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OF CASCIA

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine
of Saint Rita of Cascia

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THE GRANDPA OF ITALY FOR SAINT RITA

*On the occasion of Grandparents Day,
Lino Banfi tells his story to all devotees of Rita*



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FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

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On the cover: Lino Banfi reading the magazine of Saint Rita. Photo by Stefano Del Pozzolo

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Much more than you can imagine

When we think of a grandad or grandma, we think of old age. This, even though the average age at which we become grandparents in Italy today is 54.8, according to a study I found on the site of Senior Italia FederAnziani. It should be said that becoming grandparents, in some way perhaps represents approaching the conclusion of the cyclical path of life – new generations take over. But life has lengthened considerably. I saw an article on Ansa.it that talked about ISTAT [Italian National Institute of Statistics] data at 1 January 2019 which confirm this trend: “at the national level the report showed that in ten years (from 2009 to 2019) the number of hundred-year-olds rose from 11 thousand to over 14 thousand, and those aged 105 and over more than doubled, from 472 to 1,112, an increase of 136%. The persons aged 110 and over alive on January 1, 2019 were 21, double the 10 alive in 2009”.

In short, given that we will have more and more years to live in front of us, the urgency of putting the value of grandparents and the elderly at the centre with respect to family and society is even more meaningful. Pope Saint John Paul II left us a 'Letter to the elderly' dated 1999, which offers us insights that are more relevant than ever.

Old age is the time to do great works, because we have gained experience and wisdom. Pope Wojtyła says: “Moses too was an old man when God entrusted him with the mission of leading the Chosen People out of Egypt”.

Being elderly means having the task of guarding and spreading the collective memory. In the Letter, in fact, we read that the elderly are “the guardians of our collective memory, and thus the privileged interpreters of that body of ideals and common

values which support and guide life in society. To exclude the elderly is in a sense to deny the past, in which the present is firmly rooted, in the name of a modernity without memory”.

Young and elderly must come together for an exchange of value. Saint John Paul II reminds us that the commandment 'Honour your Father and Mother' does not only indicate “love of children for their parents, but



it has also forged the strong link which exists between the generations ... the words “father and mother” point to the past, to the bond between generations which makes possible the very existence of a people ... Honouring older people involves a threefold duty: welcoming them, helping them and making good use of their qualities ...”.

“There must be a growing conviction that a fully human civilisation shows respect and love for the elderly, so that despite their diminishing strength they feel a vital part of society ... Dear young people, I urge you to do this with great love and generosity. Older people can give you much more than you can imagine”.

“Grandparents, patrimony of humanity”

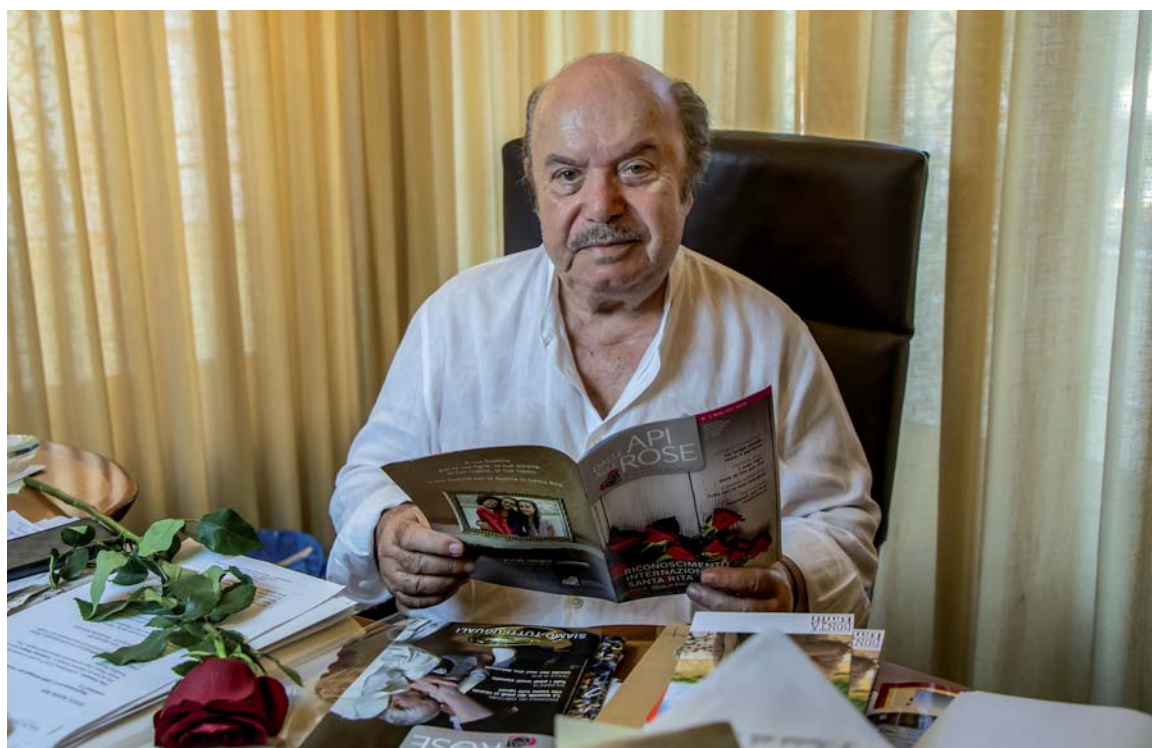
Lino Banfi tells 'From the Bees to the Roses' that his first act as commissioner for UNESCO will be to propose grandparents as the 56th wonder of Italy

by Monica Guarriello

He welcomes me into the study of his house in Rome, full of memories of his many successes as an actor, comedian, artist and television presenter. Lino Banfi, whose real name is Pasquale Zagaria, was born in Andria 83 years ago. His father wanted him to be a monsignor, if not even pope. But after five years in the seminary, Lino understands that making people laugh is his true vocation. From here, the 'conversion' to the job of actor and the choice of marriage instead of priesthood. But his curriculum contains much more: the role of “grandpa of Italy”, consecrated by his interpretation of Libero Martini

(better known as 'Nonno Libero' [Grandpa Libero]), in the famous TV series 'Un medico in famiglia' [A Doctor in the Family], broadcast on RAI television for all of 18 years.

What does Lino Banfi think of today's grandparents? The figure of the grandfather is such a beautiful and significant figure, but more respect is needed. It is rare to see young people stand up to offer their seat on the bus to an old man with a stick. Not because they don't want to, but because they're busy with their cell phone sending messages;



Grandparents and grandchildren need to chat with each other

they don't even look at the grandfather ... And we need respect from children, daughters-in-law and sons-in-law towards the elderly person. I have seen many sad people sitting on benches who have said to me: "We are in August ... They parked me here". Because the son has made the excuse that the hotel where they're going on vacation will not take his small dog. And the grandfather and the small dog get parked. But couldn't they choose a place where small dogs are welcome? Here's the point: I live these situations from close up due to the fact that I am the grandpa of Italy, which is what Pope Ratzinger called me. It's horrible to hear that people of a certain age are being parked as if they were an object.

In this situation, what can the grandpa of Italy do? I say: dear grandchildren, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, sons and daughters and dear grandparents, you have Lino Banfi among you who, luckily for him, became a commissioner for UNESCO a few months ago. So, the first thing I'll do at the first meeting of the Italian National Commission for UNESCO is to speak of the figure of the grandfather. This must become a patrimony of humanity, because it is important. What's needed is a little respect for these elderly people and, since that no longer exists in daily life, at least some respect from the institutions towards this figure. What do you think?

"Grandpa, patrimony of humanity" has a nice ring to it. Today, grandparents are often the economic backbone of families. Beyond this aspect, do you think that there are still areas of the family where the figure of the grandfather can actually have an effect? Certainly, in the coordination of daily life with children, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. Then, it is obvious that this cooperation, this cohesion between relatives and grandparents, must start at the beginning, from when the child is born, grows up, and not only when you have to take them to the nursery or take

them back home. Grandparents and grandchildren must live together a bit, chat with each other.

Do you have a message for all grandchildren? To start with, we can tell our grandchildren that they can find something in their grandparents that is not yet on the smartphone: affection. Grandparents and grandchildren can be excellent accomplices, with respect to the relationship with parents. And if I can become an influencer, as young people say, I would like to influence my grandchildren in treating grandparents better.

THE POPULATION OF GRANDPARENTS

There are more than 12 million "grandparents of Italy". The average age at which a person becomes a grandparent today is 54.8 years. Increasingly socially and culturally active, our grandparents have a high rate of computerisation and are interested in a lifestyle that can guarantee healthy and active ageing. Italy is the European country with the highest percentage of grandparents caring for a grandchild: 33.1% of grandparents take care of their grandchildren daily and 47.6% do so once or several times a week. Positive from a human point of view, this situation reflects a reality in which families have to rely on their grandparents in order to look after their children, in times of precarious economic and working conditions and lack of investments in the family and social services sector. "Grandparents" therefore represent a fundamental economic resource for our society. 77% of Italian grandparents declare that they still feel useful especially when they are involved in taking care of their families and in household chores. According to the ProntoPro service portal, if you wanted to calculate the right compensation, the ideal salary for a grandfather would correspond to almost 2,000 euro a month.

"The joy of simplicity" is the subtitle of this precious little book of information about one of the most beloved Augustinian saints, Nicholas of Tolentino. It was written by our dear Father Remo Piccolomini, as his last effort before

going to heaven in January. Of Saint Nicholas, Father Remo writes: *"From his ever-smiling mouth never words of grumbling, just words that spread only sympathy and so much understanding around him". And then: "Our sad, frightened world feels the need to have similar models for the future and to build together the city of peace in justice".*

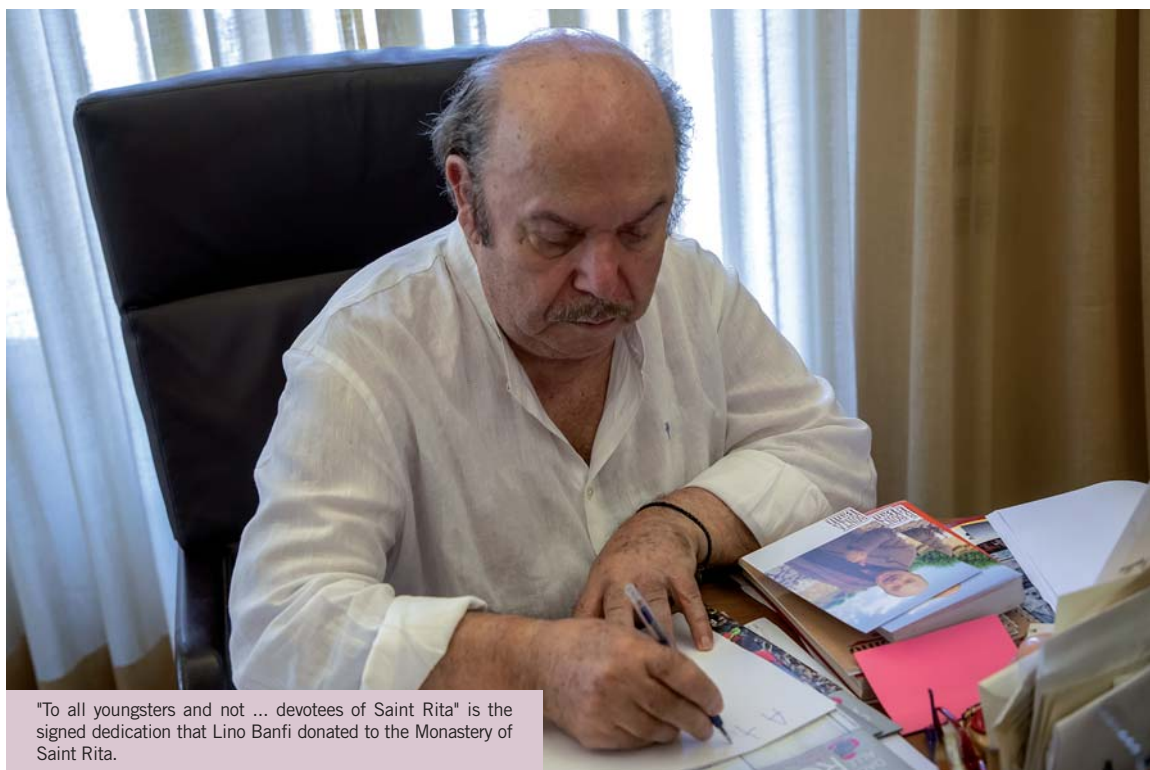
Saint Nicholas of Tolentino
Father Remo Piccolomini,
in collaboration
with Angela Rita Dello Preite
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And a suggestion for grandparents? To grandparents, who already have a lot of patience, I recommend having a bit more. Especially with their children, with their daughters-in-law or sons-in-law, to try to understand that they too have hundreds of problems ... but these grandparents can't do more than that!

Parents are called on to educate their children, grandparents to transmit their hu-

manity and historical memory. What is the episode of your life that you want your grandchildren to remember? They know my life by heart; they hear it through my words, through the interviews I've done, on the television. They know all the sacrifices, the hunger I suffered. This is not what I want them to remember, but just the one event in my life when I was 17-18. At that time, I was in Mi-



"To all youngsters and not ... devotees of Saint Rita" is the signed dedication that Lino Banfi donated to the Monastery of Saint Rita.

GRANDPARENTS DAY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

In Italy, Grandparents Day began to be celebrated only in 2005. The date chosen is October 2, when the Church celebrates the guardian angels. In the United States, the celebration falls on the 1st Sunday of September and was established in 1978, on the suggestion of Marian McQuade, a Virginia housewife with 15 children and forty grandchildren. The first Sunday of October, however, is the day chosen by the United Kingdom, while in Canada grandparents are celebrated on October 25. In France, there is a specific feast for the grandfather (the 1st Sunday in October, since 2008) and one for grandmothers (the 1st Sunday of March, which has existed since 1987).

Ian, along with many other southern emigrants, and we slept at the station when we were unable to pay for somewhere to sleep, because you had to pay every night to sleep in the dormitories.

Often you found written the phrase 'We don't rent rooms to southerners' ... Yes, it was 1953-54. At that time, while the other lads of my age, Calabrians, Neapolitans, Sicilians, cried and wanted to go home, I said: "No, no, I'm going to stay here. I'll sleep at the station,

Grandchildren can find something in their grandparents that is not on the smartphone

one day I'm going to have to sign autographs, everyone has to love me". They looked at me like they look at crazy people. This is the thing I want to remain most impressed with my grandchildren. No matter what happens, they have to push on to realise their dream. You, young man or woman, if you want to do that thing, do it. No one will forbid it.

What is your relationship with God today?

Good, because I'm a comedian. I make him laugh, I tell jokes. When I think of God, I say to him: "I'll tell you this, I'll tell you like God". Then, I say, "Ah, sorry ... sorry if I used your name". What I hope to do ... I should mention it, if I have the pleasure of seeing Pope Francis again, is to become the pope's jester. That would be a title that no one has ever had.

And speaking of popes, you have known more than one, right? I've known the last three.

I don't wish to know the fourth, because Pope Francis is the same age as me, so I want him to be around for a long time. When we met, he told me: "You are an important person, because they told me they call you the grandpa of Italy". And I said: "Your Holiness, if I am the grandpa of Italy you are the abuelo del mundo ('grandpa of the world' in Spanish, ed.)".

Mr. Banfi, I am ambassador for a question that is not mine, because grandpa Libero has conquered some, let's say 'virtual', granddaughters: the Little Bees of Saint Rita. Will Grandpa Libero come back on television?

This is a good question, actually a bad question, because we would all have wanted to do one last series to see the Martini family together again. I gave suggestions, but RAI did not want to; they'll have their reasons.

Do you still have a work project that will bring back the grandpa of Italy back to television? Most likely I will be a friar, but even a friar can be a good grandfather. I have to do a fiction story with Al Bano. But that will be the figure because, at a certain age, whatever role one plays, it will always recall the grandfather.

The last question, from Mother Prioress: when will you come to Cascia? We'll find the way. Also because I want to tell them in person what I proposed to my daughter Rosanna who, having had breast cancer years ago, has now become the 'spokesperson' for a large association of breast oncologists called Komen (Susan G. Komen Italy, ed.). I told Rosanna: "Remember to tell the heads of Komen that cloistered nuns also exist. That a special arrangement be made with oncologists to go to monasteries to do mammograms". I hope this works out. And I will also come to announce it to the nuns of Saint Rita. ■



Giovanna and Rosangela: different stories, united by love for the Little Bees

by Mirella Angius

“When, at the end of the day, you come home with empty boxes that had earlier contained rose seedlings, you feel the fullness of happiness in your heart. You know you have contributed to a good and real cause; you feel being part of a great family moved by charity and love for Saint Rita”. Speaking is Giovanna Volpe, who participated in May in Rome as a volunteer in the 'The Roses of Saint Rita', promoted by the Saint Rita Monastery and organised by the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation non-profit organisation. Together with over 1,200 volunteers scattered throughout Italy, Giovanna took to the streets in her neighbourhood, setting up one of the 384 stalls with rose seedlings, to raise funds for the Beehive, the home where the nuns of Cascia take care of children and girls in difficulty, known as the “Little Bees of Saint Rita”.

“I saw the happiness of the people I met

and to whom I gave the roses. They said to me: 'But you came at a time when I needed it, in this period of tribulation', and I told them: 'It's not me, it's Saint Rita'.” This, on the other hand, is the story of Rosangela Tuccone, who failed to find other volunteers in Budoni (Sassari) who could help her with the stall. “The difficulty,” Rosangela recounts, “came when I started asking for



help to take the initiative forward. At the beginning, much willingness. Then, as the event approached, for a variety of reasons, I found myself alone.

But my daughter told me: “Mum, don't worry, we'll make it”. So, Rosangela decides to buy the rose seedlings herself, giving the contribution necessary for supporting the Little Bees, and then giving them away to acquaintances near and far.

Giovanna involved two dear friends and colleagues and, together with them, she prepared for the event: “A month before the event I received my receipt books,” explains Giovanna, “and this gave us time to raise awareness among friends, colleagues,

neighbours and all relatives, asking them to book a seedling. So, when the seedling arrived, we had already distributed most of them!”.

The volunteers of love of Saint Rita have given us many testimonies. Some similar to each other, others different, like those of Giovanna and Rosangela. But all of them are united by generosity and the desire to do something concrete to help the Little Bees who, thanks to the Roses of Saint Rita event, receive medical care, psychological



In the Beehive, the Little Bees receive study support, medical and psychological care and all the love they need to grow.



For more than 80 years, the nuns of Saint Rita in Cascia have been taking care of the young Little Bees.

assistance, the right nutrition, support in their studies and can grow in Cascia in a home full of love: the Beehive. This year, to allow the Little Bees to continue to cultivate their hopes for the future, Roses of Saint Rita volunteers have raised more than 330,000 euro. “I know what you do, because you inform me about everything,” says Rosangela to the Saint Rita Foundation, referring to the testimonies she receives directly from the Beehive. “It's as if I were there ... When I see the things you do, it's really wonderful. I hope to continue always, for Saint Rita and for the Little Bees. For me, they are my daughters, as if it were my family”. “I came to Cascia for the two days of Open Doors at the Beehive last year,” adds Giovanna, “and seeing with my own eyes, experiencing first-hand all the good I can do for the growth and serenity of these girls, made me happy and convinced me this year to participate as a volunteer for the Roses of Saint Rita”.

Rita, unfulfilled grandmother?

by Mauro Papalini, Augustinian historian

Illustration depicting the birth of Saint Rita

Of the grandparents of Saint Rita of Cascia, Margherita Lotti, affectionately called Rita, we know nothing. Tradition has it that she was born to elderly parents. Considering the shorter course of human life in the past, it is very difficult for her to have known her grand-

mother. We know that the Lord wanted to trace a different path for her. He made her go through all the stages of a woman's life: daughter, wife, mother, widow and religious. The only condition she did not experience was that of a grandmother. Was Rita an unfulfilled grandmother? We wonder.

If we place the figures of grandparents, who are everything for their grandchildren, alongside the saints whose life flows by giving themselves to others, we can say that both categories are united by transmitting the memory of life to future generations.

Grandparents have in their being the colours of the

The only condition she did not experience was that of a grandmother

human-cultural patrimony that they inherited and which, in turn, they leave to their children and grandchildren, even if sometimes the latter do not seem interested in their past. But children and grandchildren bear the imprint of their loved ones who, assisting their growing



parents and been able to enjoy them.

As a bride, she had two children and, perhaps, if their life had followed the most common path, they would have also made her a grand-

PRAYER

Grandparents' prayer

O Lord, I thank you for all the gifts you have given me during my life. Please keep me alive and open to the problems of the changing world, capable of accepting and loving the new generations, of being able to make myself useful again with the experience of your providence. I pray to you for those who love me and who do not leave me on my own. I pray for my children and for my grandchildren. I pray to you for other grandparents like me, keep in us that joyful beat of life, which does not make us intolerant but capable of giving something of your wisdom as happened in the family of Saint Rita. Amen.

(From the book "Insegnaci a pregare" [Teach Us to Pray], edited by Father Giustino Casciano OSA)

GRACE RECEIVED

TESTIMONY OF SALVATRICE (SAN CASSIANO LE - ITALY)

I was born in Sicily and at the age of 12 my family emigrated to Switzerland, like many others. Leaving the Catholic association and friends was a shock. At first, I cried every day and often kept the holy picture of Saint Rita on my heart. Slowly I got used to it. Then, I met my husband and here came the blow. I was to get married in 1975, but in 1974 I was suddenly operated on a kidney. I was only 24 years old. There was no way to save the kidney, but the operation went well. Two days later, the rejection. In the room, there was a window where you could see a church, and I prayed in my way. They had to operate again, I didn't understand anything, but when I woke up, the patients in the room with me told me what had happened. They asked me: "Don't you remember anything?". I answered them: "No". "You called Rita" and one of them asked me if I was calling my mother. I replied that my mother's name is Antonia. When the doctors came by, they didn't believe in miracles and saints. The head physician said to me: "You were very sick, on the verge of death. We saved you. We don't believe in miracles, but this was a miracle". The next night, a great light came in through the window and I saw Saint Rita for the first time. She told me: "It was me who saved you and you have to tell people about it".

up, give them something of their form of humanity. Also the saints, who live to take us to Christ and pray for us, transmit the memory of their spiritual world to us.

When we devotees of Saint Rita approach the saint of the impossible, we

approach her through knowledge of the life and the Cascian environment in which she lived. It would have been nice to know her in the experience of grandparent and grandmother but, to all extents and purposes, she was actually a grandmother

in her living for others.

Rita is still there on her knees in front of the Crucifix, she prays for everyone, especially for the mothers, for the grandmothers who recommend the future of their grandchildren to her intercession. ■

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.

Almeria Proietti (Lugnano in Teverina TR - Italy)
Armando De Carolis (Terni - Italy)
Cesarina Baronchelli (Novara - Italy)
Concetta Buttafuoco (Marianopoli CL - Italy)
Domenica Redenta Ventura (Spoleto PG - Italy)
Ennio Ciotti (Cannaiola of Trevi PG - Italy)
Enrica Citterio Sanivo (Cabiato CO - Italy)
Enzo Pennacchi (Lavello PZ - Italy)
Francesca Anselmo (Ventimiglia IM - Italy)
Francesca Princi (Sydney NSW - Australia)
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Salvatore Pendolino (Ventimiglia IM - Italy)
Sesto Capparuccia (Cascia PG - Italy)
Virginia Fiore (Mongardino AT - Italy)



PIA UNIONE PRIMARIA
SANTA RITA
DA CASCIA
Famiglia agostiniana

by Marta Ferraro

A large family gathered in the name of Saint Rita

More than 5 thousand members of the PPU in Italy and the world

For this issue of the column, I met the national secretary of the PUP, Alessandra Paoloni, with whom I took stock of the situation of the PPU today, recalling the beginnings and with a look at the intentions for the future. Alessandra has accompanied the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita of Cascia since her birth and in the following lines you will discover some of the moments in the history of the group that Alessandra keeps in her heart.

What is the most touching memory you have? The most important moment was the arrival of



the official decree from the Augustinian Order of the PUP's approval as a prayer group recognised by the Church. At that moment I realised that a journey was beginning for the many devotees of the saint who had long been asking to feel themselves part of the Augustinian and Ritian family. With Father Ludovico we shared that moment of

grace, but without realising what would have happened. In fact, I never imagined coming into contact with so many situations and discovering the different ways of expressing devotion to the saint, as happened later.

How did you begin? We started with 4 groups, today we have 70, officially affiliated, for a total of 5,307 members. In a short time, the PPU has become a large and varied reality that is in continuous expansion.

What is the PPU event that involves you the most? All involve me, in a different way. Without a doubt, the

I realised that a journey was beginning



General Meeting that takes place here in Cascia every year, two weeks before Easter, is the most engaging one because it takes place right in the Basilica of Santa Rita and because most of the groups participate.

Why a general meeting?

The PPU is made up of groups scattered throughout Italy and in some cases also abroad, so we have created an annual meeting. This opportunity allows us not only

ciates from various countries: Congo, Argentina, Spain, Germany, Australia, Peru.

What has changed from the beginning to the present? The early days were useful

May Saint Rita be consolation and guidance for everyone

Meeting in Cascia, we also organise regional meetings, which take place each time in a different town.

What emerges from the meetings? It is always a great celebration, meeting again in the name of Saint Rita. Everywhere, Father Ludovico and I are welcomed warmly, and I have noticed a great willingness on the part of the various political, military and voluntary institutions, which make available



to be together as a family, but also to spread the meaning of being a group. From the first meeting, in fact, there was a passing of the word among associates that allowed us to become more and more numerous. In spreading the PPU, the Monastery's "From the Bees to the Roses" magazine also helps us, because it reaches every part of the world, and has allowed us to have asso-

ciates for us to have an overview of how best to manage the various local organisations, which were many and different. To do this, we thought we would meet in Cascia every year in October with all the spiritual Fathers and group leaders. Together, we decided to divide the groups at regional level and appoint a spiritual leader and regional referents. Every year, in addition to the General

Meeting in Cascia, we also organise regional meetings, which take place each time in a different town.

What are the PPU's intentions for the future? Continue to promote the devotion and worship of Saint Rita, imitating her life, under her gaze and her protection, so that her intercession and her example may be a consolation and a guide for our lives and those of our loved ones. ■

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

We, pilgrims of Rita to give our best

Pietro Del Rio, manager of Hotel delle Rose,
explains a new way of welcoming

Every day, by profession, and sometimes by vocation, the employees of Hotel delle Rose welcome the thousands of pilgrims who come from all over the world to venerate Saint Rita. However, officially, at least twice a year, they themselves become pilgrims to be able to give their best in their daily experience.

"I have always asked the nuns to come and visit us, to build a bond of friendship and esteem with the staff, so that they feel part of a circuit, a project that helps them to give their best every day in contact with the pilgrim. I believe that this contact with

the nuns makes them more attentive and also allows them to better appreciate the work of the whole team," says Pietro Del Rio, manager of Hotel delle Rose, "and, for this reason, it happens that in order to deal with some matters, even without warning, some nuns among those who have permission to leave the enclosure come to see us and visit the various sectors".

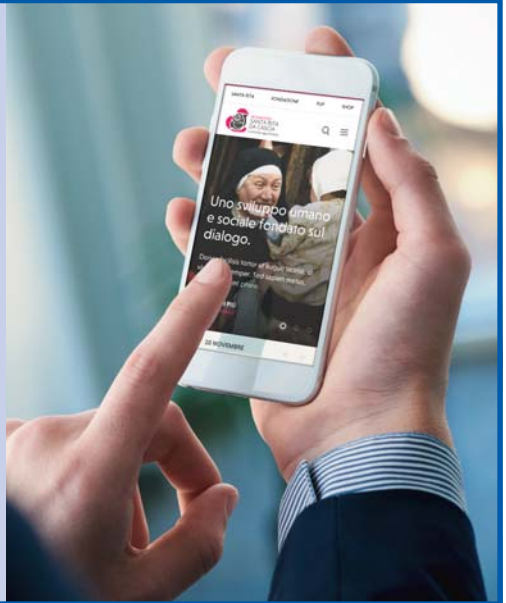
Precisely from the desire to feel part of a greater reality, over the years the Augustinian nuns and the Hotel delle Rose team have created two annual appointments they will not miss for any reason: Holy



The staff of Hotel delle Rose in Cascia, together with the Mother Prioress, Sister Maria Rosa (in the centre), and the editorial director of From the Bees to the Roses, Sister Giacomina (alongside).

A NEW WEBSITE FOR SAINT RITA

The official website of Santa Rita da Cascia is online at www.santaritadacascia.org, with completely renovated graphics and content. From prayers to requests for Holy Mass, from information on the paths for pilgrims to the 3D visit inside the Basilica, where it is possible to “pray virtually” in front of the body of the saint. In short, the nuns of the Monastery of Saint Rita together with the Augustinian fathers have conceived a complete restyling, to better respond to the tens of thousands of requests that come from devotees of Rita from all over the world. Soon there will also be versions translated into English and Spanish.



Mass to inaugurate the hotel's opening season (in spring) and Holy Mass to end it (at the end of autumn). “In each of us, even if in a different way, there is a believer and a pilgrim,” continues Del Rio, “and the staff take these meetings very seriously, doing everything to be there. We participate in the 07:30 Holy Mass in the Chapel of the Basilica, precisely to share this moment with the nuns. At the end of the celebration, there is a convivial moment with some of them in the hotel. This year, in fact, on March 26 for the beginning of the season, we attended Holy Mass and then Sister Giacomina and the Mother Prioress, Sister Maria Rosa, came to the hotel to have breakfast with the staff”.

Also, thanks to the time spent with the nuns, the Hotel delle Rose staff has learned that there are four key principles that revolve around their work: welcome, brotherhood, willingness and patience. The employees of the hotel have understood that the pilgrim is something different from

the client and must give their best to make them feel at home.

“Many pilgrims,” concludes Del Rio, “have been coming for years and a friendship has been established with some of them. Some even keep to the same period from year to year, so there are those who come for the feast of Saint Rita, some for Ferragosto [August 15, an Italian public holiday], and those who prefer to spend a few days in Cascia during the Novena. Our goal is to make them feel at home because every person who comes here has a burden on their heart and often tells us about it”.

The relationship that has been generated with the sisters has made the Hotel delle Rose staff aware that tourists and pilgrims have different needs and styles. The tourist is inquisitive, wants to discover, learn, experiment. The pilgrim, on the other hand, yearns for that tranquillity and inner serenity which is the desire that moves them to set out.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PILGRIMAGE

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

Devotion to Rita grows in the south of Poland

by Rita Gentili

Another confirmation of the great Ritian devotion in Poland: proclamation of the church of Our Lady Immaculate as a Sanctuary of Saint Rita in the city of Nowy Sącz, in the south of the country, almost on the border with Slovakia. The cult of Saint Rita in this church is recent: it all began when, on May 22, 1993, priest Msgr. Piotr Bednarczyk blessed the painting by a local artist, Bernard Wojcik, depicting Rita at the

2016, the church was also enriched by a relic that came directly from Cascia, which further attracted the faithful to this sacred place. And it was precisely due to the growing presence of devotees that the church was proclaimed a Sanctuary of Saint Rita on May 19 this year. But just 10 kilometres from Nowy Sącz, in the town of Stary Sącz, one of the oldest in Poland, there is another testimony of de-

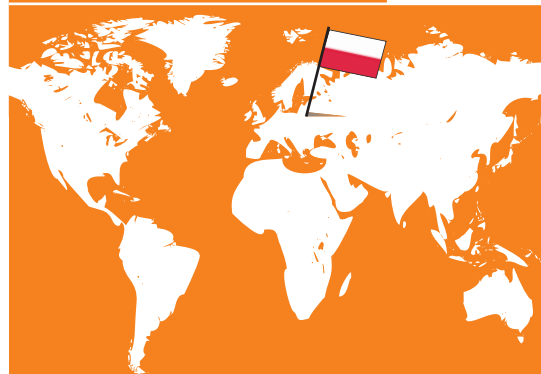


A crowd of devotees in front of the painting of Saint Rita in Nowy Sącz.

A relic directly from Cascia

foot of the cross receiving the gift of the thorn. A work commissioned by a lady, Janina Habel-Junin, originally from Nowy Sącz but who emigrated to France where she learned about Saint Rita, in gratitude for her country's return to freedom. Since then, devotion to the saint of the impossible has continued to grow. In September

RITA IS ALSO HERE



Country: Poland

City: Nowy Sącz and Stary Sącz

To know: Poland was the birthplace, among others, of Nicolaus Copernicus who, in the first half of the sixteenth century, revolutionised the astronomical system with the heliocentric model, which placed the Sun and not the Earth at the centre of the universe. The expression "Copernican revolution" is today used to designate similar paradigm reversals in other scientific or philosophical disciplines.



In Stary Sącz, the moment of kissing the relic of Saint Rita.

votion to the saint of the impossible. Here, Father Piotr Sulkowski, a native of this town but now a parish priest in a church in Rome, tells us that the saint of the impossible has been venerated for about ten years. Also, in this case, given the ever-increasing devotion, in 2014, a priest, Don Tomasz Koźbiał, placed a statue of Saint Rita purchased in Cascia in the parish church of Divine Mercy, also leading to celebration of the Novena in honour of Rita. At the beginning, only about fifty people attended, while today the church is completely full. Also because, in August

Devotion is constantly growing

2015, thanks to Father Piotr, a relic of the saint arrived in the parish. A devotion, therefore, in continuous growth which, explains Father Piotr, manifests itself with the ever-growing number of girls named Rita or girls who choose her name for their

confirmation, when – a little like in Italy on the occasion of baptism – those who will receive confirmation are given the possibility of taking a second name. On the other hand, as the bishop of Tarnów,

Rita's sanctity does not cease to fascinate

Andrzej Jez, said during the homily at the proclamation mass for the new sanctuary, Rita's sanctity is unique and never ceases to fascinate and inspire, because in her life she succeeded in realising all the vocations she faced, such as wife, mother, widow, religious sister and mystic. The people who turn to Rita with a request for help, added the prelate, do so with the profound conviction that a saint who lived her existence to the full is a special defender of God. Parishioners are also very satisfied with the bishop's decision to establish a sanctuary, which they feel as an honour and a responsibility.

Blessed Fasce, mother and grandmother

by Mauro Papalini, Augustinian historian

Marietta Fasce was born in Torriglia (Genoa) on December 27, 1881. Hers was not a very happy childhood: at an early age she lost her mother and a sister, and was raised by her older sister Luigia, the “deputy mum”, as Blessed Maria Teresa called her in a letter. In her early years, there was no significant presence of paternal or maternal grandparents, yet there would have been the need to help the Fasce orphans. Perhaps, having been born relatively late, she failed to make lasting contacts with

her grandparents who died early. In the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia, the young Sister Maria Teresa found herself living with elderly nuns, some of whom also came from the monastery of Visso. They had ideas that differed from her own, but with the help of the superiors of the Augustinian Order she succeeded in reforming her monastery, making it in a few years a luminous beacon of religious perfection; that is, a young woman had changed the elderly! Blessed Fasce is known by all as “the Mother” par excellence, and she al-

ways behaved with her nun daughters as a true mother: understanding and demanding, sweet and authoritative, as the parents who educate their children should be. Through common experience, we know that, once they become grandparents, those parents who are strict with their children are much gentler and

A young woman had changed the elderly



The statue of Mother Fasce with the first two Little Bees, at the beginning of the avenue of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita in Cascia, surrounded by pilgrims.



more understanding with their grandchildren. If you like, even Mother Fasce, in her own way, went through the experience of a grandmother in the moment when, against all human logic, she welcomed the orphans she called Little

Mother Fasce was a grandmother for them

Bees into the monastery (September 24, 1938). They were girls aged 6-7 and up. Certainly, from an age point of view, Mother Fasce was a grandmother for them, given that she was 57 years old in 1938, but she was also so in terms of attitude, which was different from the one she had with her nun daughters. In Mother Fasce's beatification process, Sister Caterina Santoni testifies that, when she was with the Little Bees, the Mother "became a child with

them", a very effective phrase to describe the overwhelming affection and gentleness that she poured on those poor girls already severely tried by life. It should also be emphasised that the contacts between the Mother and the girls were not continuous, as instead were those of the sisters involved in as-

Before being such, grandmothers are mothers

sisting them; we could say that the assistants were the parents, so sometimes they had to be severe to effectively educate the girls, while Mother Fasce was the good and affectionate grandmother who controlled everything, but delegated the task of educator to others. We should also consider the precarious health of Mother Maria Teresa, which very often prevented her from carrying out the usual activities. Those Little Bees that knew her testify to all this, highlighting the maternal behaviour of Blessed Maria Teresa, but this is normal: before they are such, grandmothers are mothers and in a certain sense Mother Fasce is no exception. ■

THOUGHTS OF A MOTHER

We hope that the people will listen to the Word of God, which is eternal and fills souls with peace, having its end in eternity.

BLESSED MOTHER MARIA TERESA FASCE

Father Miguel already a saint for Mexico

The Venerable Miguel Zavala López was born on November 12, 1867 in Rancho Nuevo de Santa Clara, Puruándiro, in the state of Michoacán, Mexico. His parents inspired deeply human

and Christian feelings in the heart of the little child. Taken to the baptismal font, he was given the names of José and Estanislao. Like many others in his social and family condition, childhood was spent within the constraints of time, oscillating between poverty and misery.

The nearness of Augustinian friars sparked in his

***His parents
inspired the
heart of the
little child***

heart to the desire to embrace the Augustinian religious life. After a short time in the diocesan seminary, he moved to Yuridia where the Augustinians had opened a college. Shortly after he entered the novitiate and, having made his first profession, he received the name of Fra Miguel. In 1894, he was ordained a priest in the city of Morelia. After ordination, a much-desired goal because it made him a servant of the



Father Miguel's nearness to the Augustinian friars gave rise in his heart to the desire to enter the Order.

Word and of the people of God, an intense life of ministry began for the servant of God in many places, where many benefited from his presence.

Tireless and open to the

Many benefited from his presence

needs of others, he carried out various tasks: parochial vicar, prior, secretary and provincial definitor, parish priest, master of novices, sacristan, rector of the San Pablo college, confessor of nuns and seminarians. In 1913, he had the joy of visiting the holy places in Rome – where the encounter with another saintly figure, Saint Pius X, took place – and in the Holy Land. He celebrated Holy Mass every day with great devotion and, always being available at the confessional, many penitents flocked to him. Known for his great love for the poorest, the sick, the most exposed to the harshness of life, both materially and spiritually, he favoured the formation of healthy Christian families and with holy vocations.

His administrative ability was also noteworthy: this was a service that led him to the commitment to restore, restructure or even build new churches for the people of God. To carry out these projects he also humbly asked for alms.

Venerable Father Miguel spent the last years of his life in his beloved city of Yuridia. He died on Good Friday, April 4, 1947.

His reputation for holiness in life continued after his death. Thus, the Augustinian General Postulation began the process of his heroic virtues, culminating in the decree of

Tireless and open to the needs of others

the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in 2018, which declared him Venerable.

Like Saint Rita, Venerable Miguel Zavala knew how to put all his hope in the grace of God, welcoming grace in the various moments of his life to conform at all times with the crucified Christ. ■

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

SMILING AT LIFE

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

1



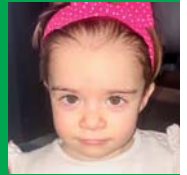
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3



4



5



6



1. Gabriele and Matteo Iovene (Marigliano NA - Italy)
2. Mario (Milan - Italy)
3. Rita Martino (Serino AV - Italy)
4. Rita (Milan - Italy)
5. Sofia Rita Costanzo (Catania - Italy)
6. Vince and Julia Petrelli, Lucas, Kiara and Alessia Taranto (Melbourne VIC - Australia)

Christians are “missionaries”

World Mission Sunday 2019

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



Cascia, Basilica of Saint Rita.

The words 'Christians are missionaries' could generate the idea of proselytising at any cost, as is the case with many movements cloaked with the label of 'religion'. In reality in the Christian sphere the word 'mission' coincides with that of the testimony of one's faith which, gathered from those

who see it, can be translated into adherence to Christ in the community of Christians (the Church).

Each year, the Catholic world dedicates the month of October to the 'Christian mission', with the title 'World Mission Sunday'. This year, this event coincides with two peculiar recurrences. The first is the centenary of

promulgation of the Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XV, *Maximum illud* (it takes its title from the opening words of the original Latin text of November 30, 1919,

***Mission is in
the hands of a
true father***

meaning “that momentous”, which gave rise in the Catholic world to ‘World Mission Sunday’) It is considered the *Magna Carta* (great charter, ed.) of the missionary activity of the Catholic world in contemporary times,

Divine life is not a product for sale

adopting Jesus’ command to his disciples: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel (the good news) to every creature” (Mt 28: 19-20). To this anniversary, Pope Francis has dedicated the message for World Mission Day 2019, which has as its theme: “Baptised and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World”.

The apostolic letter *Maximam illud* came out the day after the end of the First World War, described by Benedict XV as a useless slaughter when, for nationalistic reasons, Britain was about to drive missionaries of German origin out from all its colonies and China was about to do the same, favouring the perception of the Church as a paracolonial institution.

“Everyone who works in any capacity in the particular vineyard of the Lord,” stressed Pope Benedict XV, “should know by personal experience, and should know with complete conviction,

that the government of the mission is in the hands of a true father – an alert, efficient man, a man filled with charity, deeply interested in everyone and everything”, because Catholic is the “ministry of that religion which, embracing all men who worship God in spirit and truth, is not a foreigner to any nation”.

Along the same lines, writes Pope Francis in his message: “This divine life (of the dead and risen Christ) is not a product for sale – we do not practise proselytism – but a treasure to be given, communicated and proclaimed: that is the meaning of mission. We received this gift freely and we share it freely (Mt 10: 8), without excluding anyone ... A Church that presses forward to the farthest frontiers requires a constant and ongoing missionary conversion. How many saints, how many men

No one ought to remain closed in self-absorption

and women of faith, witness to the fact that this unlimited openness, this going forth in mercy, is indeed possible and realistic, for it is driven by love and its deepest meaning as gift, sacrifice and gratuitousness ... the Church’s universal mission

requires setting aside exclusivist ideas of membership in one’s own country and ethnic group”.

The second coincidence is the celebration of the Special Synod on Churches in the Amazon. It will be held from Sunday 6 to Sunday 27 October 2019 on the theme “Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology”. To the Churches of the Pan-Amazon Region, Pope Francis hopes that “No one ought to remain closed in self-absorption, in the self-referentiality of his or her own ethnic and religious affiliation ... [given that] the Easter event of Jesus breaks through the narrow limits of worlds, religions and cultures, calling them to grow in respect for the dignity of men and women, and towards a deeper conversion to the truth of the Risen Lord who gives authentic life to all”.

For the occasion, Pope Francis acknowledges the words of his predecessor Benedict XVI at the meeting of Latin American bishops in Aparecida in Brazil in 2007: “What did the acceptance of the Christian faith mean for the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean? For them, it meant knowing and welcoming Christ, the unknown God whom their ancestors were seeking, without realising it, in their rich religious traditions. Christ is the Saviour for whom they were silently longing”.

APPOINTMENTS

World, October 20, 2019

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

"A Church that presses forward to the farthest frontiers requires a constant and ongoing missionary conversion". Pope Francis recalls this in his

message for World Mission Day, which is celebrated on October 20, as part of an Extraordinary Missionary Month, desired by the Pope himself "in order to nourish the ardour of the evangelising activity of the Church *ad gentes*".

AUGUSTINIAN YOUTH SUMMER CAMP

The Augustinian Youth Summer Camp which ended in Cascia saw the participation of 350 adolescents and young people from different Italian (and Maltese) cities.



Organised by Father Michele Falcone OSA, together with "his" team made up of Augustinian fathers and lay people, from July 22 to 28, participants enlivened Cascia with the joy of being together and with prayer. In a particular way, this was the occasion



to have an experience of knowledge together with the Augustinian nuns and friars, reflecting on the theme "Let Yourself Look. Jesus and Peter, Story of an Expression". Through an experiential journey with themselves and as a group, the young people looked their thoughts and emotions – such as fear and sense of failure – in the face for reinterpreting their limits in terms of opportunities. Confronting themselves with Peter and the first disciples, the young people learned the importance of being involved in something in which they believe. The leit-motif of the activities was the game, used as a healthy vehicle for personal growth, from the launching of water-filled balloons to the race on a length of soapy cloth. And after having experienced the expression of Jesus, which is an expression of love, on the last day of the summer camp the young people prepared to offer the same expression to their companions of adventure, but also to their loved ones in their daily life.

EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES IN THE WORLD

The exhibition conceived and designed by the venerable Carlo Acutis also finally reached Cascia. From August 3 to 18, the international exhibition entitled "Eucharistic Miracles in the World", found space in the Hall of Peace of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita.

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 and you will receive information on how to help the children in difficulty that need you.



The relic of Santa Rita, a rose among the bricks of Urbino

by the nuns of St. Catherine of Urbino

May 2019 will remain in the annals of Urbino not only for the continuous rains, but above all for an event that involved the entire civil and diocesan community: the arrival of the relic of Saint Rita.

We requested it from the sisters of Cascia, and Mother Maria Rosa Bernardinis generously gave us an ex-ossibus fragment taken during the 1977 medical inspection.

Our desire was to implant in our people a profound devotion to the great little saint of Cascia. For years, we have celebrated her feast in a most solemn way, always with great popular participation. However, devotion, like any relationship, needs touching and seeing concrete realities and moments that are fixed in the memory. And, despite the unknown factor of rain, Sunday May 5 was truly an unforgettable day.



The nuns of St. Catherine, with the Mother Prioress of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia, Sister Maria Rosa, and Monsignor Giovanni Tani.

The arrival of the relic was scheduled for 18:00 but by 17:00 the faithful had begun to take their place in the church of San Domenico, which currently serves as a cathedral following the earthquake of 2016. The sacred fragment, brought by Mother Maria Rosa together with Mother Lucia Giacchella of Urbino, was welcomed by Archbishop Giovanni Tani in the churchyard. Waiting for Saint Rita there were civ-

il and military authorities, all our monastic community and a representation of the Poor Clares sisters, many citizens but also university students, people who came from the towns and from the nearby cities of Pesaro and Fano ... So many that some had to participate from the churchyard.

After placing the sacred fragment in the reliquary and closing it with its wax seal, Monsignor Tani presided over the concelebrated Mass with two Augustinian fathers and several priests. Finally, he imparted the papal blessing with attached plenary indulgence.

After the ceremony, the programme called for carrying the relic in procession to our Monastery of St. Catherine. However, the sky, which had previously allowed people to go to church and the wind instruments of the Musical



The many faithful present in the church of San Domenico for the ceremony of the arrival of the relic of Saint Rita.

Chapel to welcome the relic in the square on its arrival, was now pouring rain. The faithful were then allowed to kiss the relic there in San Domenico, with the musical accompaniment of the wind instruments that had taken refuge in the back of the church.

The relic was taken in private form to the monastery church, where it remained displayed until May 22. There was a constant coming and going of people of every age who wished to venerate Saint Rita; many were also able to approach the sacrament of reconciliation and receive a plenary indulgence. On May 10, the relic was in the hospital of Urbino, where

it also attracted many devotees. During the days of the display, there were other events, such as the Biblical meeting of Father Giuseppe Rombaldoni OSA, the "Rita, one of us" conference of Father Giustino Casciano, and the "Thus, out of love" evening with the monastic choir of Saint Catherine.

It would not have been possible to organise, publicise and hold the reception of May 5 and other events without the generous collaboration of many institutions and many friends, old and new. We witnessed an unexpected series of small miracles. As if the saint of Cascia herself was organising her coming by

participating in the preparations. What was most striking was not only the number of people attracted by the "Rose of Roccaparena", but above all the intensity and genuineness of their affection.

Given the numerous requests we have received to expose the relic again, it has been decided to do so on the 22nd of each month. You become responsible forever for what you've tamed. You're responsible for your rose ... said the Fox to the Little Prince. And this also applies to us today because, in addition to the beautiful memory, what will remain is the commitment not to put out the flame lit on May 5. ■

AS IF SEEING THE INVISIBLE

Dearest friend,

"it is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye", writes Saint-Exupery in the book "The Little Prince".

"How could I understand if no one guides me?" could be your question. It is a journey towards oneself and Truth, the path is that of the Spirit. Here are some steps: turn on the search and thirst for God, tell us that we are His children and this is our true identity, remember our history, let the desires of the heart emerge in search of the truest ones ...

We offer you a few days for listening, praying, discerning, living at the school of Jesus, the inner Master ...



**For information: Monastery of Saint Rita - 06043 Cascia PG
tel.: 0743 76221 - e-mail: monastero@santaritadacascia.org**

*We safeguard their future.
With joy.*



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

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