

# 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 2017

INTERVIEW  
WITH JAVIER ZANETTI  
**The Tractor's Love  
for Saint Rita**

FEATURING MOTHER FASCE  
**The Battles of Elena**

AUGUSTINIANS  
**Competition**

## I RUN TOWARDS THE GOAL

*The Christian as Athlete*

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We wish to inform all our readers that the IBAN of the Monastery has changed. For those who want to support us, here are the new bank details:

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## FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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# A Kick at the Ball

It is a Wednesday in the grips of an August heat wave. 9 August 2017, to be exact. And I was asked to kick a ball. Please understand, I am a nun in an open-minded convent, but I didn't yet know just how open minded. Before entering the monastery, I played football, volleyball and I trained as an athlete, all three at a competitive level. Training didn't leave me time for the Lord, sports was my life. Until age 38, I would go to the stadium. I was a member of the Milan fan club in my town in the province of Mantua, and I am still a fan today. After I took vows, my fellow townspeople wanted to give me the honorary No.1 Milan Club badge as a gift. I accepted it with great joy and gratitude for the affection it showed. In short, I had many interests and many friends: I liked music, I went to concerts, I liked to read, I went to book launches, to literature festivals, I liked to travel and even now... Now I travel in the people who travel, and... in prayer, which reaches every corner of the earth.

All this, until age 38, without the Lord, on my end... because He was always beside me.

Then? I don't know why in January 1998 the Lord awoke the desire in me to go to Mass one Sunday after I hadn't gone in 20 years.

The fact is I'm here, in the Monastery of Saint Rita, to live my vocation fully, enchanted with the Augustinian contemplative life I received as a gift from the Lord.

Returning to the request to kick that ball... the Monastery of Saint Rita wanted to participate in a lovely project organised by

Letizia Guerri's Tevere Servizi Group with the financial support of the Umbria Region for the Towns of Cascia, Città di Castello and Passignano sul Trasimeno and the participation of the Perugia Football Club. The project is called "Culture in Goal" and its aim is to promote the happy marriage of sports, culture and community. There are young professional athletes involved and several Umbrian cities, among them our bold and beautiful Cascia. And thus, with the blessing of the Mother Superior, I, Sister Giacomina Stuani, participated in the making of a video clip where I was asked to kick a ball towards the very young goalkeeper of the Perugia Football Club's Under 16. All this took place inside the Monastery. I accepted for two main reasons: the first, and more important, was because we were asked to speak with 22 young people of Saint Rita, telling our life stories and explaining our message of communication and forgiveness. This is due to the fact that the director in charge of the youth division, Giovanni Guerri, was committed to dedicating part of his work to the human, as well as athletic, education of these young people. Then there was a second reason which related to us nuns more specifically: included in the message we wished to send to the people who came into contact with us is this: that play is a gift of God and it is a part of our life as nuns just as it exists alongside the lives of other people. Sports and play are sources of joy and they teach values such as sharing, teamwork, brotherhood and mutual respect. This then is why, with great joy, I took a kick at a ball, in front of the technical crew led by Giovanni Migliorelli, who I hope I didn't make laugh with my somewhat rusty competitive performance! Play sports, if you can. In any case, play. And love life.



# The *Tractor's* Love for Saint Rita

*A phone chat with Javier Zanetti, devotee of Saint Rita, ex-footballer and current Vice President of Inter Milan*

by Valentina Fabbri, Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation

**F**irst of all, I must confess that I am a huge Rome football club fan.

"Saint Rita is always with me."

Speaking with me is Javier Zanetti, sports director and vice president of Inter (Milan International Football Club), ex-footballer, a defender and midfielder for the "Black and Blues", a man with record numbers on the field, in the Italian championship with the black and blue jersey (186 consecutive games played, only 1 expulsion) and for the Argentinian national team. So many nicknames coined for him. Il Capitano, by Inter fans. El Tractor for the

powerful way he plows down the field with the ball, but also because of his indefatigable passion towards work and preparation. El Pupi, a nickname given to him by his brother when he was a little boy, which also became the name of the foundation he created in 2001 with his wife Paula (P.U.P.I. Foundation, Por Un Piberfo Inte-

***Javier Zanetti has  
always been a devotee  
of Saint Rita***



Javier Zanetti with Alessandra Paoloni, Father Mario Di Quinzio, Chaplain of the Beehive and Father Luciani De Micheli, Provincial Prior of the Augustinians.

TAKE  
AND READ

*The sky is overcast. Now it rains over the heads of those without houses, on an earth that continuously shakes every certainty and where even a simple flower can become the seed of hope. A volunteer thus presents a small composition at the entrance of the refectory:*

*"I took the stones from a ruined house, I showered flowers over them, as a sign of rebirth, and I had them embraced by a tricoloured sheaf. Life that continues, this too is a way to give hope to those who still live at the epicentre of the tremors." "Voices from the earthquake. Stories among rebirth and ruins, to never forget." These are the voices gathered together by journalist Fabio Bolzetta among the ruins in Umbria, Lazio, Le Marche and Abruzzo, areas that were hit hard by the seismic fury that began on 24 August 2016. Amidst the destroyed houses, there are the young people who challenged bureaucracy and gave away "family tents," delivering them to the residences of those who lost everything. An elderly 102-year-old man who, without a home any longer, found himself starting over from scratch; a church in Tolentino that fills bellies and hosts around a hundred elderly people; Pope Francis' surprise visit to Amatrice. The light of the "voices from the earthquake," of the stories of people and their hopes for renewal, filters through the darkness of the cracks of damaged buildings.*

**Voci dal terremoto  
(Voices from the Earthquake)  
Fabio Bolzetta  
Publisher Poiesis €16**



grado, i.e. "For a Complete Childhood"). It is a foundation that works to help children on the streets. The P.U.P.I. foundation's headquarters is in Remedios de Escalada, in the province of Buenos Aires. For the champion footballer, the choice of this location was no coincidence: Remedios de Escalada is the place where Javier and Paula first met. In a world - the world of football- which is not infrequently marked by scandals, Javier Zanetti has always been for all us fans, regardless of our partisan inclinations for this team or that, a man of great values on the turf, but also outside the field of play.

We have a phone appointment for 14:30 on the dot, Italian time; he is in Argentina, but he showed himself to be more than willing to be interviewed by the editors of the magazine of the nuns of Saint Rita. I start off, of course, by saying I'm a Rome fan, but I am nevertheless honoured to speak with him. And after a friendly laugh, we began to talk. Javier Ademar Zanetti

has always been a devotee of Saint Rita, his connection with the patron saint of impossible causes runs strong and deep. "The first time I went to the Sanctuary, it was an incredible feeling," the champion tells me.

## *He lit a votive candle to the Saint of Cascia*

"Our" Javier lives in Como, but when he is in Milan, as soon as he can, he goes to the Augustinian Sanctuary of Saint Rita, the largest in Europe dedicated to the patron saint of Cascia, in the suburban neighbourhood of Barona. Zanetti returns to Cascia on pilgrimage whenever he is able, alone or with his whole family. And, to the surprise of all present, he arrived in the town of Saint Rita, a devotee among devotees, right on the Feast Day of Saint Rita, May 22: "I

# GOD'S ATHLETE

**Athletic competition shows that daily struggle every man must face  
to win his unfading wreath**

Saint Paul is considered God's athlete. After his conversion, with his great determination, intelligence and love for Christ, he brought His word to the whole known world of that time. In that age in which the Roman Empire reigned unopposed. In his First Letter to Timothy (6:12), one of his more moving pieces of counsel aimed at faith, refers to sports. There, we can read: *"Compete well for the faith. Lay hold of eternal life, to which you were called when you made the noble confession in the presence of many witnesses."* Competition. Just as athletes perform in their matches. Sports is a metaphor for life, for sure, and if one of the greatest apostles of the Catholic Church used it as an example, it is definitely a phenomenon, and a gift, not to be overlooked. We know the principles of the Olympic Charter, of the International Committee. Its second section explains how sports is a philosophy of life, which exalts the qualities of the body, will and spirit. Thus, it shows man in himself, with all his being, physical and spiritual: *"We too run in the same stadium. The same wreath, the same prize, awaits us,"* Saint Paul continues in his Letter to the Corinthians (9:24-27). This passage might refer to the sports athlete, according to the thought of God's athlete. Every man is an athlete, if he is born with the talent that God Himself gave him and he puts it into practice. Sports has the power to change the world, to improve civil society and enter into the hearts of all. The heart of a champion, of those with hero-

ic values, of everyone. Why? He fights the good fight for the faith, in that competition, on that field, in that pool, on that springboard, on that tatami, which represents the life of everyone. The adversary exists. Of course, he is physically present. But in truth, he is the mirror of the athlete who confronts him. And that which is daily is elevated. The hope of winning, exertion, fear, exhaustion, the strength of dreams. Good against evil. It is the former that must win. One of the most frequent questions of our time, inspired by this topic, is: why do sports exist? Everyone can answer, according to his own ideas and conscience. It can be done naturally, according to that natural free will with which men are vested. In reference to religious thought, a concrete answer might be found in the mission of Saint Paul. Make God's love known, through the example of each man. Through his constancy, in seeking out good, in competition, as in life. What then is goodness for an athlete? Is it victory? Perhaps. But it is also commitment and responsibility, in sports competition. It does not matter if in the end, he does not reach the podium; what is important is that heart is displayed, with all its strength. And if he does it in the best of ways, surely, victory too will not be long in arriving.

*(The full version of this article by Alessandra Giorgi was published under the title L'atleta sportivo come San Paolo, l'atleta di Dio [Sports Athlete like Saint Paul, God's Athlete] on [www.ilfaroonline.it](http://www.ilfaroonline.it). Thanks the editors for allowing us to publish it.)*



spent a very beautiful moment, rich in emotions, together with all the people and with Saint Rita.” He smiles, and then dives back into memories, to the 2010 Champions League final: “It was 22 May... It seemed like a sign of fate.” Indeed, the final took place for the first time in history, on Saturday, but not just any Saturday - May 22, the Feast of Saint Rita, “on that day exactly,” El Pupi repeats, and it almost seems as if he can’t believe it. Javier holds deep, long-standing religious sentiments which have their roots in his family, a steady point of reference for the man and the champion. Even on that occasion, a few days before the Championship which he won with his lifelong team, Inter, he’d made a votive offering to the Saint of Cascia. To me he also seemed to go back in time while he shared his memories, and his tone of voice manages to convey the emotions experienced.

***“They’ve always told me you have to give as well...”***

“The evening before (the 2010 Champions League final 2010, ed.), at midnight, I lit a candle,” he tells me. “While we were sleeping, she was with us. I was with my roommate Ivan Cordoba, a very dear friend, and that lit candle kept us company. For the whole night, the whole game, every moment.” Thus, the great Javier Zanetti explains, he was not the only Inter player devoted to Saint Rita of Cascia: “There was also Diego Milito, who wore jersey number 22 and scored 2 goals during that final game.” And he tells how at the Pinetina, Inter’s sports centre, “the Moratti family had built a church and we also have a statue there of Saint Rita which we brought ourselves. In sports, my faith has always followed me. Faith has given me great strength.” On and off the field, I think out loud. “Off the field, though,” he clarifies, “I’ve really always been a normal guy.” A word he repeats several times, normal, be-



Javier Zanetti with a young devotee of Saint Rita.

cause it serves to pass along a message: that he has always sought to do everything with enthusiasm and as best he could, while still being a person like all the others. And indeed this comes across. You’ve always been a player whose received great respect from all the fans, I tell him, and he responds, “That makes me enormously happy, respect from everyone. I believe faith can help to transmit these values as well.” Values, such as charity, which El Tractor has certainly always made tangible through his P.U.P.I. Onlus Foundation, in support of children: “They’ve always told me that you have to give as well. It’s something I do with my heart, I always try to give back to the people who are in the most need, to do something that can even help, most of all, children’s futures.” It’s at this point that I invite him to visit “our” charity work, the Beehive of Saint Rita shelter. “Gladly!” Il Capitano promises. “It would be a wonderful experience.” Then I ask him if there’s a message he would like to pass along to the devotees of Saint Rita. “I’d like say to all the people, always have faith, especially in a figure such as Saint Rita, a saint who transmits important emotions. There are so many people who are in difficult circumstances, being able to have faith inside you, it definitely helps a lot.” I thank him for his time. By way of farewell he says, “The pleasure is mine, bye and see you soon.” See you soon, dear Javier, we’re waiting for you in Cascia. ■



# Testimonial of a Supporter

I received the Beehive of Saint Rita supporter's badge and I would like to thank you for your work, your active and generous presence. It's a joy for my family to be able to send you something every so often for the girls and boys of Saint Rita. We'd like to do much more! It gladdens me to tell the story that connects my family to Saint Rita and Mother Teresa Fasce.

I came for the first time as a little girl with the Parish of Santa Maria di Fabriano and I have photos from that marvellous day, spent with my parents and my sister in Cascia. I was immediately struck by the church's colours, by the perfume of the roses. It was May, the sun was out! My mother has always been a devotee of Saint Rita and she's always asked her protection for our family. Saint Rita has accompanied me since I was a girl, on the long car trips we made in Sicily to go visit our grandparents, in evening prayers, and today, now that I'm a mother and I live in Umbria, a few kilometres away, I come to visit you every year with my loved ones, to thank Saint Rita for the support and help I've received from her as (for example) a mother, a wife and a woman. Since he was a little boy, my brother Teo Michelangelo has been moved by the figure of Mother Teresa Fasce; he was only



***I am sending this  
letter to join you in  
your continuous work***

a year and a few months old when he pointed to her in church with his little finger. Thus we decided to keep her image close to us, always, right where we set the table every day, where we sit and give each other the gift of shared moments that are unique and unrepeatable. I am sending this letter to join you in your continuous, daily work to help the family grow with love and passion, a very special gift, and one which is protected, preserved and cared for in every instant. The family is a grace, a luxury, a blessing. We pray every day for the girls and boys of Saint Rita and we feel we are a family that grows along with you, even if at a distance, but very close in heart and in prayer. Saint Rita and Mother Teresa Fasce are our daily bread, our strength, the exam-





## SUPPORT US IN THE BEEHIVE PROJECT

The Beehive is an organisation that exists solely thanks to the offerings of people who make their devotion tangible.

To support the girls and boys of Saint Rita, it just takes a donation, even a small one, via:

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account holder: Fondazione Santa Rita da Cascia onlus

to carry out a postal wire transfer

IBAN:

IT-59-S-07601-03200-001010759072

specify “Alveare,” or “Beehive”, in the reason for payment



## ON BOARD NAVE ITALIA

On July 29, the five day adventure from Olbia to La Spezia came to an end on board the *Nave Italia* sailing ship, which hosted the young people of the Beehive of Saint Rita as part of the “Beyond the Horizons - on calm seas”. Through our Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation, in collaboration with the Tender To Nave Italia Foundation, 14 girls and 2 boys set sail to experience navigation on the open sea. The project, now in its second year, provided an active listening space for retelling the trauma of the earthquake, designed particularly for girls, who previously came from difficult family situations. Thanks to the many friends of the Beehive who supported the project, the young women were able to regain some of that lost peace, to discover the importance of cooperation and teamwork, and to live fully respecting nature.

ples that guide us and drive us forwards, in good times and those that are not as good, but which are nevertheless an impetus for reflection, for prayer that draws us closer to the Lord and His Passion. With love, gratitude and so much heartfelt joy.

(Flavia and family)

# EVENTS

## Cascia (Perugia), from 21 to 22 October PPU General Meeting

The return of the traditional event with the friends of the Saint Rita of Cascia Primary Pious Union, who meet this year



to reflect on the theme “God obeys he who obeys”. With this occasion, we also have an opportunity to celebrate the **10th anniversary of PPU.**

The two days are open to everyone, even those not registered with PPU.

Here is the schedule:

### **SATURDAY 21 OCTOBER**

10:00 - Conference in the Hall of Peace with Don Angelo Longo

11:30 - Meeting of the heads of PPU with the nuns

15:00 - Visit to the urn

17:00 - Procession aux flambeaux with the Campofranco statue of Saint Rita (departing from the statue donated by Lebanon)

21:45 - Adoration with the nuns and new affiliates (each group will bring a small pot of earth coming from their country, which will be offered to Saint Rita as a sign of the country's closeness



to Cascia). For adoration, we asked the nuns for the relic of the heart of Mother Teresa Fasce, given that this year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her beatification; at the end of adoration we will together recite the prayer of The Blessed Fasce.

### **SUNDAY 22 OCTOBER**

9:15 - Penitential liturgy at the Penitentiary

10:00 - Event in the Hall of Peace with our costumes and banners

10:30 - Holy Mass

Photos and Farewells

*Everyone should make their own arrangements for meals and lodging.*

*Info: Sanctuary Information Office,  
tel. +39 074375091 - email:  
infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org*





### **Cascia (Perugia), every Sunday. Holy Mass in the Church of Saint Augustine**

Every Sunday at 8:00, Holy Mass will be celebrated at the Church of Saint Augustine in Cascia. Thanks to the presence of the Carmelite Nuns of Tolentino, who were transferred to Cascia due to damages their monastery sustained in the earthquake, the Church of Saint Augustine will be open every day and one can visit and pray. The Carmelites are currently living in the Hospitality House next to the Church, closed until now, but which has been brought back to new life.

### **TESTIMONIAL**

I came to know Saint Rita thanks to a pamphlet handed out in church. I am deeply devoted to her. I built this chapel in her honour and as a gesture of love towards her. I pray I will be able to go and visit Cascia, I would like to tell her everything I feel for her.

*(Christian Leblanc)*



### **MUSIC BEYOND BORDERS**

*"No walls, no barriers, just music"*, this is the subtitle of the concert event *"Music beyond borders"*, which was held within the evocative cloisters of the Monastery of Saint Rita, on the night of San Lorenzo, 10 August. The "Giardino di Delizie" ensemble appeared under the falling stars to a successful audience turn out and applause from the Augustinian nuns and fathers.

The concert was in memory of Giacomo Persiani, young organist of the Basilica, who died of illness in 1997.





## THE AUGUSTINIAN YOUTH MEETING

From 24 to 29 July 2017, Cascia held its 30th meeting with young people and adolescents coming from Italy's various Augustinian institutions. There were 220 boys and girls participating in the lesson on the topic "You are a prophet". The prophet is called on by God to point out a new direction for men; he is a man of modest means, often derided and perse-



cuted for having proposed "ways" different from those of mortals. He is a man of great ideals, but who must often flee, like the Prophet Elijah, who withdrew into the desert to await his demise.

While he was alone crying over his mission which had been reduced to "ruins", the Lord lifted him back up and guided him to an unexpected rebirth, which surpassed all expectations. During the gathering, there was no lack of contact with the people of Cascia: The *colour run*, i.e. the run through the streets of the town, ended on the avenue of the Basilica with the throwing of coloured powder; the Mass in the tent which is temporary replacing the parish church damaged by the earthquake; the festival with the people of Cascia in the town's square. Over these six days, Cascia heard a bit of uproar; it saw young people and adolescents who prayed, reflected, worked and played together, who smiled and enjoyed the great gift of friendship, accompanied by the silent, caring presence of Rita. It is a sign of hope, the hope of letting oneself be guided towards rebirth, betting above all on the youngest among us: the most precious thing we have.

*(from the agostiniani.it web-site)*



# Feast of the Mother

We are awaiting you in Cascia, from 9 to 14 October

**O**n the occasion of the **20th anniversary of the beatification of Mother Maria Teresa Fasce** (Torriglia, 1881 - Cascia, 1947), known to everyone as simply “the Mother”, the Augustinian Family of Cascia is preparing to celebrate this great woman with a series of events which will take place in the Lower Basilica, where the body of the blessed is preserved. Here is the schedule.

**FROM 9 TO 11 OCTOBER - Triduo** in preparation for the 12 October feast day:

17:30, Holy Rosary;

18:00, Holy Mass with a sermon by Monsignor Giovanni Scanavino.

**12 OCTOBER - Liturgical Feast Day** of the blessed:

18:30, Holy Mass.

**14 OCTOBER - Round table** to learn more about Mother Fasce:

from 17:00 to 20:00, participating are Father Josef Sciberras, General Postulator of the Augustinian General Curia; Cristina Siccardi, biographer and church historian, author of *Maria Teresa, alla conquista di Cascia*; Sister M. Giacomina Stuani, Au-

gustinian nun of the Monastery of Saint Rita.

20:15, Buffet dinner at the Hotel delle Rose offered by the Monastery of Saint Rita.

grim's House (today, the Hotel delle Rose). Mother Fasce is also the woman who put the saint's charity in action with the “Beehive of Saint Rita” project, for girls coming from



Abbess of the Monastery of Saint Rita for 27 years, “the Mother” made her mark on the history of Cascia and the cult of Saint Rita, through the realisation of our magazine, *From the Bees to the Roses*, the construction of the current Basilica, the construction of the Hospital and Pil-

grims in difficulty, which will have 80 candles on its cake next year.

*Info:*

*Information Office of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita,*

*tel. +39 074375091 - email:*

*infobasilica@santaritadacascia.org*

W O R D O F T H E M O T H E R

*He who is most tested is dear to God.*

# The Battles of Elena

Edited by the Sisters

**O**n 2 July we received a most beautiful testimonial, which made us think it was truly worth the effort of “shaking up” this special issue dedicated to our dear Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce. We won’t say anything beforehand, you’ll read the moving words of the protagonist shortly, but this is the story of a battle, the latest among many, won by a woman who knew to trust in the Lord. It is the story of Elena, a school teacher for 45 years in her town, *Cologna Veneta* (Verona), who came to know Saint Rita and the Blessed Fasce in a wholly unexpected way...

I feel the need to confide in you some important happenings I was involved in recently. I’ll give a brief

introduction. At the age of 20 I had lymphoma which was treated with very strong chemo and radiotherapy. The illness was very dangerous and they informed me that I wouldn’t be able to have children. Once I was married, my husband and I wanted children so much, but we would accept whatever the Lord decided for us. Two babies were born: Irene, who today is 15 years old, and Enea, who is 13. Five years ago, however, the tumour reappeared, this time in the breast. I was treated once again. But again, in January of this year, I discovered I had a tumour in both lungs. This time I was unable to accept the situation and I thought many times about death. I felt empty, extremely sad and nothing gave me courage.

I pretended to be strong for my children, but inside I was destroyed and disheartened.

My grandmother was named Margherita (Rita) and she was always devoted to Saint Rita. She came to Cascia every year. They decided to operate on me; I’d have to have my whole left lung removed and part of the right one. A disaster!

I wrote to you several months ago to ask for a prayer and you replied to me that I would be present in your prayers and you sent me your best wishes. In that moment, I took heart and I left for the hospital with the rosary beads of Saint Rita my grandmother had given me years ago (and which I kept in the case!).

The night before the operation, I cried and prayed a lot to the saint,



for the first time. I spoke to her as a friend and... in the morning the surgeon entered the room to notify me that he changed his mind! He wouldn't operate on me but rather he'd try to reduce the mass with chemotherapy. I couldn't believe it! The chemo was hard, but I began a relationship with Saint Rita who comforted me and gave me courage.

I'm not a dreamer, but I'm certain of what I'm telling you. At night when I prayed I would close my eyes in the dark, and yet I saw a strong light, as if someone had pointed a torch in my face. The light moved and spun slowly.

I knew nothing of Saint Rita. I hadn't yet read up on her, I only knew she was considered the saint of impossible cases... And that was my case!

While I prayed, sometimes I even said the wrong name: I prayed "Maria Teresa". Then I would ask the saint's pardon and I thought I wasn't focused enough! I didn't understand why the two names came to my mind: Maria Teresa. (I still didn't know anything about Maria Teresa Fasce).

One afternoon, when I was very ill, bed-ridden, I saw a black cloud on the ceiling of my room. Outside it was sunny. I'm sure of what I saw! The cloud drew closer and it was on top of me. I chased it away with my voice, I screamed that I wanted to live and I felt strangely protected and happy.

Now the tests showed that the mass had been significantly reduced! The first surgical intervention was smaller than planned and

## The night before the operation, I prayed to the saint for the first time

they certainly no longer talked about removing my lung!

My parents came to Cascia to give thanks. They brought me powders, pamphlets to read and a small bag of grapes. When they handed me the booklets I discov-

ered the story of the Blessed Maria Teresa. The exact name I had prayed without knowing why. The surgery took place on 22 May! An important date!

The day after tomorrow I will go back to hospital for a small operation on my right lung as well, but the doctors are in disbelief. The mass of the tumour that had grown to affect my aorta as well has literally withdrawn and even disappeared. But what unsettled me the most were the day visions, and



nocturnal dreams, which had calmed me down and had always foretold future events to me.

I will come to Cascia as soon as I can. My dearest regards, Elena.

*Three days later, Dear Elena wrote this to us:*

Hello, my happiness is indescribable. I was admitted for the surgery planned on my right lung but, after the CAT scan, I was released. The tumour has shrunk so much that the operation is no longer necessary! The surgeons and nurses are speechless, let alone my husband and myself! Let me specify that I was treated at the Centro Humanitas in Milan and they've seen thousands of cancer cases (sadly). So I'm at home. The doctors are deciding about arranging some radiotherapy sessions. Then I'm coming! But I'll let you know first! A big hug, Elena. ■



## THE WITNESS

### FROM THE BEATIFICATION PROCEEDING FOR MOTHER FASCE

Witness no. 45:

My name is Magrelli Giovanna in Conti, born in Cascia on 7 July 1907. By profession a housewife, widow, Catholic.

“I need to express the deepest recognition of the goodness of God who, through the intercession of Mother Teresa Fasce, gave a gift of grace to my little grandson, Giuseppe De Angelis. The dear baby was just 2 months old when he came down with acute gastritis and enteritis: he was raced to the hospital in Spoleto, but the doctors gave up hope of saving him. In the bitterness of those days, great solace came to me from directing my pleas to the dear and never forgotten Mother Teresa. In front of her tomb, as I cried and prayed... faith led me to feel that the Lord, through the intercession of Mother Fasce, would grant my prayer. And so it was. Today, little Giuseppe is 5 months old, but thanks to God he is so fit he already seems like a one-year-old. I trusted in Saint Rita and Mother Teresa that they would always protect him.”

# *A bequest, a gift of love*

Remembering  
who is most vulnerable  
in your will can change someone's life  
for ever

Allocating even a small bequest to the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia means leaving a sign of your generosity in time.

Thanks to bequests, we can support the Beehive of Saint Rita, a hope for all Little Bees, the children who will inherit your love.

Write to us at [monastero@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:monastero@santaritadacascia.org) and you will receive information on how to help the children in difficulty that need you.







Edited by Marta Ferraro

# Grandpa Guglielmo and His Children

From the Melfi PPU, the support initiative of the Roses of Saint Rita that brought generations together

On 7 May 2017, the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation took to the square for the first time to gather funds with the exhibition of support booths. The goods chosen to contribute to supporting the charitable activities of the Monastery of Saint Rita were roses, one of the primary symbols of the saint of impossible causes. The event was an excellent training ground for volunteers and

devotees, united for the same goal: to challenge themselves, invest their time, unite their forces, to help their neighbour. There were so many who signed up to make their contribution and the end result was very

satisfying, in support of the Beehive of Saint Rita shelter. There are numerous beautiful experiences I could recount. Moments of exchange and satisfaction which the volunteers manning the booths experienced in vari-

***Guglielmo is a grandfather who decided to get his granddaughter involved***



Guglielmo Calandrelli at the booth for the Roses of Saint Rita in Melfi (PZ).

ous ways while they traded smiles and roses ready to bloom. But there is one story that struck us more than the others, that of Guglielmo Calandrelli who, together with his family, keeps the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita alive in the town of Melfi, province of Potenza. Guglielmo has been devoted to Saint Rita since childhood, thanks to the example and the experience he received from his family. He is a grandfather of almost seventy who, on this occasion, de-



them interested in things that seem far away from them.” And, thus, Grandpa Guglielmo, together with his granddaughter Cristina and her friends Lucio and Agnese, spent two days united by the same cause. On the first day, they prepared everything and the second day they spent the morning distributing rose seedlings. Having fun, they also did good, they met so many people and came to know new aspects of their personalities. “The Melfi initiative turned out very well. In a few hours we managed to go through all the 255 seedlings that came to us from Cascia. And I’m sure if we had had more roses available we wouldn’t have had any difficulty keeping it up.

Beside the fact it was for the Monastery, it was fulfilling personally. I’m a good person, my fellow townsfolk trust me and they put their faith in me, helping me in the noble goal,” Guglielmo recounted with pride. We don’t think we’re saying anything new when we assert that when one does good works one is happier. We noted a further note of contentment in Guglielmo’s words when he said, “Everyone who took a seedling from

## le ROSE di SANTA RITA

cided to involve his granddaughter and her friends, all adolescents. Thus, the Melfi support booth saw two generations lined up alongside each other. “It was an excellent opportunity to teach the children about Saint Rita,” Guglielmo explained. “I think it’s important to draw young people into these initiatives. For adults these activities are almost a habit. The true challenge is involving young people, getting

***In a few hours  
we managed  
to get through  
all 255  
seedlings***

the support booth stopped me on the street to happily tell me that the roses took root and they’re blooming!” We want to take this fact as a sign that Saint Rita definitely appreciated the blessed commitment of those who worked with dedication at this significant exhibition. ■

### JOIN THE PPU

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

# Competition

## Sports competition as a metaphor for Christian life

by Fr. Giuseppe Caruso OSA

**A**mong the many writings of Saint Augustine there is one with a rather unique title, *De agone christiano*. *Agon* means, first in Greek and then later in Latin, the fighting competition which took place, as a sporting activity that drew a large crowd, in a square; thus we can try to translate the title as “Christian fighting,” keeping in mind however that this is sporting (agonistic) and not military fighting. Augustine is thus using the sports metaphor to illustrate the path of Christian life to the common people, of whom he had only recently become a bishop (if the text truly dates back to 397, as it seems) and who, as Augustine himself had to recall, had trouble understanding sophisticated Latin, so much so that he forced himself to give discourse in simple language and to be brief, so as not to wear out listeners and readers. Thus we are looking at a manual that seeks to show how to live a Christian life, and does it by presenting the act of following the Saviour as a sort of competition; indeed, notes the holy bish-



Group of young Augustinians in motion during the Colour run.

op, we are promised a wreath - this is the typical trophy for the winner of a fight; a bit like our medals. To obtain the prize, the ath-

lete must subject himself to rigorous discipline made up of training and renunciations and, moreover, he must withstand the strain of the



competition; furthermore, referring specifically to fighting, the athlete has an adversary who opposes him with the clear goal of making him lose to snatch victory for himself. Augustine uses this, when he advises his audience to fight against the devil, an adversary who is invisible but none the less insidi-

But how, in practice, does one handle this fight which is wholly internal? Augustine explains it in the first part of the work: winning against our own closing-off and selfishness, always keeping before our eyes the example of Christ who, while he is the Son of God, was made man to mark the path for us to



ous, and who - well aware of our desire for happiness - tricks us by presenting brief, fleeting satisfaction to us as if it were the ultimate paradise.

follow. To believe this, to believe that God truly loves and saves the world is an essential condition for being able to face Christian competition with the

# SMILING AT LIFE

Send photos of your children to [monastero@saintritedecascia.org](mailto: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. Chiara Rita Marinosci (Francavilla Fontana BR - Italy)
2. Eva Fritz (Bertiolo UD - Italy)
3. Giorgia Galasso (Nicotera VV - Italy)
4. Leonardo Toscano (Zafferana Etnea CT - Italy)
5. Marco Donato Montemorra and Margherita Protano (Cerignola FG - Italy)
6. Sofia Rita Costanzo (Catania - Italy)

# PRAYER

## PRAYER OF THE ROAD

Who could ever reduce the adventure of the Road to just one reflection? To translate our steps, in a written text, is to risk a betrayal. The road is always too long to be told. Better to be silent, to pray and walk together... Walk long.... To go silently along the silent roads that hide a secret. He who knows how to listen and watch, may be able to receive from them the stunning revelation!

Let us set off!

Here everything has a meaning.

Little TRAIL, teach us humility, poverty and abandon.

As long as we're in a car, twenty kilometres from nothing

We feel capable of anything. We puff ourselves up.

Just on foot, however, you've thrown away the mask of our semblances, and you've left us on our own, without defence against the heat and the cold, the rain and exhaustion.

You've shown us our limits, our riches and we've entered into the truth of ourselves

Here we've learned to watch what surrounds us in a new way.

O ROUTE that leads our steps, you are a school of beauty and a reflection of God...

Modelled in the consumerist moulds of the modern world, our five senses were extinguished.

We saw no more!

Your kilometres reopened our eyes to the splendour of Mother Nature, mirror of God.

With you we understood the need and urgency of observing, admiring, keeping silent, adoring...

For the others, by now we're prophets of Beauty.

Here we learned the way to live in community.

When we arrived on the edge of the TRACK of freedom

we did not speak the same language. We were strangers. We set off.

For all men, the ROAD is a common language.

It is you who build the Clan and establish true relations;

when he was thirsty, I held my water bottle to his mouth.

when he was tired, I carried his backpack,

when he showed signs of weariness, I slowed my pace to put it in step with his.

The kilometres made us brothers.

Here we learned the meaning of perseverance and of loyalty to overcome the kilometres, the upward slopes under the sun, the muddy paths.

For us you were the trampoline that put us off balance on another ROAD,

towards that of Jesus Christ that leads our adventure towards the overflowing Truth of Life...

And our steps will never stop, until we reach the Camp of Repose and of Joy, where Jesus has planted his Tent with ours forever and ever

Amen!

*(Father Etienne)*

right equipment; for this reason Augustine dedicates the second part of the work to explaining the fundamental contents of faith, thus giving life to a sort of catechism for the common people.

To conclude this brief reflection, I would like to turn to

Augustine himself who in one of his discourses (Sermon 156,9.9) returns once again to the discussion of Christian competition, illustrating how God, during this fight, is not just an impartial spectator, but the greatest coach to each of the faith-

ful: *"When we fight in this agon, we have God as a spectator; when in this fight we're put to the test, we turn to God, our help; indeed if He were not there to help us, I say that we would be unable not only to win, but even to fight."* ■



Let's give  
a nest to  
those that  
have none.

**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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# Let's run together, towards the goal

## The scouts serving populations hit by earthquakes

By Sr. Giacomina Stuani OSA

“**B**etween Earth and Heaven. Leaving a mark on earthquake sites”. Five routes (a specific type of scout itinerary, ed.), with the possibility of rendering service in some areas of Valnerina from 15 July to 9 September, with over 1,350 scouts involved, counting boys and leaders, coming from 90 groups from across Italy.

The Umbrian Scouts of AGESCI [Association of Italian Catholic Guides and Scouts] thought of offering the Clans of Italy a project of tangible service to the local communities. The project is called “...between Earth and Heaven... road, spirituality and service in the Benedictine lands.” Boys from across Italy set off on the path so as to lend a hand and pray, reflect-



ing in these lands and finding themselves. The theme-motto of this project comes from the declaration of Premonstratensian monks: scouting is a natural education method [earth], open to the supernatural [heaven]. This is a worthy offering which teaches boys to have their “feet on the EARTH” (i.e. to be real men), with their “head on their shoulders (i.e. responsible men), but with their “eyes towards HEAVEN” (i.e. men who live the Faith).

Five Routes of road and service in a land hit by the earthquake, five itineraries immersed amid nature and spirituality. On each, the possibility of entering into contact with the local communities and performing activities. On each path the possibility of experiencing moments of spirituality with some religious communities of the area. And, through the tale of experiences of service and testimonial, re-discovering prayer and contemplation in the places they pass through.

“The scouts,” explains Prof. Marco Moschini, Regional Head of AGESCI in Umbria, “teach the logic of service, of action which must respond quickly to a need and must leave a sign, a testimonial, a trace, capable of leaving the world better than how it was found. We called on scouts from all over Italy to do their summer educational activities here because these young men, returning home, can tell of the beauty of our land and the pride of our people. They will bring an embrace, leave behind a sign of tangible service, but above all they will be privileged witnesses to an Umbria which has lifted itself up. We are Italy. We want to say thanks to them and let everyone know that the revolutionary force of service is not that of sitting and watching, but that of courageously tackling ordinary things and doing them in the name of kindness, closeness and justice. Today, Umbria needs closeness, the ordinary, and concrete gestures. The scouts are just that.”

He who loves feels the need, the desire to stay close, to make himself close. This is the





## WHAT TO DO DURING MISSIONARY OCTOBER?

It was in 1926, when Pope Pius XI announced for the first time the Day of Global Mission, which occurs every year on the penultimate Sunday of October (which has become the “missionary month”). But, in practice, what are we called to do during missionary October? This is an occasion in which we are called on to share: it is possible to share spiritual, liturgical, cultural riches; it is also important to share material riches, to help the most poor and defenceless. Everyone gives according to his ability, what matters is doing it with heart.



To help us in this path of reflection and action, there are the words of Pope Francis, spoken on Pentecost Day for the next Day of Global Mission which will be celebrated on 22 October 2017: “The world has a fundamental need for the Gospel of Jesus Christ... And thanks to God there is no lack of significant experiences which bear witness to the transformative power of the Gospel. I think of the action of that Dinka student who, at the cost of his own life, protected a student of the Nuer tribe destined to be killed. And we can think of innumerable testimonials to how the Gospel helps one to overcome separations, conflicts, racism, tribalism, promoting everywhere and among everyone reconciliation, brotherhood and sharing.”



## 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.*

Andrea Mariani (Anzio RM - Italy)  
Angela Rita Albanesi Serena (Canada)  
Anna Maria Valente (Ronciglione VT - Italy)  
Domenica and Teresa Ferraina (Girifalco CZ - Italy)  
Elsa Bucalossi (Livorno - Italy)

Elsa Guerrieri (Milan - Italy)  
Flora Longo De Vallier (Laste di Rocca Pietore BL - Italy)  
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Gino Garrapa (Cutrofiano LE - Italy)  
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Liliana Gentili (Leonessa RI - Italy)  
Nazzareno Vissani (Cascia PG - Italy)  
Rocco and Mario Migliaccio (Girifalco CZ - Italy)  
Roberto Arrighini (Livorno - Italy)  
Rosa Carando (Tronzano Vercellese VC - Italy)  
Rosa Russo (Floridia SR - Italy)  
Teodoro Castiglioni (Olgiate Olona VA - Italy)  
Vezzosa Bulleri Benvenuti (Isola di Ortonovo SP - Italy)  
Virginia Vergari (San Pancrazio Salentino BR - Italy)

logic of God because God is Love! This is why God decided to “descend into the world of men” to share our flesh, our life, our adventure, our “route”, walking the roads of Palestine.

“Be prepared” is the original scouts’ motto created by founder Baden Powell. This captures the essence of the scout spir-



it and of the fundamental principles of scouting. It drives one to put living consistently into practice. It has also been translated into Latin with the expression “Estote Parati” (be ready), which appears in both the Gospel of Luke (Luke 12:40), and in Matthew (24:44).

This serves to highlight, in addition to the practical aspect, the spiritual part in the scout’s Christian education.

We nuns have met so many groups: from Orvieto, Mesana, Bassano, Marano, Bitonto, Marostica, Lanciano, Roverbella, etc. There have been moments of grace, brotherhood, communion, mutual exchange... These boys have walked these lands, they have breathed the spirituality present here, they have tried to answer the question of meaning they are living, in the beauty of their youth. Their experience has been a training ground for inner strength, loaded with intensity and fullness, in part also with exertion, but with the knowledge that, from Heaven, Jesus acted as guide and trail-blazer for everyone.

Thank you, boys! After having crossed paths, now we run together in joy towards the goal!

## THE ABBESS RESPONDS

The column is returning with the Mother Superior’s correspondence with devotees of Saint Rita. If you wish to share your fears, your questions or your happiness, write to [monastero@santaritadacascia.org](mailto:monastero@santaritadacascia.org), specifying that you give us permission to publish your letter. Mother Maria Rosa will respond to everyone in the *From the Bees to the Roses* magazine.





It is our  
task to let  
them grow  
serenely.

ESTROGENT

**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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