

# FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine  
of Saint Rita of Cascia

BIMONTHLY  
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN  
MONASTERY  
OF SAINT RITA  
OF CASCIA

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## NEW HOSPITAL READY IN CASCIA

*Work on the Monastery of Saint Rita  
project has been completed,  
the structure is now ready to welcome  
those who need it most*

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## FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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# Take care of me, I take care of you

**F**or this issue's editorial - and thinking of the wonderful New Hospital project that we have managed to realise thanks to the Francesca Rava Foundation-NPH Italia Onlus but also thanks to the many benefactors who have generously helped us, each within their own means - I would like to take a cue from the biblical passage in the "In a Word" series (on page 6) edited by Father Vittorino Grossi. The passage refers to the parable of the Good Samaritan (Gospel of Luke 10, 25-37). It is in situations like this that I think of how much the Bible, regardless of one's belief, is a source of inspiration for understanding the human soul, the relationships between people and the daily dynamics that we find ourselves facing. In this sense, the wisdom of the sacred text proposes welcome - in all its facets - as the way, starting with the story of Cain who we have seen was unable to welcome his brother Abel.

When I welcome a person, I'm taking care of that person. Welcome has to do with hospitality, which often recurs in the Bible as a concept: *"I was a stranger and you welcomed me"* (Matt. 25, 35). Hospitality calls into question responsibility, taking charge of the other. Limiting my space, to make space for you.

What do I mean?

That in the relationship with the other person, the Lord tells us to behave exactly as when we have guests at home. When I have a guest, I give them my attention, I share my space, I put my food and my drinks at their disposal, I listen to them. All this is welcome. It is giving without asking for anything in return. In the same way, I must desire to be in turn the other person's guest. As a guest, I too show my desire to be welcomed. There is reciprocity.

The Good Samaritan, a foreigner, stops to help a man, a Jew, slumped on the roadside after having been robbed and beaten (bear in mind that there was bad blood between Samaritans and Jews, they were often in conflict). Earlier, a priest and a Levite (therefore two people who believed in God, practised the cult, and should have put the teachings into practice) had passed



along that same road, but neither of them had helped the victim. Perhaps out of fear (fear makes us do horrible things even if we are good people). Perhaps because they believe him dead. Whatever the reason, in fact neither of them made a simple gesture of charity.

The Samaritan did not ask who the wounded man was, he only did what he felt was right. He did not investigate first whether the man on the ground was a Jew, he just helped him. Here is who is the neighbour: it is anyone in need that we come across. And welcoming means both accommodating them within ourselves and asking them to be accommodated. Only in this way is love disinterested. Full love. ■



# THE NEW HOSPITAL OF CASCIA IS A REALITY

With work on the “A Hospital for the Valnerina” project of the Monastery of Saint Rita completed, the structure is now ready to welcome those in need

by Alessia Nicoletti

## Two specialist centres: Healthcare Residence and Rehabilitation

**T**he fruit of charity, solidarity and faith, and less than a year from the beginning of alteration works, the now former House of Spiritual Exercises of the Monastery of Saint Rita is ready to open its doors to bring the Intensive Rehabilitation Centre of the Hospital - closed for two years due to the earthquake - back to life. This is the outcome of the “A hospital for the Valnerina” project, born from the synergy between the Municipality, the Umbria 2 Health Authority and the Monastery of Saint Rita and made possible thanks to the financial support of the many benefactors of the Monastery and of the Francesca Rava Foundation-NPH Italia Onlus, with the contribution of the Vodafone Italia Foundation. A structured commitment, that of the Francesca Rava Foundation in the earthquake zones, which has also made it possible to provide Cascia with 2 schools, among the 7 realised between Marche and Umbria for children affected by the earthquake. The work of converting the structure into a hospital marks a great and historic achievement for the community, local or otherwise, which will be able to benefit once again from services of excellence for health. In fact, healthcare services will be transferred to the New

Hospital of the Valnerina, except for first aid which is in the Leone XIII car park. Funding for the memorable work came on the one hand from the Francesca Rava Foundation-NPH Italia Onlus which, with the contribution of the Vodafone Italia Foundation, supported the restructuring of the rehabilitation unit, and on the other from the many benefactors of the Sanctuary, devotees of Rita who responded generously to the appeals of the nuns with their donations. We talked about the project - which started in December 2017 and is now ended - with the works director, engineer Lanfranco Castellucci.



Dr. Gino Capitò, health director of the New Hospital of Cascia.



Works director, engineer Lanfranco Castellucci (first right).



### At what point are you today, July 2018?

The works are completed and restoration of the two specialist centres for the Healthcare Residence (RSA) and Rehabilitation is a reality. The structure comprise 3 floors. On the ground floor: occupational therapy room, 3 surgeries, FKT (physio-kinesiotherapy, ed.) gym, radiology, offices, kitchen, conference room with Wi-Fi, chapel and morgue; on the first floor: rehabilitation with 5 doctor's offices, 1 infirmary, 1 nurse's station, 1 refectory, 1 lounge, 20 beds, 14 rooms and 1 gym for physiotherapy; on the second floor: the RSA with 2 medical offices, 1 infirmary, 1 nurse's sta-

tion, 1 refectory, 1 lounge, 20 beds and 13 rooms. Stairs and elevators, with bed-lifts, connect the floors. All ready for the work of 40 health workers, plus linked activities.

**What were the most important interventions?** Those on finishes were the most significant. Floors, interior and exterior fixtures, with windows and shutters renewed and motorised. And then the various plants, like the electric system which was totally revamped, the heating system which was updated, in addition to the installation of fans for each area. Finally, the exterior restyling with painting of the facades.

## INAUGURATION IN SEPTEMBER

The inauguration of the New Hospital of Cascia is scheduled for September. Having closed this issue of the magazine in late July, we have been unable to tell you about this important day of rebirth for the whole community. We will certainly give you all the updates in the next issue.



**What are the strong points?** The original structure, built in 1954 and expanded in 1965, was found free from the effects of all earthquakes, including the last one, and therefore has great structural strength, is earthquake-proof and is safe, to the extent that it hosted some of the people who had been displaced. We then looked at issue of fire safety, positioning two external steel stairs, one on the south side and the other on the north side, and we installed a water system. The communal areas, canteen and the lounge for welcoming visitors and family members are very beautiful, and finally the panoramic view which allows you to enjoy the beauty of the territory of Cascia. ■



## IN A WORD

Edited by  
Fr. Vittorini Grossi OSA

**A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead ... A Samaritan, as he travelled ... took care of him.**

*Luke 10, 30-34*

The Samaritan, religiously judged a 'foreigner' (for the Jews), showed solidarity with a dying victim of a robbery, abandoned along the roadside. He immediately gave him his help because he looked at the suffering of a man and not at his nationality or religious background. In the guise of the sympathetic Samaritan, the Christian world has always seen hidden the Redeemer Jesus, who bends down over all human suffering.



# The centre of excellence for patients with multiple sclerosis is back

**R**ehabilitation is the medicine of the future, because we are increasingly faced with untreatable diseases, and being able to allow patients to return to the family or social circles with a high quality of life is fundamental. Cascia has proved to be an example in this and, with the reopening of the Rehabilitation Centre in the former House of Spiritual Exercises of the Monastery, it will once again become so. “The Centre was established almost 15 years ago,” says Health Director Dr. Gino Capitò, “as a business and management decision to reconvert the hospital into a highly specialised pole. Over the years, it has been given a rehabilitative profile with great interest for



multiple sclerosis, for which we have become an excellence in treatment, including at national level. Being a rheumatologist, with my ar-

rival Cascia has become the second centre in Italy of rheumatological rehabilitation since 2010 and, from 2015, the year in which I be-

***Rehabilitation is the medicine of the future***



Institutions visiting the structure. Among these: (from the right) Dr. Capitò, next to Mario De Carolis, mayor of Cascia; Dr. Imolo Fiaschini, DG of Umbria USL 2; Luca Barberini, Councilor for Health of the Umbria Region; Deputy Mayor Gino Emili; (behind him) Dr. Mauro Zampolini, director of the Department of Rehabilitation of Umbria USL 2; municipal councillor Monica Del Piano (first woman from the left).



Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis (centre), Mother Prioress of the Monastery of Saint Rita, visits the hospital together with the Community.

It is not only institutions but the patients themselves - true witnesses of a real case of good healthcare - that give recognition to the Centre. Of this Annita Rondoni is certain; from Foligno, she is tenacious and energetic, adviser to the Italian Multiple Sclerosis Association and head of the AI-SM Foligno-Spoleto-Valnerina Operational Group, who has been at the Centre in Cascia twice. Her life has been turned upside down by the illness but for her it was a rebirth, even if it was hard to understand it. "My diagnosis dates back to

## *In Umbria, there are 1,800 sclerosis patients*

came director, the Centre has seen an increase in work so much so that in 2016 it became the first hospital in Umbria in terms of number of hospitalisations from out-



Annita Rondoni, local head of the Italian Multiple Sclerosis Association.

side the region. Then the earthquake rendered the structure unusable, but we did not stop. We activated a home rehabilitation protocol and worked on a rapid relocation, which will soon be a reality. We expect to be able to reopen by September, no longer with 20 beds, but 40 between RSA and intensive rehabilitation, new facilities and enhanced staffing, so a greater potential to offer more services to regional and other users".

2005, after a traffic accident," she recounts. "I recall episodes that happened to me like falling or losing things from my hands and for which I did not give the correct name, namely multiple sclerosis. Life changes, it is your body that changes and you realise that if things fall from your hands there is a reason, your legs do not respond to your movements, but it is not over because life is a precious gift. A large part of what keeps me going



comes from faith which for me is a reason for living". Annita then begins her healthcare path in her hospital, but after four years she needs intensive rehabilitation

*Now, finally, there is a new beginning*



and arrives in Cascia, for three weeks. "At the centre, I found professionalism, courtesy and humanity in everyone. It is an environment that is truly lacking, because so many people are without an important point of reference. In Umbria alone, there are 1,800 sclerosis patients,



many need intensive hospitalisation and Cascia was a certainty". Speaking of the

results achieved by the Centre, Annita recalls a story of an Umbrian friend she met during the rehabilitation in Cascia: "He said he went to Milan, but if he was back on his feet it was thanks to the Centre in Cascia. Despite being a hospital environment, there was serenity and sharing like in a large family, thanks to the volunteers of the Angela Paoletti association who assisted in every need, especially human need. Now, finally, there is a new beginning for the Rehabilitation Centre in Cascia and there are many awaiting the reopening with hands clasped".





# Open doors at the Beehive

On June 9 and 10, 2018, the Little Bees and the Wildflowers, or the girls and children hosted by the Beehive of Saint Rita reception house, met with benefactors from all over Italy in Cascia. Now in its 6th edition, the "Open Doors at the Beehive" event has now become a fixed appointment and, for those who want a close up view of the project, the opportunity to experience all the good that the young guests receive from supporters of the Beehive project.



The Beehive project was started 80 years ago by Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce, abbess of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia, for a noble purpose: to help children with economic and family difficulties.



On the occasion of the "Open Doors" event, the Bees prepared a theatrical performance based on "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, staging themes such as the meaning of life, love and friendship. These are important themes on which the Beehive project of the Monastery of Saint Rita is rooted.





“Open Doors” is a real Family Feast organised in honour of the Beehive's benefactors, but it is also our way of thanking friends, supporters and volunteers for their closeness, generosity and affection.



During the event, we greeted those Little Bees and the Wildflowers who have concluded their journey with us, but who will always remain in our hearts: Ioana, Niccolò, Andrea and Michael.





# APPOINTMENTS

## **World, October 21, 2018**

### **WORLD MISSION DAY**

*Together with young people, we carry the Gospel to everyone:* this is the title of the message of Pope Francis for World Mission Day 2018, which falls on October 21. "Every man and woman is a mission," the Pope writes, "that is the reason for our life on this earth ... How many young people find in missionary volunteer work a way of serving the "least" of our brothers and sisters (cf. Matt 25, 40), promoting human dignity and witnessing to the joy of love and of being Christians. These ecclesial experiences educate and train young people not only for professional success, but also for developing and fostering their God-given gifts in order better to serve others ... Dear young people, this coming October, the month of the missions, we will hold the Synod devoted to you. It will prove to be one more occasion to help us become missionary disciples, ever more passionately devoted to Jesus and his mission, to the ends of the earth".

## **Cascia, every 3rd Friday of the month**

### **PRAYER FOR CANCER PATIENTS**

Every third Friday of the month, we invite you to participate in the prayer for cancer patients, which we will recite before the urn of Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce, in the Lower Basilica. At the end of Holy Mass at 16:00, we will ask for the intercession of the Blessed, who lived with this evil for twenty-seven years.

## **Event for the 80 years of the Beehive**

The title of the musical representation promoted by the Monastery of Saint Rita was *In the name of the Mother*. It was performed by the GardArt association on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Beehive of Saint Rita, the welcoming house where the nuns host girls and children from

difficult family situations. The event took place in the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia, on the evening of August 11, and was a great success with the public.

### **NOTE STELLATE**

The night of San Lorenzo in Cascia saw four exceptional stars illuminate the sky with music above the cloister of the Monastery of Saint Rita with the "Note stellate" (Starred Notes) concert event. Like



every year, in memory of the friend of the Sanctuary Giacomo Persiani, the young organist of the Basilica of Saint Rita who died in 1997 after illness, the Augustinian nuns host a suggestive and awaited concert in the cloister. For the evening of August 10, 2018, the task was entrusted to the Muse Mediterranee cultural association which offered the sublime performance of the Fancelli Quartet (pictured).

(continued on page 17)

# An intelligent and alert mother

by Msgr. Giovanni Scanavino, OSA

**T**he sudden tumour certainly slowed her down, even with the convinced joy of being truly closer to the sanctity of Rita. But amid the sufferings of Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce (founder of the Beehive project, *ed.*) we must also register a concern that led her to exhaustion: ten years of real anxiety for the responsibility of building the new temple dedicated to Saint Rita. Few know of this great anxiety that the Mother had to face, just like a true secretary of Saint Rita, for promoting the devotion and the cult of the saint she had fallen in love with.

She soon found herself between

## Ten years of real anxiety for the building of the new temple

the devil and the deep blue sea, namely between two opposing factions: one was on the side of architect Brasini, who was also Mussolini's architect, and the other formed by the community of nuns of the monastery and the Provincial of the Umbrian Augustinians, who considered the Brasini project exaggerated for a town like Cascia and ex-

cessively expensive. The controversy lasted for ten years and for Mother Teresa it was a nerve-racking nightmare. Finally her opinion and that of the nuns pre-

vailed; they had insistently prayed to Saint Rita and obtained comforting support from her. There was also fraternal support from Don Luigi Orione, who, as a pilgrim visiting



Mother Fasce with the Little Bees of Saint Rita (work by Bonaduce, XX cen.).

### THE BEEHIVE TODAY

assures its young guests (the Little Bees and the Wildflowers) all that is necessary to make them grow in serenity, guaranteeing their education, health care and psychological assistance, adequate nourishment and a home full of love.

## All that is needed to be in good health

We live in a society where image and physical form are exasperated by a continuous search for perfection. Eating disorders in adolescents, and lately also present in small children, are increasing. Having to do with children, pre-adolescents and adolescents, we decided to field our skills to try to reduce the risks related to the above. Because food is not just nourishment but also a symbol and an object of exchange, communication and relationship.

First of all, we worked on introducing a menu that helps our guests acquire a correct and healthy diet. We did so with the help of a nutritionist and a psychologist, through informative and preventive meetings about food, eating disorders and all that goes with them. We did so trying to give voice to the discomfort that is sometimes expressed through food.

With the same enthusiasm, we are promoting further training based on doing. Because we are sure that only through experimentation does effective learning - aimed at harmonious development of the person as a whole - take place.

This training path, which we have identified in the Cooking Workshop, combines the teaching of proper nutrition, the targeted enhancement of each Little Bee and her need to always learn new things. These needs meet and take shape thanks to volunteers Ivana and Marcella, who devote themselves to cooking and to the Little Bees with much passion and lively enthusiasm.

*(Violanda Lleshaj, director of the Beehive of Saint Rita)*







### That host of girls who gave her the strength

little girls welcomed in the Beehive project, ed.) could not deprive themselves of the affection and serenity of such an important mother, yet the worries were so overwhelming as to be able to make every smile and trust disappear. This did not happen. The Mother continued to smile and believe in a Providence that would not have neglected any of the various members of the big family. And in the meantime, Saint Rita could finally count on a sanctuary of her own, while the Mother herself would not manage to see it completed. Death was to surprise her first, but this would not be able to take away the joy every evening of embracing that host of girls who

### Saint Rita could finally count on a sanctuary of her own

Saint Rita, obtained the confidence of the Mother and offered her decisive advice.

Mother Teresa confided to him the terrible suffering caused by the uncertainty that had arisen in dealing with the construction of the sanctuary. She was also losing the friendship of Father Marabottini, her loyal collaborator to that point, creator of the bulletin of Saint Rita (From the Bees to the Roses, today a bi-monthly magazine in Italian, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and German, *ed.*) and a precious tool for promotion of the Ritian cult. Don Orione advised the Mother to entrust herself directly to Pope Pacelli and to the Vatican Board of Superintendence. It was a fortunate indication that led to the replacement of the regime's architect with pontifical architect Chiapetta who had already shown that he knew about sanctuaries, like that of

Saint Rita, recently built in Turin.

Ten years of continuous suffering show us the courage and great balance shown by the Abbess in having to fight on several fronts at the same time. The Little Bees (the



## The flowers and the bees

### WHO I AM ...

My name is Niccolò, I'm 10 years old and I'm in primary 5. I have a little sister named Giulia. For five years I have been part of the Wildflowers project; we're at school until about 6 o'clock in the afternoon, then mum comes to pick me up after work.

### WHAT I LIKE MOST ABOUT THE BEEHIVE ...

I like playing football and luckily, here in the Beehive, I'm able to arrange good football matches with my friends. I'm happy, it's almost like living in a family; there are the educators who help us to do our homework and teach us new games, accompany us to catechism, and so on. In short, I'm really happy.



Niccolò,  
Wildflower



Sara,  
Little Bee

### WHO I AM ...

I'm Sara, I'm 18 years old. I am a sensitive girl, sometimes too finicky with myself and with others. I trust myself little because I am rather insecure, and often, faced with the problems of life, I'm afraid of making mistakes. However, I try to face life with a smile. In short, a girl with many faults but also with positive qualities.

### WHAT I LIKE MOST ABOUT THE BEEHIVE ...

The moment I entered the Beehive, my life slowly began to change because I had found a place where I felt protected and considered. The Beehive is like a second home where I realised that things are faced with more courage by being together. One thing I really love is the laughing with some of the girls, and also the moment when I take part in the manual workshop, because I'm learning new things; in particular using an iron to draw on a sheet of paper with coloured wax.

gave her the strength to regenerate her serenity every day and to constantly believe in that service of love that helped her to invent all the Ritian works of Cascia, which continue today in a new hospital

and in that Beehive, which never ceases to offer maternal tenderness to those who have to experience the harshness of life.

It is not easy to distribute love in ten years of confusion and darkness,

but it is above all here that lies the greatness of a mother who never stopped smiling, being elegant and alert in handling all her responsibilities. "This," Pope Francis would tell us, "is true holiness!"

# APPOINTMENTS

## AUGUSTINIAN YOUTH SUMMER CAMP

From July 24 to 30, 2018, almost 300 youngsters aged between 12 and 19 from all over Italy met in Cascia for the special youth summer camp organised by the Augustinians. *Senza TE sono solo MPO. Il tempo vola, tu sei il pilota (Without You I am incomplete. Time flies, you are the pilot)* was the title and crux of the theme faced by young people, with the help of animators led by Father Michele Falcone: "We realised how important the dimension of time is in the life of our children", explained Father Michele. "During this week we also wanted to make it clear that a value, which for us is fundamental, must be conjugated forcefully over time, and this conjugation that sometimes can appear as a simplification, or even a misrepresentation of the value itself, does not mean that it no longer exists. Like a watercourse, where the value is water and the river bed is time: it can be a tortuous, beautiful path, flat or with waterfalls,

sometimes it can disappear and then reappear at a great distance. The water continues to flow, even if not as we have imagined it". The Augustinians, who gave their contribution to the catechesis for young people, are different. Among these, the Augustinian Sisters, Servants of



Jesus and Mary, who accompanied a group of more than 40 young people from Malta in the search for an experience in line with the Synod of Bishops on the theme "Young people, faith and vocational discernment", which will be held from October 3 to 28, 2018.

## MY DEVOTION FOR SAINT RITA

I met my husband 30 years ago. At the time he had a holy picture of Saint Rita that he wanted to give me. From



that moment on, the saint became part of our life, accompanying us. Our daughter was born of a twin pregnancy, but she was the only one who survived. Then we made a promise to Saint Rita and every two years we went to the Chapel which is located in Buenos Aires. Years passed and when our daughter was 15, we left for our pilgrimage to the Monastery of Cascia. It is our pillar, my example of dedication to the love she had for her husband and children. We will be eternally grateful to Saint Rita! (*testimony of Fanny Garcia, Argentina*)





by Marta Ferraro

# Vito and the mustard seed

## Testimony of the PPU of Carini (Palermo)

**F**or this issue of the column dedicated to the Pious Primary Union of Saint Rita I have the pleasure of telling you the story of the Sicilian group of Carini, an experience that I would call delicate. This story has excited

me a lot, proving to be an example of the good which, hidden in small things, never wanes. The promoter and head of the association is Vi-

to Gallina, a young man who is only 18. I met him during the two days of the general meeting of the PPU held last October in Cascia. On that

***Today, the association has 20 members. Devotion to Saint Rita in those parts is much older***



occasion, listening to his testimony, which he told in the parlour before the nuns and all the groups present at the event, I immediately understood that he was a very special person. His story brought to mind the parable of the mustard seed, the smallest of the seeds which, after sowing, nevertheless turns into a robust and strong plant. I interviewed Vito at a time when the media were lingering on the violence of baby gangs who mercilessly perpetrate acts of absurd brutality (an absurdity corroborated by the fact that it has no motivation) against their peers. Vito is only slightly older than them and this made me think a lot and he touched my heart like a positive gust of wind. Vito appeared to me like that mustard seed, a small yet essential seed of hope and good for the future. The Carini group joined the PPU last October and it is also thanks to Vito's commitment that the association now has 20 members. However, devotion to Saint Rita in those parts is much older. Fervour for the Saint of Cascia has always been particularly felt in Sicily

and Vito knew about the Saint from his grandmother's stories: "I was 8 or 9 years old and I already knew the story of Saint Rita ... Grandma also gave me a book about her life and I was fas-



inated by the forgiveness that Rita gave to those bad men who killed her husband, but then, even her whole life is special. As a child I carried her statue in church to recite with others the Novena dedicated to her and in 2013 I joined the PPU as an individual," the young head of the group told me. With the arrival in the parish of the new parish priest Giuseppe Billeci and with the great support of Pina Santonocito, Vito wanted to transform his personal experience with the PPU into a moment of community ag-

gregation: "We only became affiliated as a community in October, but I would like to organise something for young people too, to involve them in the group". Among the first activities that the PPU of

## ***Vito knew about the Saint from his grandmother's stories***

Carini has organised, there is the recital of the Fifteen Thursdays of Saint Rita, the prayers of preparation for May 22, the day of the feast of the saint. "I thought of adding a symbol that recalls the qualities of Rita to the recital of the Fifteen Thursday prayers. For example, on the first Thursday we handed out honey sweets in memory of Saint Rita's first miracle. For the second, instead, I asked the parish priest to celebrate a Mass with the final blessing of the students to honour the period of Rita's youth". Parish priest Giuseppe Vallesi immediately showed himself willing to join the project of Vito and the PPU: "I saw in the parish this great desire of the many devotees of the community and I said to myself 'Why not?' It can also be a moment of growth and enrichment for me, to be more in love with this Saint". ■

***On the first Thursday we handed out honey sweets***

# Rita miracle worker

by Mauro Papalini

**W**e can have no doubt that Saint Rita was extremely sensitive to the condition of the sick; but the lack of a complete biography contemporary to her does not allow us to know how she put her ardent charity into practice: we can only deduce it.

Certainly she assisted her elderly parents with love until their death; she assisted her husband and children in their illnesses. In Roccaporena she helped those in need, especially during her widowhood; tra-

and then the neighbour, because they are these the precepts that were given to us as fundamental" (Prologue). In this regard, we have a direct coeval (contemporary, *ed.*) of the saint: a short biography written by a notary from Cascia in 1457 states: "A most honest nun, religious woman, Rita lived as a nun for 40 years in the monastery of St. Mary Magdalene of Cascia living with charity in the service of God". The notary language

***Even after her death,  
Saint Rita has  
continued her  
mission***



***First of all love God  
and therefore our  
neighbour***

dition has it that she assisted victims of the plague in the leper hospital and epidemics were frequent at that time.

Without a doubt, however, it was in the monastery that her charity was shown in all its magnitude, favoured by the Augustinian rule that makes charity its foundation: "Dearest Sisters, first of all you love God

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus,  
in journeying towards the Synod, your Church turns  
her attention to all the young people of the world.

We pray that they might boldly take charge of their  
lives, aim for the most beautiful and profound  
things of life and always keep their hearts  
unencumbered. Accompanied by wise and  
generous guides, help them respond to the call you  
make to each of them, to realise a proper plan of  
life and achieve happiness. Keep their hearts open  
to dreaming great dreams and make them  
concerned for the good of others.

Like the Beloved Disciple, may they stand at the  
foot of the Cross, to receive your Mother as a gift  
from you. May they be witnesses to your  
Resurrection and be aware that you are at their  
side as they joyously proclaim you as Lord. Amen.

*(Prayer of Pope Francis for young people in view of  
the Synod of Bishops of 2018 on the theme "Young  
people, faith and vocational discernment")*



## GRACES RECEIVED

## TESTIMONY OF ENZA, MARSALA (TP) ITALY

Some days ago, I had decided to go to Milan for the usual eye check-up. In fact, for about ten years I have suffered from a serious illness that I fight with punctures of the vitreous body inside my eyes. Well, my 93-year-old mother's physical condition worsened a few days before I left; she no longer got out of bed and that made me realise that she was not as well as before. Despite this, my mother urged me to leave for my check-up, asking me not to think about her. Living in Marsala and aware that I would have to leave her for at least a few days, I did not know whether to postpone my departure or follow the advice of the doctor who kept telling me that my mother was not dying and that she could last months and months in the state in which she was lapsing. So, I decided to leave, but I was full of doubts and fears. The night before leaving, I prayed to Saint Rita fervently, begging her to help me in this difficult moment. Having finished my prayers, I jumped out of bed at the ring of the phone: it was the caregiver who asked me to rush to the bedside of my mother because she was passing away. Yes ... my beloved mother was passing away and I could hug her and kiss her a thousand times while "still warm". I thank Saint Rita with much love, because I was able to assist my mother at the time of her passing. I entrust to Rita her soul which, I am sure, is in heaven with the revered saint.

does not hide the charitable activity of Sister Rita, at least as long as her strength allowed her: "service of God" is understood above all as to the infirm sisters.

Even after her death, Saint Rita has continued on her mission of great charity,

assisting many sick people who turn to her to ask for their healing, and thanks to her intercession they have been healed by God. Her fame as a miracle worker (healer who performs miracles, *ed.*) has spread all over the world.

## THEY LIVE IN CHRIST

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

Alfredo Merola (Santa Maria Capua Vetere CE - Italy)  
 Angela Pratico (Sapri SA - Italy)  
 Angela Ponzi (Praia a Mare CS - Italy)  
 Angiolino Farinazzo (Dugliolo di Budrio BO - Italy)  
 P. Anselmo M. Busatto (Belvedere di Tezze sul Brenta VI - Italy)  
 Antonio Giuliano (Rutigliano BA - Italy)  
 Domenica Dubini Cortelazzi (Gravedona CO - Italy)  
 Domenico Venzo (Villaverla VI - Italy)  
 Dosolina De March (Camposampiero PD - Italy)  
 Egidio Marino (Praia a Mare CS - Italy)  
 Elena Cavaliere (Agerola NA - Italy)  
 Francesco Fucci (Cerignola FG - Italy)

Gaetano Palombini (Rome - Italy)  
 Giannina Piana (Cornedo Vicentino VI - Italy)  
 Giovannina Marino (Sapri SA - Italy)  
 Giulia Rosa Boschetti (Pontevico BS - Italy)  
 Giuseppina Bonini in Arioli (Mantua - Italy)  
 Lea Biani Angeli (Urbino - Italy)  
 Luciano Amiotti (Novara - Italy)  
 Luigi Gessa (Domusnovas CI - Italy)  
 Luigi Salzano (Naples - Italy)  
 Maria Fabozzo (Rome - Italy)  
 Maria Giuseppina Didonè Zanetti (Cusinati di Rosà VI - Italy)  
 Martina Pecori (Remedello di Sotto BS - Italy)  
 Matteo Casanova (Agerola NA - Italy)  
 Nelly Rita Polly (Monthey - Switzerland)  
 Nicla Consolini Perrotta (Mantua - Italy)  
 Otello Nardi (Cascia PG - Italy)  
 Pasquale Santori (Dollard-des-Ormeaux QUE - Canada)  
 Rita Drago (Rome - Italy)  
 Umberto Battilocchi (Leonessa RI - Italy)

# Saint Rita in Palmira

by Rita Gentili

A chorus of voices tells me of the devotion to Saint Rita in Venezuela, and in particular in the town of Palmira, to the north-west of the country on the border with Colombia. The voices are those of Father Adelmo Irene, parish priest of the Church of San Agatòn, accompanied by Wilson F. Quintero, founder of the Pious Union of Saint Rita in the federal state of Tachira and of the work of Saint Rita, Teresa Platas Suárez and Mercedes Chacón, devotees very active in the parish. In this way I learn that the cult of

cas, it is almost patronal feast day. In the parish of Palmira, the cult of Saint Rita is linked mostly to the experience of Mercedes and Teresa. It was in 2007, under the guidance of the then parish priest Father José Antonio Griman OAR (Order of Augustinian Recollects, *ed.*), that Mercedes set up an apostolate group which had Saint Rita as its guiding figure. Teresa, on the other hand, tells a story that has contributed to increasing faith in the saint in the parish: she puts her recovery from cancer down to the work of intercession of Saint Rita, invoked in the most difficult moments of therapy. The entire parish believes in this grace, even if the only official case of a



Wilson and Teresa hold a rose in their hands as they prepare to offer the symbolic flower of Saint Rita to the faithful.

## *The cult of Saint Rita has been present in Venezuela since Rita was still Blessed*

Saint Rita has been present in Venezuela since the mid-1600s, when Rita was still Blessed, even though mostly limited to the Augustinians. It is from 1900, with the canonisation of Rita, that devotion began to spread, until the birth of the first prayer groups named after the Saint in the '90s. Today, on May 22, in many cities and towns of Venezuela, starting with the capital of Cara-

### RITA IS ALSO HERE



**Country:** Venezuela.

**Town:** Palmira.

**To know:** The Federal Republic of Venezuela consists of 23 federal states, including that of Tachira, where Palmira is located. For years, Venezuela has been experiencing a profound economic, financial and humanitarian crisis. There is a lack of food and medicine, basic services are not guaranteed and almost 3 million Venezuelans have left the country, including doctors and teachers.



miracle operated by the intercession of Saint Rita in Venezuela is that of Francisca Dunàn, a woman cured of stomach cancer, residing in the municipality of Francisco Linares Alcántara, whose capital is the town called Santa Rita. After her recovery, Teresa joined the group called Sorellanza Santa Rita [Saint Rita Sisterhood] which, following the steps of the Saint, helps people who are sick or in need, providing medicines, food, basic necessities and, once a month, preparing lunch for the sick of a psychiatric hospital abandoned by the state. Today, unfortunately, all this activity

## *On May 22, in many cities and towns it is almost patronal feast day*

of a social nature has become impossible due to the economic crisis that is affecting Venezuela. It is the Fathers of the Order of Augustinian Recollects who also meet the material needs of the people, thanks to the international solidarity network called Arcores. Even the feast of Saint Rita in the parish of San Agatón has suffered the effects of the crisis: on the occasion of the celebration of the feast of May 22, roses used to be distributed along with honey, figs, grapes and holy picture prayer cards, but with the drop in donations and strong inflation the cost of these products has become too high to continue. However, the difficulties have brought people closer to the saint of the impossible: in places where she was not celebrated, says Father Adelmo, she is now celebrated and social networks and the radio have become spreaders of the message of Saint Rita.





# Young people at the centre

by Father Vittorino Grossi OSA, editor-in-chief of From the Bees to the Roses

**T**he “Saint Rita in the heart of the Church” column in the bi-monthly “From the Bees to the Roses” magazine will be dedicated to emerging themes in the contemporary Church as they are conveyed by the Holy Father. In this issue of the Magazine of

vocational discernment”, also in view of 34th World Youth Day (January 22-27, 2019) on the theme “I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

A preparatory document of January 17, 2017 has already been made available to

connectivity, the Church wants to help young people in their search for belonging and participation in daily life, which matures their choices of Christian faith. These choices require the capacity for discernment and commitment resulting from the evaluation made. In this



Saint Rita of Cascia, we pay attention to the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops which will take place from October 3 to 28, 2018, and will be dedicated to “Youth, faith and

interested parties. This document outlines the issues that are to be examined: in a nutshell, the Christian faith as a guide for young people in their choice of life.

In an age of virtual hyper-

***The Christian  
faith as a  
guide for  
young people***

process, the urgency is increasingly being seen of someone moving with young people, accompanying them in becoming adults in age

## *Not just good advice, but a structured “pastoral care”*

and in faith. This is the pastoral choice of the Catholic universe and its commitment in the coming years, not only of good advice but of ‘pastoral care’ structured around indication of the points of reference and the adequate means to such a noble end, substantiated by joy in proclamation of the Gospel.

In this regard, the introduction of the preparatory document specifies: “These things I have spoken to you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full (Jn 15:11)”. This is God's plan for men and women in every age, including all the young men and women of the Third Millennium, without exception. Proclaiming the joy of the Gospel is the mission entrusted by the Lord has to his Church.

Therefore, attention to young people will involve all believers in the near future, even if this seems excessive to someone. In reality, from the beginning of Christian generations, attention to the young has been considered not so much a sensitivity of some bishop as one of the

commands left to us by the Apostles. On the other hand, young people are the most fragile link in the chain of human generations, and today they seem almost ignored by adults in their profound discomfort. Furthermore, if young people like - rightly - having care-free fun, at the same time they need adults able to help them in their free and responsible growth, also in faith. In our time, being drawn into the vortex of the network (Net), they are exposed to the use of cannabis, to (small or large) gestures of self-harm, from “cutting” to “burning”, to much else besides. Under such influence, many young people do not study, do not work, do not seek formation,

## *Young people seem almost ignored by adults*

and, on the contrary, feel paralysed, deciding to exclude themselves and exile themselves. Accompanying them in these difficulties, as well as being a duty for adult society, for a Christian, means continuing the story of the Good Samaritan, that is, of Jesus himself who hid himself in the parable of the Samaritan. Pope Francis feels this problem greatly and is coordinating it in the pastoral choices of the Catholic Church. ■

# SMILING AT LIFE

Send photos of your children to [monastero@saintitadecascia.org](mailto:monastero@saintitadecascia.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. Agostina and Martina Listello (Argentina)
2. Angelo Leonardo Gomez Cortes (Amstelveen, The Netherlands)
3. Candela Listello (Argentina)
4. Rita Sofia Di Giustino (Fano a Corno TE - Italy)
5. Sofia Sacilotto (Campodarsego PD - Italy)
6. Thomas Fai (Cugliate Fabbiasco VA - Italy)



# Golden Jubilee for Sister Alfonsina

edited by the Sisters

**F**ifty years of profession are a gift, a great gift, just as life is a gift. On June 16, 2018, we thanked and praised the Lord for the Golden Jubilee of Sister Alfonsina Versenti.

It was a day of great celebration for the Augustinian communities of Cascia, for relatives and friends and for the pilgrims who found themselves in the Basilica of Saint Rita at the afternoon Eucharist; gathered at the foot of the altar to thank God who called Sr. Alfonsina and each of us to the *sequela Christi* and made us a sign of the covenant of love with his Church; a public



celebration to say to the world: Jesus is our life, is freedom, we renounce everything to follow with joy He who chose and loved us from the beginning, giving us the grace of constancy, perseverance, fidelity and total giving, despite our smallness and fragility. Fifty years of consecration means many joys



Sister Alfonsina (centre) together with her loved ones, during the ceremony for the 50th anniversary of her Solemn Profession.

and also difficulties, roses and thorns, but every effort belongs to a dailiness of love that helps overcome everything. It is the encounter between God's faithfulness, which is forever, and the personal faithfulness of the consecrated who no longer lives for herself but for God alone and for her neighbour, near and far.

It is always moving to hear the words of the renewal of the vows by the celebrated Sister, strong words: "I thank you, Lord, for having made me persevere in the service of the community and of the Church, in the joy of living together and in fraternal communion. With all the impulse of my heart, I renew before you, before my sisters and brothers, my vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, desiring to serve the Augustinian Family and the Church until death".





Sr. Alfonsina pronounced them with a firm and sure voice, with peace in her heart and a smile on her lips, to renew her full and happy dedication to her Spouse.

The phrase for the souvenir-holy picture of the 50th anniversary of her Solemn Profession was chosen from Psalm 17: *"Your right hand supported me, your goodness made me grow"*. And if we continue reading the psalm we find these words: *"You have paved the way for my steps, my feet have not wavered ..."*. This is why the anniversary is celebrated mainly in the Eucharist: because it is thanksgiving, it is a reminder of the action of grace and the goodness of God the Father who has called us by the power of his Spirit, to follow Jesus more closely for participating intimately in his saving mission in the Church. We said it at the beginning: it is all a gift, free and full, and so ... *Deo gratias!*

## GIVE ME A HEART THAT LISTENS...

Dearest friend,

"Return to your heart: see there what perhaps you perceive about God, because the image of God is there: in the inner self Christ dwells, in the inner self you are renewed according to the image of God". This is the thought of our spiritual father St. Augustine. There is a challenge to which we are all called: that of learning to look within ourselves. The choice of life, in fact, is realised in listening to one's heart, in search of the most real and profound desires that the Father himself has hidden from you.

We offer you some days for listening, praying, discerning, living at the school of the Lord ...



**For information: Monastery of Saint Rita - Cascia PG**  
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Let's give  
a nest to  
those that  
have none.

estrogeni

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