from the social fabric, placed in peripheral institutions. Young people retreat from an ugly world into a virtual world. The so-called ‘death of the neighbour’ is experienced ... Everyone tries to save themselves in their own corner. Each pursues their own interests. But there is a ‘community salvation’ which starts from inclusion of the weak, a precious resource of integral ecology. Is this ‘the kind of world,’ asks Pope Francis, ‘we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?’ So, conversion to responsible construction of the common house is required of everyone”.

TAKE
AND READ

This book is a valuable work because of the wealth of detail on the natural, cultural and socio-political context of Saint Rita and forms the background against which the author, Franciscan Sister Maria Elisabetta Patrizi (pictured), brings out the personality of the best known Augustinian saint in the world. "La presenza viva di Santa Rita. Ieri - oggi -



La presenza viva di Santa Rita (The Living Presence of Saint Rita)

Maria Elisabetta Patrizi
Tau Editrice, 25 €



domani" (The Living Presence of Saint Rita. Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow) has a clear, transparent and linear style. It contains almost photographic descriptions of specific places, as well as descriptions of the iconographic documentation of Saint Rita which, through her external features, bring out the inner life of the patron saint of impossible cases. The description of the youthful face of Rita – pretty, lively, strong-willed, devoted – is beautiful, followed by that of a more mature Rita, marked by the

trials of life and the searing pain of the thorn stuck in her forehead for fifteen years. The author's passion not only introduces us to the saint but places her in front of us as if wanting to etch her in our heart with live words that reveal an authentic faith and a great love for all that is holy and immaculate, and, above all, engages the reader in walking with Jesus along the way of the Gospel through Saint Rita, taking their hand and bringing them to the places and times in which Rita lived, loved, forgave, suffered, prayed and gave all of herself. The title of the book comes from the author's belief that the saints are alive in Christ and with Christ near to us all: for this reason, Rita is a "living presence"; it is up to us to encounter her and love her in every stage of her life – daughter, wife, mother, widow and nun with heroic virtues – present in the past, today and, more than ever, in our future.

in the right measure, otherwise they conflict with each other, generate contradictions and if we overdo it on side, we inevitably overdo it on the other. Pope Francis promotes a return to synthesis by carrying out a kind of spiritual, moral and cultural revolution.

The human sense of ecology and actively and humanly participating in these changes

... There has to be the participation of society, it is essential. Pope Francis considers that there is a unique socio-environmental crisis of a global nature; he appeals to everyone and everything to think of a project for *governance* of the global commons by a world political authority, implemented in peace and able to self-generate itself. This is not easy to imagine in concrete terms.

Young people are calling for change, must they participate in change ...

Of course, it could not be otherwise. They are the only ones who can and should implement change. Pope Francis is not so young, but he expresses himself in this way which is so innovative and young. Young people are fresh and willing for change, but action has seldom followed. They are intuitive and have the enthusiasm for active participation. FAI, which is not a political or a religious foundation, is happy because it has understood that its mission coincides with the path traced by Pope Francis in this encyclical. We place great hope in young people with numerous delegations of FAI Giovani (FAI Youth) and activities carried out on the territory.



PIA UNIONE PRIMARIA
SANTA RITA
DA CASCIA
Famiglia agostiniana

by Marta Ferraro

In Geraci Siculo, Saint Rita is in every family

The promoter of the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita of Cascia in Geraci Siculo is parish priest Don Francesco Saputo, extremely devoted to the Saint of impossible cases, as are most Sicilians. In fact, it is Sicily which has the highest number of members of the association and a massive presence of PUP prayer groups accredited by the Monastery

of Saint Rita of Cascia. Specifically, Sicilian PPU groups represent two-thirds of the total of all Italian associations, followed by Puglia which has 10 associations less.

On one of his many pilgrimages to Cascia, Don Francesco came into contact with and got to know the Pious Union, the prayer group which is part of the Order of St. Augustine: "I was very

impressed by the kindness and devotion of the Secretary General of the Association, Alessandra Paoloni," recalls the priest. "Back home, I felt I had to propose that my hometown Castelbuono should participate in the PPU given that devotion to Saint Rita was already very developed". In fact, a brotherhood of both men and women dedicated to the saint of the impossible had already existed for some time in Castelbuono, a town about one hundred kilometres from Palermo. The women's sec-

***Sicily has the highest number
of PPU groups***





The Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, where the Geraci Siculo PPU group (opposite page) meets in the name of Rita.

and the Augustinian nuns. Belonging to the Pious Union is a way to feel close and united in prayer with those who daily experience the condition of Saint Rita in her places every day". In addition, being part of the PPU is also a way to stay up-to-date on local meetings organised by the Monastery with the main goal of spreading the values for which Saint Rita lived.

The PPU in Geraci Siculo is particularly active, especially during the period of the feast of Saint Rita. The community prepares for May 22, gathering in prayer for all the Fifteen Thursdays of Saint Rita that precede the feast, and for the Eucharistic Adoration. Subsequently, on May 22, during the celebration of Holy Mass, the bread and rose petals are blessed which associates and devotees then distribute to the sick of the whole community: "We decided to reach out specifically to the sick and the elderly, to recall Saint Rita's commitment to the last and the abandoned. Reaching out to the sick and elderly in the town is like entering the homes of all, because here the average age is very high. In this way, Saint Rita goes to visit everyone. It also is a sign of presence that is always appreciated". (MF)

tion immediately accepted the parish priest's proposal with great enthusiasm and today there are more than 100 members.

But the experience of the Pious Union has evolved and strengthened with the establishment, by the same priest, of a second PPU association, this time in the community of Geraci Siculo, a small town 150 kilometres from Palermo, where Don Francesco has been performing his ministry for the last six years. Today, the PPU in Geraci Siculo has 30 members. Given that the town

has less than 2000 souls, it can be said that on average there is a least one member for each family; in other words, there is a germ of devotion to Saint Rita in every household in the town.

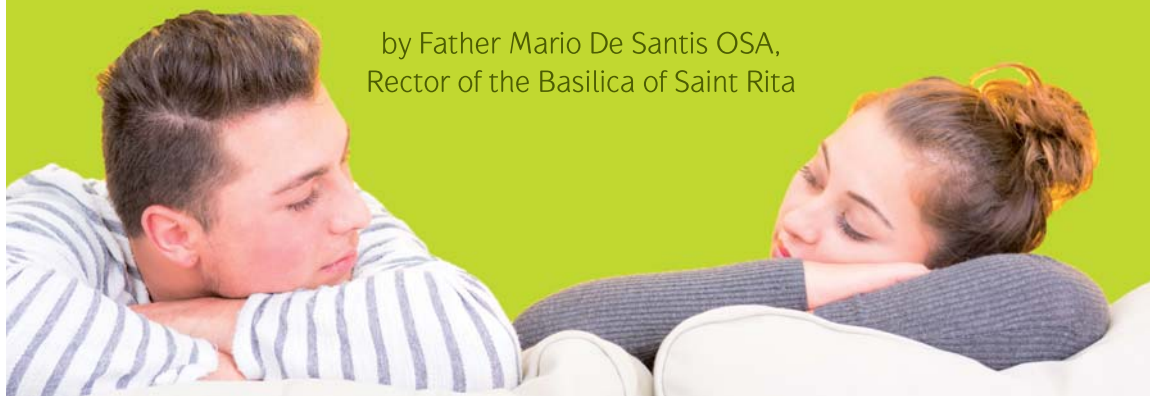
Notwithstanding the positive experience of devotees of Rita in the Geraci PUP, devotion to Saint Rita was already very fervent before Don Francesco and the Primary Pious Union arrived in the town. However, according to the parish priest, what the association has guaranteed is "a direct line to the Monastery of Cascia

JOIN THE PPU

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

Marriage: that forever ... forever unstable!

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



In October 2015, Pope Francis had the courage to call bishops and experts to a universal synod with the theme of “The vocation and mission of the family in the Church and in the contemporary world”, in a world that is changing dramatically, in a culture of uncertainty represented by slogans like: “as far as possible” ... “then we will see” ... and other similar expressions, certainly not indicating a bond *usque ad mortem* (until death, *ed.*), or forever. But God unites the hearts of a man and a woman who love each other and unites them in unity and indissolubility. This means that the purpose of marriage is not only to live together forever, but to love each other forever! Only in the light of the folly of the gratuity of the Easter love of Jesus can the folly of the gratuity of a unique and *usque ad mortem* conjugal love be understood.

The journey of the couple begins in the Common Home, in the created, in the natural *habitat* of man and woman. The Church has always treasured this wonderful and sublime divine command, has lavished energy and pastoral commitment, accom-

panying the man and the woman along the difficult conjugal path, encouraging stability and loyalty to “that forever” ... forever unstable, conscious of the inevitable difficulties present in the hearts of the man and the woman. Christian doctrine is very clear on the sacrament of marriage, confirmed by the Synod as a faithful and indissoluble union between man and woman, called on to accept one another and embrace life. At No. 61, the Synod says that it is important “to have the consciousness that we are all weak, like other sinners, without renouncing affirmation of the goods and values of Christian marriage. It is also worth being aware that in God’s plan the family is not a duty, but a gift, and that today the decision to enter the sacrament is not something already given from the outset, but a step to be developed and a destination to reach; for people who have contracted civil marriage and who are divorced and remarried, and who simply live together, it is for the Church to reveal to them the divine pedagogy of grace in their lives and help them reach the fullness of God’s plan in them”.

TWENTY YEARS OF RITA

"We are Michele's group" is how the pilgrims of Rutigliano (Bari) define themselves and who, every year since 1996, come to the Sanctuary of Saint Rita in Cascia, coordinated by Michele Tangorra. Besides being a testimony of faith, the pilgrimage is also a beautiful demonstration of solidarity. In fact, the group comes to Cascia loaded with foodstuffs collected thanks to the generosity of the people of Puglia, in particular thanks to the contribution of the Divella and Giuliano Puglia Fruit companies. Michele and his companions begin the pilgrimage in their home territory, going round businesses that produce foodstuffs and asking them for a donation. In this way, they arrive in Cascia "full of food" which, after Holy Mass, they hand over to the nuns of the Monastery of Saint Rita for distribution to the needy. Then a final stop in Roccaporena, at the Rock, because there, they confess, "we really feel Rita very close" and then the group takes to the road back south. *(Rita Gentili)*



MY GREETINGS TO YOU

I would like to open a page that has to do with "that forever" that is, yes, related to married life and religious life *usque ad mortem*, but certainly not related to the rotating community dynamism of "here today ... tomorrow there" ... according to pastoral and community needs.

Well, the time has also come for Father Mario, Rector of Cascia, for "tomorrow there" ... in Pavia, because the "here today" in Cascia is over. Yes, I will go to Pavia to guard the sacred remains of the Holy Father Augustine, the spiritual father of Saint Rita and the entire Augustinian family. In short, from Daughter to Father! I greet all the pilgrims I have met and served for eight "gruelling" years; the Mother Abbess, Mother Natalina Todeschini and Sisters; my brothers; collaborators and workers of the Sanctuary; I greet all the people of Cascia and thank them for all their demonstrations of kindness. Finally, I greet with affection on behalf of the Augustinian Family of Cascia, the new rector who will take over from me at the Sanctuary, Father Bernardino Pinciaroli, wishing him all the best in his new job. Bye to everyone! *Father Mario*

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On the road of the good Samaritan

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

The road travelled by the Good Samaritan, from Jerusalem to Jericho, is singled out by Pope Francis as the way of mercy for all men of good will. In the mid-1900s, this road became a model to follow in the life of Charles Eugene de Foucauld who, in religious life, is known as Brother Charles of Jesus. He was born into a noble family in Strasbourg with the title of Viscount of Pontbriand on 15 September 1858, the same year as the apparitions at Lourdes.

At the age of 20, Charles de Foucauld became an army officer and in October 1880 was sent to Algeria as part of “a column manoeuvring in the highlands, south of Saida”. He then left the army to devote himself to travelling in Algeria and Morocco, with Algiers always as his base point. At the age of 28, he returned to Paris for a period of rest. On Sundays, he went to Mass in the Church of St. Augustine. One Sunday, he was reading the Gospel passage about the Good Samaritan and he wrote in his diary: “you will no longer forget the road that leads from Jerusalem to Jericho”. This was his conversion to embodying the Good Samaritan. He returned to Algeria, no longer dressed as a soldier but in white like Arabs. And, like them, he began as a good Samaritan to travel the roads of the Sahara desert inhabited by the Tuareg, no longer with armed soldiers who kill, but as one of them: he was now Brother Charles of Jesus, brother of the Arabs. Following the example of Charles de Foucauld (the centenary of whose death falls this

year), the aim of the contributions to “From the Bees to the Roses”, the magazine of Saint Rita, has been to offer some lines for understanding mercy, giving them as a blessing for those who will be able to be *merciful like the Father*.

Mercy is the only divine and human way of relating: God comes closer to us in mercy; we creatures relate to each other, at the level of living, only in mutual mercy. In fact, mercy has no boundaries of space or race or ethnicity or culture, because it mediates the encounter between the human creatures which they are in their existential condition. While forgiveness confronts the person who has to forgive and the other who receives it, mercy only brings closer and embraces one’s fellow as he or she is. To be reunited with his father and wear the new clothes for the party offered to him by his father who had been waiting for him since he left, the *prodigal son* of the Gospel, for example, did not first have to take a shower.

The humanitarian turning point of our times – all to do with migration between those arriving and those who are waiting for no one while others have already arrived – awaits mercy: for greeting, welcoming and living together. Pope Francis teaches us: “No one can place a limit on divine mercy because its doors are always open” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 23). So far, as we know, it has not always been so, but through this Jubilee Year, mercy is opening up new scenarios of humanity.



Mercy, beyond the confines of the Church

by Msgr. Giovanni Scanavino OSA

On a number of occasions throughout Jubilee Year, Pope Francis has reaffirmed the courageous intention of taking mercy beyond the confines of the Church, in particular towards the great religions of Judaism and Islam, and to other noble religious traditions of the African world and the Orient.

Judaism and Islam have the same biblical concept of mercy: “both consider mercy to be one of God’s most important attributes. Israel was the first to receive this revelation which continues in history as the source of an inexhaustible richness meant to be shared with all mankind ... Among the privileged names that Islam attributes to the Creator are “Merciful and Kind” ... They [Muslims] too believe that no one can place a limit on divine mercy because its doors are always open” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 23).

Pope Francis thus officially expresses the desire that “this Jubilee year celebrating the mercy of God will foster an encounter with these religions and with other noble religious traditions”, and adds two specific purposes: “may it open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; may it eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect, and drive out every form of violence and discrimination” (*ibid.*). So far this has not been the case. We have had to record too much violence and shed too many tears. Will that fraternal embrace still be possible, to see Jerusalem finally at peace and to dream new peaceful relations with Islam? Too many no longer believe so, and we are almost at the end of the Jubilee Year. What is still missing in our Christian witness to encourage consoling reconciliation?





We have to believe, against all hope, and offer the same love of Christ Crucified. We have not yet reached this point: only the Cross of Christ attains peace. Too much historical encrustation make us doubt the good intentions of others. Too many betrayals cloud the clarity of brotherly love; too many are convinced of praising God when they manage to kill the enemy of their religion.

We have to love like Christ, up to death and death on the cross. All the rest is only sterile chatter, what we read every day in the newspapers or hear in television debates. The past of history is before the eyes of all: each opponent can refer to concrete violence against Jews or against Christians or against Muslims. In this way, the testimony of each side today is before the eyes of all. But what is the testimony that more than any other can convince us that we are strongly founded on mercy? The one that is ready to die for friends and enemies. If we are unable to convince that our religion is

based on love – because “God is love” – nothing can be done: we must accept the contradictions of history. If instead – as Pope Francis teaches us – we, all we Christians, reduce history to a single experience of love, like that of the martyrs, only then will this love also conquer the few who remain violent. Our faith, our testimony, is a question of love; only love is stronger than violence. If we do not unite to propose this love, which lives in our hearts and which is the same Love of the Trinity, because it is called the Holy Spirit ... if we do not pursue the same line of charity in welcoming the poor and desperate from every sea, even despite the whole of Europe, no one will ever understand that for us, for our religious faith, mercy is our inalienable concrete face, and will disarm if it wants to act in the name of God, Allah or Yahweh. This is the true power of faith in the one God: a God who would like share his own strength to unite in love. This is the only and final phase of merciful love: *faith working through charity* (Gal 5: 6).

WHAT CAN I DO?

The Pope invites us to perform the seven corporal works of mercy and the seven spiritual works of mercy. We continue our journey by reflecting on the 3rd, 4th and 5th works of spiritual mercy.

ADMONISH THE SINNER.

Let us start from the premise that we are all sinners, without exception. So, having established that there is no one among us who is “righteous” or “without sin”, who can put this work into practice? Everyone. The sinner who helps the other sinner. It almost sounds easy, but in reality we often prefer to talk behind someone’s back rather than tell them to their face what in our view is not right; we prefer to spy, instead of going to our “sinner friend” and warning them of the error. Let’s reflect on this.

COMFORT THE AFFLICTED.

You know that saying “a friend in need is a friend indeed”? Let’s talk about this. When someone is experi-

encing a moment of great pain, whether of physical, spiritual or psychological origin, why it is that it is difficult to be close to the suffering person in such a moment? It will have happened to all of us to draw back in the face of a cry for help. Being present is difficult. But this is where we have to start again, because life is made of human warmth and we have a duty to add ours.

FORGIVE OFFENCES.

Saint Rita showed us this: the path of reconciliation passes through the forgiveness of offences, but it is all uphill – both because forgive a wrong requires great humility, deep trust in others and extreme courage, and because reconciliation takes place only if all the persons involved take this path. A tip can be: address, if not immediately at least so soon as possible, unresolved issues with boldness of heart and the truth of words.



The son who returns

Edited by Rita Gentile

Stories of life lived
returning to god

Story of how I was reborn

Testimony of Gianni, 44, a former drug addict,
now guest of the non-profit Comunità Incontro Onlus

In Don Pierino's community, all are welcomed like normal people and we addicts are not normal. My story begins way back: at the age of 15-16 I smoked joints, at the age of 19 I was taking ecstasy and then that first sniff. At first, it was a latent need and a life that apparently functioned like that of any family: I met Laura, now my ex-wife, then came two children, a job as an accounting clerk. Slowly and without realising it, however, my life was falling apart. I thought I could handle drugs but I began to use them more and more often and I realised the damage they were causing: I was neglecting family, parents and friends, I wasn't going to work in order not to be seen "under the influence", I wasn't bringing money home and I was asking around for loans. When my licence was taken away for driving under the influence of cocaine, that was the straw that broke the camel's back: I lost my job, I was depressed

and desperate and suffocated these feelings in alcohol and drugs. I felt I was bursting, I could see no future, I wanted to destroy myself, but I continued doing my own thing. That was until I met a guy who told me his story, very similar to mine, and told me about the new family he had built after he had been in Comunità Incontro, which he had been out of for ten years. I asked him to get in touch with them: I wanted to go back to being a free man, like that guy had returned to being himself. For sixteen months I have now been in this "valley of hope", as Don Pierino called it. At first it was hard; it was a bit like going back to school. Communities have rules, schedules, commitments, responsibilities to be observed that drugs had completely taken away from me. For me, for example, it was impossible to be punctual. It's a hard path, but it's helping me. We are about 80 guys, each with his own story, but all

aware that without this help, death would have awaited us. When I entered I was afraid, I was afraid of everything and everyone; now I'm finding myself and the good in me. I help those who have just entered and I have found that doing so makes me feel good and gives me something that I didn't have until now. I'm an "almost" normal person, I judge nobody, I'm balanced and patient but I think I still need time. Faith is playing a crucial role and I'm not saying this rhetorically: drugs drain you of all the sound principles that the family teaches you. Words like dignity, respect, patience and love are cancelled by drugs. I have rediscovered the joy of praying with others, every day I recite the Rosary which I had never done, I have read the Bible again and I make communion every Sunday: now it is Jesus Christ who is putting the strength in me. A rebirth, which is what it's all about, that I dedicate to my children.

COMUNITÀ INCONTRO

Founded by Father Pierino Gelmini, the non-profit Comunità Incontro Onlus offers care and support to people in need (men and women, also with children), victims of drug, alcohol and gambling addiction. Its headquarters are in Amelia (Terni), but has centres in different parts of Italy and the world. For more information: website www.comunitaincontro.org - e-mail segreteria@comunitaincontro.org - tel. +39 0744977204.



APPOINTMENTS

Cascia (Perugia), from October 9 to 12 Triduum and Feast of Blessed Mother Fasce

We celebrate together the Feast of Blessed Mother Maria Teresa Fasce (Toriglia, 1881 - Cascia, 1947), which falls on October 12. **From October 9 to 11**, preaching of the Triduum will take place, curated by Father Giuseppe Pagano in the Lower Basilica which houses the body of Blessed Fasce: at 17:00, Holy Rosary; at 18.00, Mass. **Wednesday October 12** at 18.00, Msgr. Renato Boccardo, Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, will celebrate Holy Mass. Abbess of the Monastery of Saint Rita for 27 years, "the Mother" has marked the history of Cascia and devotion to Saint Rita through the realisation of our magazine, "From the Bees to the Roses", and construction of today's Basilica. Mother Fasce is the also woman who made Ritian charity concrete through the "Beehive of Saint Rita" project for children from families in distress (see pp. 18-19 of this issue, dedicated to the upcoming 20th anniversary of her beatification which we will be celebrating in 2017).

Live TV coverage on Rete 4, November 6 Mass from the Basilica and closing of the Holy Door

On Sunday, November 6, Saint Rita will arrive in the homes of all her devotees, thanks to live TV coverage to be broadcast on Rete 4. From 10:00 until 11:00, the Mediaset channel will provide live coverage from Cascia of the Holy Mass celebrated in the Basilica of Saint Rita by the Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, Msgr. Renato Boccardo, in the presence of the newly-appointed rector, Augustinian Father Bernardino Pinciaroli. This will be followed by the ceremony for the closing of the Holy Door, opened on the occasion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

WYD FOR MERCY

World Youth Day closed on July 31. This year, young people from all over the world assembled in Krakow, in the Poland of St. John Paul II. It was the fifth of the eight beatitudes announced by Jesus that was chosen by Pope Francis as the theme for reflection of this 31st edition: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (*Mt 5,7*), in perfect sync with his pontificate and with the proclamation of the ongoing Extraordinary Holy Year. One of the stopping points for many young pilgrims was the tomb of St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, apostle of Divine Mercy, and the Sanctuary consecrated by St. John Paul II, precisely to entrust the world to Divine Mercy.

RESTORATION IN THE BASILICA

Summer in Cascia saw the staff of local technicians summoned by the Monastery of Saint Rita and restorers face a challenging and equally delicate emergency inside the Basilica of Saint Rita: in early July, substantial blocks of plaster fell from the central dome, seriously damaging frescoes by artist Luigi Montanarini. Action was taken immediately to limit the damage as much as possible.



Mother Fasce, 20 years since beatification

by Cristina Siccardi

Of Mother Fasce, the Roman Martyrology states: *"In the city of Cassia, Italy, Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce, abbess of the monastery of the Order of St. Augustine, who was able to combine asceticism and contemplation with charity towards pilgrims and indigents"*. It was Sun-

amples of the faithful following of Christ, including another member of the Augustinian Order, Father Elias del Soccorso (1882-1928), martyr of the Mexican government, professed priest. Teresa of Cascia and Elia del Soccorso are two masterpieces of life, two examples of evangelical wisdom in the

celebrated in 2017, as will the 70 years from the *dies natalis* of the extraordinary Abbess of Cascia (Mother bands ascended into heaven on 18 January 1947, *editor's note*).

In his homily on 12 October 1997, John Paul II said: *"The Augustinian family is living an extraordinary day today, because it sees united in the glory of the altars the representatives of two branches of the Order, the apostolic, with Bl. Elías del Socorro Nieves, and the contemplative, with Bl. Maria Teresa Fasce ... We glorify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, because the new blessed, baptised in the name of the Blessed Trinity, collaborated with God's grace with persevering heroism. Fully participating in divine life, they now contemplate the glory of the Lord, face to face, enjoying the fruits of blessedness proclaimed by Jesus in the 'Sermon on the Mount': 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Mt 5:3). Yes, the kingdom of heaven belongs to these faithful servants of God, who followed Christ to the end, fixing their gaze on*



St. Peter's Square crowded with faithful on 12 October 1997, the day of beatification of Mother Fasce by St John Paul II.

Teresa Fasce is beatified by John Paul II

day 12 October 1997 when Mother Teresa Fasce (1881-1947), professed nun of the Order of St. Augustine, was beatified by Pope John Paul II. On the same Sunday, the Pope also beatified other ex-

Augustinian family. Their lives coincide with a moment of rebirth of the Order, after the great liberal suppressions of the nineteenth century. The 20th anniversary of their beatification will be

Devotion to Rita spread throughout the world

him. With their lives they witnessed to him who died on the Cross and was raised for them and for all people“.

The message of Blessed Mother Teresa Face, from her deep maternal heart, is contained in the phrase she often repeated: *“I want it even though it costs, I want it because it costs, I want it at any cost”*. This motto encompasses all the value that the Blessed has transmitted to posterity, both to the Augustinian order, in its daughters and his sons, and to the faithful. The process of beatification clearly documents her loyalty to the contemplative vocation and the effort to make her community grow in the same spirit. She wanted a well-formed community and she obtained it. She frequently exhorted her sisters telling them: *“Read, teach, meditate”*. She gave a great impetus to the monastery and spread devotion to Saint Rita of Cascia worldwide: her spiritual dimension was key to religious and moral reconstruction in Cascia, and beyond. She was a woman of great strength, giving proof of this both by demonstrating her high organisational talent and by enduring her serious infirmities. She said: *“Our banner is the cross and we are happy to embrace it”* and *“Who does not suffer does not love. Chosen souls are like Jesus crucified”*. Behind these words lies a deep Christological spirituality, which also re-

flects that of Saint Rita, of St. Clare of Montefalco and of St. Augustine himself, who said: *“No one can cross the sea of this world if not carried by the cross of Christ”* (Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John 2.2).

Devotion to Mother Teresa Fasce, dispenser of miracles and grace, is mainly linked to her Augustinian monastery of Cascia and a little to her home town of Torriglia (Genoa). However, it is still little known compared with what she deserves and the good that could be bestowed even more if invoked. She was able to sublimate all human limits, as Father Miguel Ángel Orcasitas OSA has explained: *“This way of living her human limitations, which so resembles that of Saint Rita of Cascia, forged a maternal spirit in Teresa with which she sought to give peace of mind and courage to the sisters. With the peace that generates faith in providence and the mercy of God, Teresa accepted illness and death. She thus leaves us the example of a life in which she constantly struggled to overcome difficulties, to defend her vocation to reform his community, and to carry out social works of extraordinary importance”*, as shown by the Beehive which she founded to accommodate orphan girls (now the home welcomes children from families in distress, editor's note), the home of the “Little Bees” who still live today with her and thanks to her. ■

SMILING AT LIFE

Send photos of your children to monastero@saintritedecascia.org with the consent of both parents for publication. Photos with incomplete or illegible consent will not be considered.

1



2



3



4



5



6



1. Arianna and Alessandro Pedetti, Emma and Sara Nocentino (Cucciago CO - Italy)
2. Clelia Abela (Italy)
3. Keita Sanna (Turin - Italy)
4. Leonardo Trona (Courmayeur AO - Italy)
5. Rosanna Lalario (Carbonara BA - Italy)
6. Samuele Ascari (Italy)

At the school of a funeral

Letter to Father Luigi Giuliani OSA, ascended to heaven after 103 years of passionate life

by Father Remo Piccolomini OSA

Dear Father Giuliani, when we agreed about the homily to give on your and my death, it was you who told me: “When I die, it will be you to give it for me”. I answered you: “If I die first, it will be you to give it for me”. But you expected something else, certainly joking: “But,” you said “you will have to talk about me”. I answered you: “You can forget that; if I did, I would also have to tell some lies. Honestly, in a sermon for the funeral of my brother, and what’s more very dear to me, that would displease me”.

When you die, your presence in this coffin, in front of all of us, will itself be a school where, with our spelling book and

The finishing line of the race for life is God

notebook, we will write down your lesson: “Dear brothers, nephews and friends all, write: I will tell you how manage the spiritual forces, with dedication, with sacrifice, suffering to the full, giving the last “thrust of the back”, like cyclists when they make the sprint. The strongest will win”.

The author of the book of Job offers us the occasion: tempted by the devil, deprived of goods, the family and health and forced to sit on a pile of ashes, deserted by his wife, betrayed by friends. In the end it was he who was victorious, he who won the fight. After *my skin is destroyed, having left the flesh, I will see God*. The goal has been reached, victory is assured: it is *the ecstatic contemplation of the splendour of the Beauty of the Supreme God, Father of all Beauty*.



Father Luigi Giuliani

To reach it, how much road to travel! How many efforts! How much fatigue! Until *agony*, that is, the extreme fight. The extreme fight is the sign of man’s rebellion at the end, at death. Man is made for life; man feels a strong *desire for life*. The true meaning of the word *desire* is that which comes from its Latin derivation *de sideribus*: from the stars, that is, from heaven, from God. Man, created in the image and likeness of God, bears his image indelibly impressed in the heart, a sign of profound communion with God. From Him we come, to Him we return.

The finishing line of the race for life is God, sought with vivid desire, possessed with love, love that always burns and is enjoyed in contemplative ecstasy, love which, as St. Augustine himself tells us in the Rule, we seek: *not as slaves living under the law but as men living in freedom under grace*; men and women who offer their free heart for the construction of the monastic community.

Dear Father Giuliani, what more do we want? What could your death teach us better if not life? It is that of the “Saturday

What could your death teach us better if not life?

without evening”, of the Saturday of life. Now I can also say goodbye with the words of Holy Father Augustine, literally the finest, experienced first-hand, that the Saint wrote in his Confessions to remember the very dear friend, the *my sweet friend*, who along with me passionately sought the truth and who asked me without giving me time to breathe. But let us hear Augustine himself, his words are also delightful: “*now he lives in Abraham’s bosom. Whatever is signified by that term ‘bosom,’ ‘there lives my Nebridius, my sweet friend, thy son by*

adoption, O Lord, and not a freedman any longer. There he lives; for what other place could there be for such a soul? There he lives in that abode about which he used to ask me so many questions – poor ignorant one that I was. Now he does not put his ear up to my mouth, but his spiritual mouth to thy fountain, and drinks wisdom as he desires and as he is able – happy without end. But I do not believe that he is so inebriated by that draught as to forget me; since thou, O Lord, who art the draught, art mindful of us (Confessions IX, 4, 6)”. ■

FATHER LUIGI, AN AUGUSTINIAN LIFE

Father Luigi Giuliani, known as Gino, a priest of the Order of St. Augustine, entered the peace of the Kingdom of God on 23 July 2016. Father Giuliani, who was born in Onano (Viterbo) on 29 October 1913, was the oldest religious of the province of Italian Augustinians and for everyone, his confreres and the many pilgrims coming to Cascia who wanted to meet him and listen to him, he was an example of perseverance and, at the same time, also a living historical memory of the last century of life of the Order. He became an Augustinian at the age of 17 and was ordained priest in 1936. In Gubbio, he lived the harshness of the Second World War and became an apostle among the war-torn population, especially in 1944 when the German army killed forty “martyrs” from Gubbio. He served as provincial superior of the Augustinians of Umbria for two consecutive terms, a service that he performed with great humanity, always trying to exploit the talents of the individual religious, especially in studies. Father Giuliani lived the rest of his long earthly pilgrimage in Cascia, serving at the Sanctuary of Saint Rita where, as a young cleric, he had been able to meet Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce and many Augustinian nuns who have marked the recent history of the Sanctuary in Cascia. For over sixty years, he was the main animator and then faithful collaborator of the rectors who came and went at the Sanctuary, through the service of the confessional, celebration of the Eucharist, preaching and, above all, welcoming and guiding millions of pilgrims eager to visit the monastery in Cascia where Saint Rita had lived.



Rita, ecological saint?

by Father Giuseppe Caruso OSA

Some recent historical research has given substance to the hypothesis that Rita and her husband Paolo operated the Collegiacone mill, near Roccaporena, for some years.

We like to think of Rita as a woman who worked in a family business; it is nice to imagine her engaged in an activity that put her in close contact with the world of nature.

gift from the Creator which was to be used but, at the same time, taken care of.

Rita, ecological saint?

Yes, but with a simple and appropriate clarification. The exercise of charity is the fundamental and consistent attitude of the saint of Cascia; above all, charity towards a

PRAYER

“God, merciful Father,
in your Son, Jesus Christ, you have
revealed your love
and poured it out upon us in the Holy
Spirit, the Comforter,
We entrust to you today the destiny of the
world and of every man and woman”.
We entrust to you especially the young
people of every language, people and
nation: guide them and protect them
along the intricate paths of the world
today
and give them the grace to gather
abundant fruit from the experience of
World Youth Day in Krakow.

Heavenly Father,
make us witnesses of Thy mercy.
Teach us to bring the faith to the
doubters,
hope to the discouraged,
love to the indifferent,
forgiveness to those who hurt
and joy to the unhappy.
Make that spark of merciful love that you
have lit within us become a fire that
transforms hearts and renews the face of
the earth.

Mary, Mother of Mercy, pray for us. St.
John Paul II, pray for us. Saint Faustina,
pray for us.

(Prayer for WYD 2016 -
www.krakow2016.com)



From nature comes grain, that precious seed that farmers took to her for milling. By the quiet and steady flow of the river, the energy that operated the gear of the mill, Rita, who was used to seeing the presence of God in everything, will certainly have felt the atmosphere that surrounded her as a

GRACE RECEIVED

TESTIMONY OF CATERINA NARRACCI, CONVERSANO (BA) – ITALY

After about 57 years and holding back tears of emotion, 75-year-old Vito Murro from Conservano, finally found the courage to enjoy the greatness of Saint Rita, recounting the grace he received from the Saint of 'impossible cases'. "Early one morning, at the age of around 18 way back in 1959, as I got out of bed, I suddenly felt a sharp pain in my leg first and then all over my body. The discomfort forced me to stay in bed blocked and dying for a year and a half". No longer feeling shame, the pensioner described the indescribable suffering of those years spent in a bedroom, between hospitals and specialised medical visits, followed by the miraculous healing. Months passed with him having to had to stay in bed, seeing his brother and three sisters leading a normal life and his parents making great sacrifices to cure him. Over time, the medical diagnosis of his illness, initially defined as severe rheumatism caused perhaps by hard work, was to be archived as an "impossible case" that would reduce Vito Murro to a vegetative state. At a certain point, his mother confided in her neighbour, who told her to place her trust in Saint Rita and pray to her. From then on, he did not have to wait long for the "night of miracles": "One night, after a year and a half spent in bed, at the age of 19, I dreamed of the statue in procession and, passing a fountain," said the pensioner in tears, "I saw Saint Rita pass by the window of my room, turn around, look at me and bow". The next morning, Vito Murro was completely healed, resuming his work with great enthusiasm. Cured miraculously, he now has a wife three children and six grandchildren, two of whom are twins, like the Saint of impossible cases.

deeply loved God, and then to others, expanding the horizon from the family to the religious community, and then the whole of humanity, as those who turned to her for

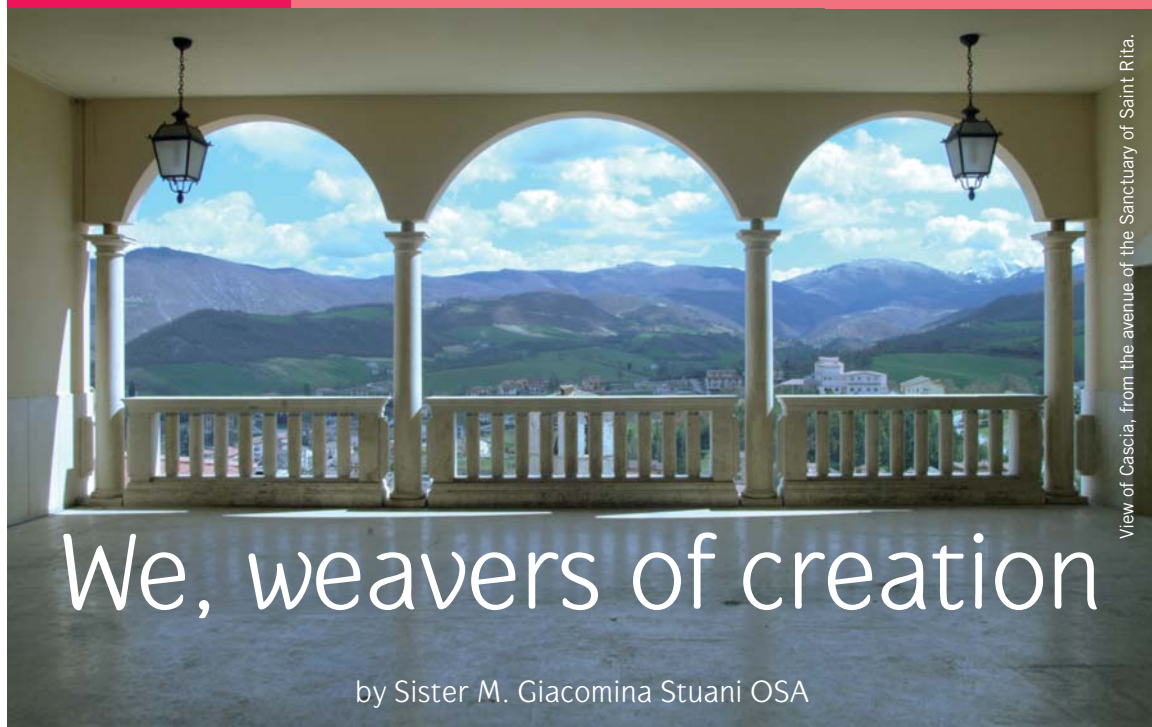
help over the centuries can testify; but, of course, also charity towards our world, the common home that God has given us to live in and safeguard. ■

THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

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

Alessandro Da Dio (Capua CE - Italy)
Angela Pizzolotto (Sanremo IM - Italy)
Anna Maddalena Adami (Sanremo IM - Italy)
Carlo Corradino (Vercelli - Italy)
Giuseppina Di Vizio (Toronto - Canada)
Felice Palumbo (Rutigliano BA - Italy)
Francesco De Angelis (Cascia PG - Italy)
Josefa Ferré Méndez (Olesa de Montserrat B - Spain)

Liliana Arnaboldi (Morbio Inferiore - Switzerland)
Lucia Puopolo (Albano Laziale RM - Italy)
Maria Claudini (Montecchio Precalcino VI - Italy)
Maria Porpora (Lettere NA - Italy)
Maria Domenica Meloni (Siniscola NU - Italy)
Maria Rosa Bortoli (Montecchio Precalcino VI - Italy)
Ovidio Fernando Dito (Marcellina CS - Italy)
Paola Pro (Rome - Italy)
Paolina Romano (North Melbourne - Australia)
Piera Santarelli (Turin - Italy)
Santina Antoniotti and Silvestro Bibanco (Musile di Piave VE - Italy)
Stefano Defilippis (Rutigliano BA - Italy)
Stella Maria Civati Vitale (Monza MB - Italy)
Tommaso Stanizzi (Cropani CZ - Italy)
Tonino Petrelli (Carmiano LE - Italy)
Vincenzo Iozzino (Lettere NA - Italy)



We, weavers of creation

by Sister M. Giacomina Stuari OSA

“**A**longside the ecology of nature, there exists what can be called a *human ecology*, which in turn demands a *social ecology*. All this means that humanity, if it truly desires peace, must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology. Experience shows that *disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence*, and vice versa. It becomes more and more evident that there is an inseparable link between peace with creation and peace among men. Both of these presuppose peace with God”. These words of Benedict XVI (Message for the celebration of World Day of Peace 2007) refer to a more pronounced sensitivity to the ecological problem. To be authentic, consecrated life and spirituality must also be truly ecological. This is an increasingly emerging awareness and is recalled by Pope Francis in the *Laudato Si'*

We have lost education in the sense of admiration

encyclical in this way: “... whenever he [St. Francis of Assisi] would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise. He communed with all creation [...] If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters”. (Para.11).

We have lost education in the sense of admiration, wonder, reading creation, nature and all its reality with a gaze full of wonder and charm. This could be a first step in our new relationship with nature ... Awaken the aesthetic sense, the sense of beauty for all that surrounds us, leading a lifestyle based on the search for truth, beauty, goodness, respect for the environment and the free nature of human relationships. Here is the point from which to start: from wonder of being, from wonder at the perfection of the created realities that surround us.

“We have been given the canvas of the universe by God, built with patient weaving, not to be unravelled by us but for us to con-

tinue to embroider it with all the wisdom of our genius". These words of Msgr. Tonino Bello call each of us to the responsibility of *homo viator*, wayfarer on the roads of the world, who crosses creation and nature and leaves his footprint, and must also make efforts to return it to future generations safeguarded and improved. We must regain our role as weavers of creation.

How can we nuns, consecrated persons, contribute to safeguarding the environment? With what spirituality, attitude, path, style of life? What relationship with nature? In the "Un'itinerario formativo per una Vita Religiosa Profetica" (Educational Itinerary for a Prophetic Religious Life) document of 2010 edited by the Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation USG/UISG, section 42

Here is the point from which to start: from wonder of being

reads: "Awareness of the environmental crisis facing the planet reinforces the need for education with a strong ecological spirituality. Creation is simultaneously a subject of contemplation and commitment. The Spirit of God, creative force that brings everything into being, acts constantly in the cosmos: it is dynamic principle, illuminating light, perennial source of life. With this vision, consecrated persons are called on to cultivate an attitude of responsibility and co-responsibility towards the habitat, the common home that God has given to humanity; with gratitude and recognition to the Creator of the heavens and the earth, they discover the footsteps of the Lord in the world, the place where he reveals his creative, providential and redemptive power [...] The safeguarding of creation, starting from concrete actions of everyday life, should be a distinctive feature of the following of Christ". No creature is thus excluded from being alongside God the Creator ...

"Rich in Mercy rich in Thanks! "

Dear friend,
how many reasons we have to say THANKS to the Lord, grateful above all because we are loved.
Thanks because ... God bursts into our lives with his Word.
Thanks because ... God seduces us with his gaze that attracts.
Thanks because ... God chooses us and leads us to the fullness of life.
Do you also want to try to say your "Thanks because ..." and to repeat with Saint Augustine: "I now exist because of Your goodness, which made provision for all that You have made me to be and all that You have made me from ... My happiness depends on You" (Confessions, 13: 1,1)?
We await you!

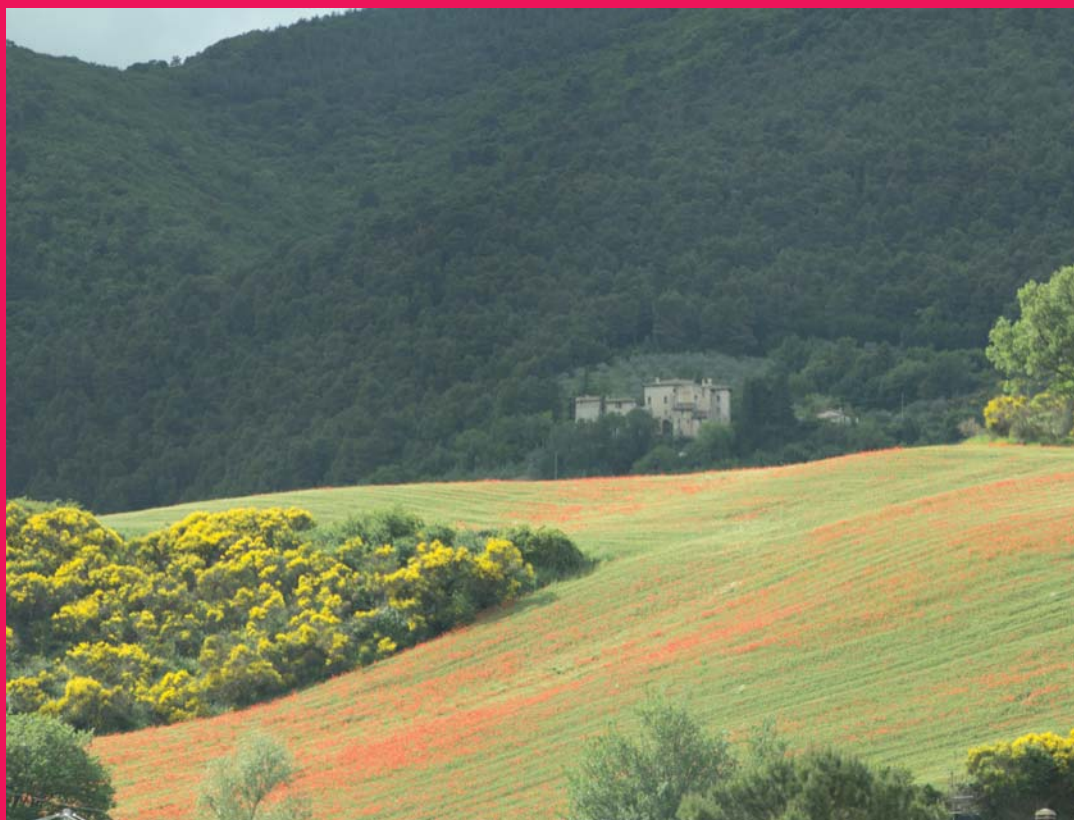


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PARADISE IN THE GARDEN

When we think of a "garden", we imagine a piece of land defined by boundaries, planted with flowers and ornamental plants, with the purpose of beautifying. It is not merely a "corner of nature", because we are in front of a man-made construction, a piece of artificial nature that hides the need to want to take refuge in a world that takes us back, not just to ancient roots, to "mother earth", but which aspires to perfection. Already in ancient times, the garden was symbolic of a happy state, mostly of a lost happiness that became hope of a better and free life. Just think of the Garden of Eden, but other peoples also had this kind of concept, in both Oriental and classical cultures. The "case" of Eden, however, is very special, as archaeologist Valerio Massimo Manfredi explains well: "Man also takes the blames for destroying this perfection, through the intelligence of 'being like God', as the serpent says". For better or for worse, man is therefore responsible for the aesthetic identity, history and culture of the garden and the landscape in general, of which he changes the form and content according to his own aesthetic sense, rationality and the good or bad sense he may have of ecology. "Eden was entrusted to man as a garden to be tended and cultivated," explains bible scholar Fr. Silvio Barbaglia, clarifying that none of us is "father and master of the Earth", rather we are called to serve through our work. (MG)

(This piece is loosely based on the dialogue between archaeologist Valerio Massimo Manfredi and biblical scholar Fr. Silvio Barbaglia, which took place in the context of the Vicenza Biblical Festival 2015).



MISSIONARY OCTOBER

In 1926, accepting the request of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Pope Pius XI proclaimed World Mission Day for the first time, to be held every third Sunday of October (which is why “October” has become the so-called “missionary” month). But what is WMD? On this day, the faithful on all continents are



called on to engage themselves with concrete gestures of solidarity in support of one or more missions. What can we do during Missionary October? The Missio Foundation (pastoral body comprising Italian bishops for promoting and supporting missions, *ed.*) explains that parishes are called on to organise a five-week path of activities, with each week proposing a theme for reflection: 1) **Contemplation**, source of missionary testimony; 2) **Vocation**, essential motive of missionary commitment; 3) **Responsibility**, inner attitude for living the mission; 4) **Charity**, heart of missionary being; 5) **Thanksgiving**, gratitude to God for the gift of the mission. The words of the Holy Father, delivered on Pentecost Sunday specifically for the 90th World Mission Sunday which will be celebrated on 23 October 2016, can help us in this process of reflection, and then of action. **First of all, offer your talent.** Pope Francis asks us to “go out as mis-

sionary disciples, each generously offering their talents, creativity, wisdom and experience in order to bring the message of God’s tenderness and compassion to the entire human family”.

Then, remember that God is our father and our mother and, as such, loves us all. “He is a kind, caring and faithful God,” Francis reminds us, “who is close to those in need, especially the poor; he involves himself tenderly in human reality just as a father and mother do in the lives of their children (cf. *Jer* 31:20) ... in the face of their weaknesses and infidelity, his heart is overcome with compassion (cf. *Hos* 11:8)”. **Respect all cultures and all religious convictions.** Francis says: “The Church, in the midst of humanity, is first



The Augustinian mission in Bulacan, Philippines (also pictured above).

of all the community that lives by the mercy of Christ: she senses his gaze and feels he has chosen her with his merciful love. It is through this love that the Church discovers its mandate, lives it and makes it known to all peoples through a respectful dialogue with every culture and religious belief”.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta said: “God still loves the world and He sends you and me to be His love and His compassion to the poor”. (*The Sisters*).



It is our
task to let
them grow
serenely.

ESTROGENT

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