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FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine
of Saint Rita of Cascia

BIMONTHLY
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
MONASTERY
OF SAINT RITA
OF CASCIA

**LET'S TAKE EACH
OTHER BY THE HAND**

*So we don't reduce life
to a competition*

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On the cover: Let's take each other by the hand.

Photo by: Stefano Dal Pozzolo

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Editorial Director

Sr. M. Giacomina Stuari

Editor-in-chief

Pasquale Grossi

Editorial Committee

Alessia Nicoletti (co-ordinator)

P. Giuseppe Caruso, Monica Guarriello, Vanessa Postacchini

Registered Office

Monastero Santa Rita, viale Santa Rita 13 - 06043 Cascia (PG)

tel. + 39 0743 76221 - fax + 39 0743 76786

Operational headquarters

Via Francesco Massi 12/D - 00152 Rome

tel. + 39 06 39674099 - fax + 39 06 39637399

www.santaritadacascia.org/dalleapiallerose

redazione@santaritadacascia.org

In collaboration with

Sr. Maria Rosa Bernardinis OSA, Sr. M. Natalina Todeschini OSA,

Sister Maria Lucia Solera OSA, Alessandra Paoloni, Maurizia Di Curzio

Photos

Massimo Chiappini, Stefano Dal Pozzolo, Giovanni Galardini

Graphic design and layout

Bruno Apostoli graphic designer - www.brunoapostoli.it



monastero@santaritadacascia.org

www.santaritadacascia.org

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We need to save humanity

I ncreasingly, there is talk of environmental sustainability, a central theme for the future that we have also addressed and put into practice. Looking at the poverty, hatred, violence and wars in Ukraine, the Middle East and many other countries that are tearing the world apart, however, I think that we should work together to safeguard human sustainability. By this I mean making sure that humanity, our distinctive feature, is also saved, because saving the Earth and therefore the men and women of tomorrow, is worthless if they lack humanity.

Made up of compassion, empathy, mutual respect and solidarity, humanity is the inner light that connects us beyond our differences: it cultivates the care of others and the awareness that every life is sacred. We are not human on our own but in relation to others, because humanity is a social dimension. Here, then, is where we must work: within relationships, to nourish humanity by building bonds that reflect all its beauty.

I'm not saying anything new, but it is good to put these truths back into centre stage. The best way, we think, is to have examples to follow to understand that you can be human, despite the presence of so much inhumanity, and that above all it is nice to do it! Therefore, we wanted to create a prize dedicated to Blessed Mother Fasce (which goes hand in hand with the Saint Rita Award and which we will tell you about later) to go in search of those who do business not for profit but to create a social and human impact. This is the Gospel-oriented development that Mother Fasce teaches the world about today. In 1900, she founded an empire of goodness on Ritian values in Cascia, because opening one's heart to God means opening it to others.

Luciana Delle Donne, about whom you will read after turning the page, was the first entrepreneur to receive the award, on the occasion of the feast of Mother Fasce last October. It reminds us that, with humanity, life can be focused on sharing and not competition – a race in which we all lose. The best thing is to give yourself to others. Try it and experience the emotions it brings!





by Vanessa Postacchini

Luciana Delle Donne: “I don't work to earn money”

Getting to know the first entrepreneur to receive the “Mother Maria Teresa Fasce” Award



Luciana in Cascia in front of the body of Blessed Mother Fasce, kept in the Lower Basilica, holding the Prize (which we will also tell you about in the next pages)

“I have received many awards but today's is a blessing.”

This is how Luciana Delle Donne reacted when she received the first “Mother Maria Teresa Fasce” award in Cascia, an award created by the nuns of the Augustinian Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia to celebrate entrepreneurship inspired by evangelical charity, following the example of the historical Abbess. Luciana is one of those women who infects you with her energy and her will to generate beauty where there is none, bringing light back into the eyes of people who have lost it. After giving up a successful managerial career, she created her social enterprise “Officina Creativa” and her brand “Made in Carcere” (Made in Prison), through which she has generated profit with the aim of promoting the social reintegration of female prisoners, through the creative work of tailoring and more, shining a new light on an idea of economy that values social well-being and people.

Can you tell us who is Luciana delle Donne?

Having previously been a manager at the age of 40, I found myself in Milan in the year 2000 after having created the first online bank (*Banca 121, ed.*). I was earning a lot but I wasn't happy. I wanted to

do something to rekindle the light in the eyes of forgotten people, so I abandoned my comfort and benefits to return to Lecce. I wanted to help the lowest of the low, so I landed in the uncomfortable world of prisons and their female inmates, an indirect way of helping their children too, considering that almost all of them are mothers. I therefore created “Made in Carcere”, a project to promote social inclusion and environmental impact through the work of female inmates, who have been employed in tailoring personalised gadgets, accessories and garments from wonderful waste fabrics at a time when recycling was unknown. I have been volunteering for 17 years, guaranteeing a monthly salary to the people I take care of

and making sure that work is a tool that allows for their rehabilitation, with a decrease in the percentage of those who go back to committing crime once they get out.

Like Blessed Mother Fasce, you have pursued an intuition of goodness, making what seems like an illogical choice to the world. In addition, you are both a model of spiritual and feminine motherhood, she embracing the Bees and you the imprisoned women. Do you sense this link?

In Cascia I felt her to be very, very close. She was a kindred spirit throughout all the steps. For example, in the way she created the means to raise funds with the bulletin (*the current From the Bees to the Roses magazine, ed.*) in a bril-

My goal is not to sell more bags, but to help more people





MADE IN CARCERE AND THE SITUATION IN PRISONS IN ITALY

The “Made in Carcere” (Made in Prison) project has now spread to several prisons, in Lecce, Trani, Taranto, Bari and Matera, and is aimed not only at women but also minors and men. It involves tailoring and the production of organic vegan biscuits and engages about 300 people so far. In addition, it supports the opening of social tailoring shops in the suburbs in Italy and abroad. The project makes it possible to reduce the percentage of reoffending, that is, of prisoners who go back to committing crimes. This confirms the data of the National Council of Economy and Labour (CNEL), which indicate that the recidivism of prisoners who have carried out a job is 2%, compared to 70% of those who have not. However, the latest report by the Antigone association, which studies the situation of Italian prisons every year, shows that about 2 out of 3 prisoners do not have access to work, and the majority of those who do are employed in internal activities of the Prison Administration, with only 4.6% working for external employers. Prison conditions are also problematic due to overcrowding, with cells where the walkable area per inmate is often less than 3 square metres. The latest data speak of 56,674 detainees (against the official capacity of 51,249 places), of which 4.4% are women and 31.3% are foreigners.

Prison thus
becomes an
environment
for
rebuilding
new
identities
and dignity

liant way, and to inspire people with a good use of the world. Seventeen years ago, I too invented a model that everyone now copies. I went against the tide, against unbridled consumerism and individualism. We were both visionaries, we did something impossible, in very difficult times. In terms of spiritual motherhood, when I made this choice it was hidden and not explicit. Now I have greater awareness, as

the project becomes increasingly ambitious and I am receiving many important awards, for example from President Sergio Mattarella himself, who awarded me the honour of Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic in March 2023. But the need to offer tools for people's growth is still the same as it was 17 years ago.

In an interview you said that “giving oneself is the economy of

the future”: what does that mean for you?

How to give and give oneself is the new frontier of wealth. The concept is that by helping others to grow we can build a better world, otherwise we will have more and more economic, cultural and social inequalities that will lead to the exclusion of many people who don't have the opportunity to express their skills, creativity or competence. The economy of the future must aim at common well-being, as is the case with the replicable model of circular and regenerative economy that I created, which has grown considerably over the years (*see the box, ed.*). I don't work to make money. My goal is not to sell more bags, but to help more people.

Do you also want to be a pioneer in introducing GDW (Gross Domestic Welfare) as a new measure of the economy, overthrowing the currently-used GDP (Gross Domestic Product)?

We have been grappling with this challenge for years. Thanks to a project with the Fondazione del Sud and the Università Cattolica, we are promoting a model that takes its priority indicators from the parameters of well-being rather than profit. To us, well-being implies the construction of intangible values that are often neglected, putting focus on commitment to the cultural and social growth of each individual. In May 2023, we presented the first results of a feasibility study based on interviews with women prisoners, monitoring indicators such as self-esteem, self-confidence and the ability to relate to others. The prison, initially conceived as a place of punishment, thus becomes an environment for rebuilding new identities and dignity, allowing forgiveness, because there is time and space to do so. Based on the feasibility study carried out, we are developing a manual, a sort of “tool-

I have been volunteering for 17 years, guaranteeing a monthly salary to the people I take care of

Gospel of Luke 24:13 -38 - The pilgrims of Emmaus: *“Two of them were going to a village... Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognising him... They recognised him at the breaking of bread... and they returned to Jerusalem.”*

Emmaus was the home of those two disciples of Jesus. Dejected by the news of their master's death, they returned to their home disappointed, which they had left for the Rabbi of Nazareth. Emmaus has always been the symbol of the Christian pilgrim in the world who sometimes loses contact with their Master. With eyes that no longer see him, we return to a life devoid of hope and the joy of living in the presence of Risen Jesus. The return of the two disciples to Jerusalem is the call to a return to the devotion to Christ, to their own ecclesial community, to devotion to their own families. Pilgrims at the 2025 Jubilee know that the Risen One accompanies them on their journey. If the doubt of the darkness approaches them, they stop to recognise him at the breaking of bread.

THE PILGRIM'S BOX: TOWARDS THE 2025 JUBILEE

*edited by
Fr. Vittorino
Grossi OSA*



box". The unique feature of our project is its influence not only on prisoners but also on students, entrepreneurs and managers, the people who come to know this uncomfortable reality from the outside and be affected by it.

How are you welcomed in the prisons you go to with your project and what changes do you bring?

In our country, prison was not designed to reconstruct identities, but rather as a punitive structure. As far as we are concerned, after 17 years our presence has created a relationship of respect with the prison context. Our tenacity was gradually accepted, and now, it having almost come of age, they support us instead of tolerating us. This is also because we helped open the prison up to figures such as philosophers, theologians, writers and famous people, like Santo Versace and his wife. Prisons have



become a sort of incubator where not only professional but also cultural and social skills are developed for the people involved. We want to bring creativity and beauty, so much so that we furnish the tailoring workshops inside the penitentiaries with refrigerators, carpets and curtains, just like in a house. Our approach is that we don't want to know the stories of the prisoners so as not to judge them. Rather, we aim to be travelling companions, making it clear that we only deal with their present and future. Thanks to us they learn a trade and the rhythm of work, and they be-

come so good that when they leave they find work quickly and do not fall back into committing crime.

What effect has the Fasce Award had on you, now that it's the day after?

It is a very challenging and intimate award, which reads even better within my model. It is a prize that goes to my entire team, which embodies this characteristic of building something impossible every day, deciding to help all those who knock on our door, presenting situations that can be difficult. Just as Blessed Mother Fasce did and the nuns of Cascia continue to do.



by Sister M. Lucia Solera OSA

Walking with Saint Rita through the Year of Prayer
and towards the 2025 Jubilee

The presence of the Lord in daily life

Rita reminds us that we exist, we are and we move in God

Prayer is
above all a
form of
attention to
what we
experience

It is tempting to think of prayer as a “sector” alongside many others that make up the mosaic of our existence. We experience things one after the other, and we struggle to connect them together. In fact, this way of conceiving and living prayer is very reductive.

Prayer is above all a form of attention to what we experience. Getting up, sleeping, cleaning the house, eating, walking: these ges-

tures are already covered with something sacred. Consider how many times Jesus pauses in the Gospels to contemplate the beauty of the flowers in a field, or to use domestic images for his parables: the woman sweeping the house; the housewife kneading the bread; the hostess honouring her guests with a delicious lunch.

Everything, but really everything that makes up our existence



is sacred, that is, inhabited by the presence of God. For our part, we do not need to emphasise this truth by repeating short liturgies or prayer formulas, for example. Rather, we are asked to keep our eyes open to the holiness in which we are immersed. Our task is to feel and give things what they already have, but which our sin has taken away from them: holiness. We must recover the transparency of the heart, so that all things truly manifest God and communicate Him to us. This is the climate that prepares for and introduces us to knowledge of God's fatherhood towards us.

Rita became the humble saint of Cascia, configured to the Passion of Christ through an entire life in which she grew progressively by feeling the presence of God through all things. She lived her daily life as if it were a visit from God. And she did this right from the years of her youth, as a bride and mother. It is this kind of attention from the heart that gives unity to living, redeems it from dispersion, gathers every fragment and recognises it as significant,

PRAYER

Please, Saint Rita of my heart,
receive this sincere prayer.
Hear me, I pray you,
so that my heart and those of others tomorrow
are always nourished with peace and love.
Listen, beloved Saint,
so that no evil can ever take away our lives.

*By Michele Nappa
(Piana di Monte Verna CE - Italy)*

without throwing anything away. Perhaps in Rita's time there was greater familiarity with living through very simple, ordinary religious gestures. Perhaps it is less instinctive for us today. Yet it is also possible for us to cultivate this climate as the atmosphere in which to grow in our relationships with the Lord.

We too
can grow
in our
relationship
with the
Lord

Rita, woman of prayer, obtain for us the attention of a pure, confident, simple heart, so that we will know how to recognise that God comes to us through everything.

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.

Anastasia De Simone (Meta NA - Italy)
Anna Pia Zampaglione (Valmadrera LO - Italy)
Angelo Di Carlo (Dimbulah - Australia)
Anna Modolo (Sassuolo MO - Italy)
Bruno Corrias (Decimomannu CA - Italy)

Carmela Bovezza (Patane - Australia)
David Consoli (Pieve Torina MC - Italy)
Enrica Barni (Sarzana SP - Italy)
Enrico Trombetta (Toronto - Canada)
Francesca Fiscella (Cesenatico FC - Italy)
Giuseppe Beninatti (Australia)
Giuseppe Borzi (Ladispoli RM - Italy)
Luciana Parenti Lodico (Lucca - Italy)
Maria Carmina Fracella (Nardo LE - Italy)
Pietro Grasso (Vaiverde CT - Italy)
Rinaldo Lorenzi (Busto Arsizio VA - Italy)
Rita Cuccarolo (Feltre BL - Italy)
Virginia Marfori (Verucchio RN - Italy)
Vito Alfano (Casamarciano NA - Italy)

On 12 and 14 October we celebrated the Spirit, the works and the great legacy left to us by Blessed Mother Fasce, Abbess of the Monastery for 27 years in the first half of 1900.



Created in 1923 by Mother Fasce, the magazine now reaches thousands of homes in Italy and around the world. It has maintained its identity, updating itself in terms of topics and languages, keeping the dialogue with society alive. The exhibition allows you to learn about the life of the Monastery, of Cascia and a piece of the history that belongs to all of us.

On 14 October, the central focus was the first “Mother Maria Teresa Fasce” Prize, awarded to Luciana Delle Donne (*her story is in the first pages, ed.*). Two events dedicated to the Prize were entrusted to the masterful presentation skills of Lucia Ascione from Tv2000: a discussion with students and a dialogue with the community, during which the mayor also presented Luciana with the medal of the municipality.



On 12 October, the day of her beatification, the exhibition “From the Bees to the Roses: 100 years on display” was inaugurated by the Prioress Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis, the Prior Father Mario De Santis and the Mayor of Cascia Mario De Carolis.

God’s entrepreneurial nun

The magazine's 100th anniversary exhibition and the 1st “Mother Fasce” Award



BLESSED MOTHER FASCE EVENTS



The Award is a recognition aimed at entrepreneurs who stand out by basing their choices on the values of the Gospel. The nuns wanted to use it to promote Mother Fasce's idea of entrepreneurship, symbolically represented by the work of art chosen as the prize and created by Sister Elena Manganelli. The hexagonal base depicts the Beehive of Saint Rita, the monastery's shelter project for minors initiated by Blessed Mother Fasce. It tells of the entrepreneurial construction that arises from a solid and concrete charity, for a development model based not on profit but on social and human impact.





DEAR SAINT RITA

Maurizia Di Curzio, assistant to the listening service of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia, entrusts your Graces to the saint

A Grace against loneliness

Dear Saint Rita,

I start like this, the way many of your devotees turn to you. They write *"Dear Saint Rita"*, as if writing to a friend who is present. And you are there, even physically, in joy and despair. Sometimes I think, but how do you do it? How can you make your caress, your comfort, felt? It is not a matter of question-

ing your greatness in holiness. Indeed, hearing and reading about the passion with which so many people turn to you, it makes me think that your presence is the greatest grace you obtain for us today.

We can be connected with people a thousand miles away, and yet each of us is alone with ourselves; we have a sense of emptiness and abandonment in our hearts. In this hyper-interconnected world we suffer from loneliness, the tragedy of our times. It's a paradox, but it's the reality. We no longer have time to give. We live like trains speeding

towards a thousand things to do, because you have to be someone, to make a name for yourself. This makes us focused on ourselves, on always being perfect. It is sad to hear from a mother that her son has time to walk the dog but not to visit her. But, with unconditional love for her son, the wisdom of this mother leads her to pray, because she knows that prayer is the victory over feeling alone and she says: *I have Saint Rita with me and she never leaves me*. This is what we should learn from you, to be there, to open our hearts to listen. We need to talk, to converse with each other in fraternity and friendship, to irrigate one another. To dedicate ourselves to others, to those who are next to us, as you did with your family and, after you were left alone, by caring for the lepers. Even today, you can send your support from Heaven to the many on this Earth who need a pinch of comfort and joy in their hearts, and, when Mrs Luisa says *every beat of the clock makes me think of Saint Rita*, this confirms how precious you are and how much we still have to learn.

What gift did Saint Rita obtain from the Lord for you?
Write us your story at redazione@santaritadacascia.org

We embrace their hopes. Together.



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 • santaritadacascia.org/beehive

EMBRACE THE BEEHIVE

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by Alessia Nicoletti

Brother Massimo is a deacon

A double yes to serving God and his people

He understood the meaning and value of the Christian life

“We are servants of the Lord and our cassocks are work clothes!”

This phrase, which he often repeats, is the perfect summary of the path taken by Brother Massimo Ubaldo Monacelli, who was the centre of a gathering with the entire Augustinian Family of Cascia, including nuns and fathers, to celebrate his ordination as a deacon last 25 September. These great festivities were attended by the Provincial Prior of the Augustinians of Italy, Father Giustino Casciano,

and numerous devotees, thanks also to the concelebration live stream, chaired by the Archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, Monsignor Renato Boccardo. The story of Brother Massimo began in Gubbio, one of the most famous medieval villages in Umbria, where he was born and where, after living a life as a professional cook, he chose to join the Augustinian Order. His “yes” to the Lord came when he was 35 years old. In reality, however, that seed had been planted in his heart long before, ever since he was a boy attending the parish of Sant’Agostino di Gubbio, where he grew up and with which he had developed such a strong bond that he considered it a second home. In fact, it felt like a homecoming for him when, in 1990, he agreed to go and work for the Augustinians, who requested his services to manage the work necessary to run the Convent. Here, among the friars, Massimo’s days passed calmly until Providence manifested itself. And it did so through the needs of an elderly friar whom Massimo had to take care of one day, after having to stay in the Convent with him. From that seemingly fortuitous opportunity, Massimo then cared for that friar like a father for four years and, with him, he understood the meaning and value of Christian life, of loving one’s neighbour as oneself, of helping the weak...



Brother Massimo (left) with Monsignor Renato Boccardo and Father Giustino Casciano



Brother Massimo's loved ones embraced him warmly on his special day

When
the Lord
calls you,
you can't
say no

These feelings matured in Massimo until 1 April 1994, the anniversary of his mother's death. That evening, Father Franco, one of the friars, was having dinner at his house and asked him: "Why don't you become a friar?" Massimo, who had not had the courage to acknowledge this vocation rooted in childhood – even to himself – said yes and began his journey at the service of the Lord. "At that moment," he says today, "a golden door opened inside me, because that yes was the result of many noes that I had said to myself since I was a child." Now liberated, Massimo began his journey in Palermo, with the pre-novitiate. Then, he moved several times: the novitiate in the Marche, 7 years in Rome, Genoa, Florence, Tolentino, again Rome and Palermo and then, finally, 7 years in Cascia, where he was the treasurer and sacrist for the community. One day, in an interview with Archbishop Boccardo, Brother Massimo found a second

sign from God, when the cardinal proposed the diaconate to him and he said yes, a second time: "Because when the Lord calls you," he acknowledges, "you can't say no". Ready to put himself at the service of the Church even more by also engaging in evangelisation and charity, Brother Massimo thus became a deacon, with the confidence and certainty that God will always guide him. "We are of the Lord, for the Lord and with the Lord, this is my goal. Perseverance and consistency are the prayers I ask for. I have so much to be thankful for!" This latter was a great gift that he received from God: getting to know a friend with faith so great that it stunned him. It was a boy who had come from Sicily to pray to Saint Rita on behalf of his sick mother, to whom Brother Massimo felt transported. This led to a beautiful, unexpected friendship... a friendship that strengthened and confirmed his new ministry as a deacon.

We look forward to seeing you at the Cascia meeting

“Rita: craftswoman of the future” is the theme of the General Meeting of the Pious Primary Union of Saint Rita, which will meet in Cascia on 6 and 7 April. It is a family that has united over 8,000 devout followers of Rita throughout Italy and across the world for 18 years. Together, they testify to their faith and make Rita's message concrete and current. This special family has a place for you too!! See the event program and get involved: we are waiting for you!
For more information: +39 (0)743.76221
piaunione@santaritadacascia.org



SATURDAY 6 APRIL

9:00: Hall of Peace meeting

9:30: Chaplet of Saint Rita

10:00: Conference led by Sister Maria Lucia Solera O.S.A.

11:15: Meeting with the nuns in the large parlour (all the priests present, the heads of the new affiliated groups and the regional heads)

From 14:30 to 15:45: Entry into the Sanctuary for the visit and personal prayer in front of the Urn that holds the body of Saint Rita. During the passage to the Urn: songs and prayers to Saint Rita

From 18:45 to 20:00 Basilica: Eucharistic Adoration and new affiliations

SUNDAY 7 APRIL

9:00: Hall of Peace: group meeting with banners and uniforms

10:00: Eucharistic Concelebration, presided over by Father Ludovico Maria Centra Delivery of the lamp from the Centre/North to Calabria

11:00: Procession through the streets of Cascia with the statue of Saint Rita

Gesture of charity: for the needs of the Sanctuary of Saint Rita of Cascia

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.





by Mother Maria Rosa Bernardinis OSA

Reflections and advice from the Prioress of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia

With dialogue and listening, love is patient

In moments
of trial,
Jesus
teaches us
not to be
withdrawn,
not to close
ourselves off
from others

The family is the vital cell of society because affective relationships are intertwined in it. These relationships can sometimes be conflictual, and they leave a positive or negative mark on everyone's lives. Therefore, the family must be a place of encounter, dialogue, exercise in self-knowledge and acceptance of the other; a place where peace begins and where it must be cultivated, a space where we grow with respect for roles and rules, where love matures and, with the grace of God, is transformed from eros into agape.

That is why we want to try to work together to comprehend the dynamics that exist in families and the crisis that is affecting them in this period, with the light of the Gospel, also to understand the original plan that the Lord conceived for the human family. It was a brilliant idea worthy of an enamoured madman not to hesitate as the Word "to become flesh", to choose a Mother, Mary, and an adoptive father, Joseph, to carry out the promises made to Abraham and his descendants and reconcile humanity again, in the Family of God the Father as children in the Son, through Baptism.

In fact, the Christian family must conform to the Family of God to be a reflection of the love of the Holy Trinity. To enter into communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to have a single heart and a single soul towards Them and among us, we need trust, confidence and silence to listening and welcome others, mutual respect, a search for the common good and the gift of oneself.

Jesus introduces us to his dialogue-based relationship with his Father in preaching to the leaders of the people: "For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these (he had healed a paralytic, ed.) will he show him, so that you may marvel" (John 5:20). And with the disciples: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you have known me, you will also know my Father; from now on you know him" (John 14:6). His prayer is a constant dialogue with the Father, and even in moments of trial Jesus teaches us not to withdraw, not to close ourselves off from others, but to continue to believe in the Father's love.

Okay, I set my sights high by presenting Jesus as an example,

but this is not something impossible to achieve! Dialogue and, above all, listening are important in family life, taking the relationships in the life of the Trinity as a model. Many families in crisis struggle because they don't pay attention to dialogue and listening. The silences that set in increase the discomfort, because these are not tools for listening to others but rather walls people put up to protect themselves. Sometimes it only takes a little to overcome the resistance. Pope Francis teaches us three phrases that can help establish a sincere dialogue in the family: thank you, please and sorry. If we also start the day by saying good morning and a prayer to-

gether with the Lord, I am sure that the hardness will begin to crumble.

Saint Rita, an expert in family life and a saint of dialogue, tells us that things aren't always okay within families: she too had difficulties with her husband. However, if Paolo came close to true love, this was not only due to the prayers that Rita sent up to the Lord, but also the words said at the right time, that were not shouted but were supportive, that caused him to reflect. With dialogue and listening, love is patient... it knows how to apologise and forgive us, to reach full maturity, mirror of the Lord's Love!

Three
phrases:
thank you,
please
and sorry





by Sister M. Giacomina Stuani OSA

“Sister Pierina was always original”

A life in the Monastery: from Little Bee to nun

Sister Pierina Bella left us on 3 September 2023 to reach her Bridegroom, Jesus, whom she had loved, longed for and sought here in the Monastery. But she was also welcomed by the Mother par excellence... after the

Madonna, of course! I am talking about Blessed Mother Teresa Fasce, who, on 27 December 1938, welcomed Anna Maria (the baptismal name of Sister Pierina) into the Monastery as a Little Bee. She was just over ten years old,

I came here
to Cascia
and the
Mother
herself
received
me



Sister Pierina in 2018, together with Mrs Olga Paoletti, also a former Little Bee

she came from Monteleone di Spoleto, a village located in the mountainous areas near Cascia (she was the only nun of Umbrian origin at the time of her death). Since it was a cold day, the Mother covered her with her own cloak. She told us the story like this: "Back in 1938, on 27 December, I came here to Cascia and the Mother herself received me. That day was a feast because it was her birthday and name day (Mother Fasce's baptismal name was Maria Giovanna, but everyone called her Marietta). She welcomed me with her motherly embrace and a kiss. It was cold and I remember that she immediately covered me with a cloak and gave me some sweets. There were just seven of us; with me were Palma (later also an Augustinian nun under the name of Sister Teresa) and Irma (who later became Sister Arcangela)."

When Sister Pierina told us about this episode, her eyes lit up! Then the Mother sent her out to reflect on her vocation... And when she finally entered the Monastery to respond to the Lord's call and become a nun, Mother Fasce had already left this world for Heaven.

Blessed Carlo Acutis would have liked Sister Pierina very much, as he said that "we are born as originals and die as photocopies." She was always original... in everything... Hers was an originality that shocked, leaving you with no chance to fight back. And that always made you smile. She was very precise and she loved order. She was fastidious and critical but with the right sentiment, to the point that, one day, while the two

of us were exchanging views, I remember saying these words to her, with an ironic air: "Pierina, when you are with Jesus, you will find some fault with Him too." She shrugged with an equally ironic smile. She was also very original on another occasion, when her memory was beginning to falter. It was a Thursday and she was saying the Tuesday psalms with the breviary. I approached her and said: "Pierina, it's Thursday today. You're on Tuesday, you have turned the page." She replied: "What offense will our Lord take if I say a different day's psalms?" No comment.

She was curious out of a desire to learn things, not for anything else. She had a do-it-yourself attitude in many things. She had the mechanical skills to repair sewing machines and more. She was a passionate collector of images and various objects, a decorator and hobbyist restorer... She was a fully-fledged *jack of all trades*.

But, above all, she was faithful to prayer and community life. In February of last year we celebrated the 70 year anniversary of her religious profession and at the end of July her 95th birthday. She lived out these two beautiful achievements with joy and together with her family, a host of nibblings, great-nibblings and great-great-nibblings, all of whom still loved her very much.

Thank you Pierina, you were a wonderful and very strong walking companion and a beautiful example of constancy and perseverance. May the Lord reward you with the joy of Paradise. Deo gratias!

She was very precise and she loved order. She was fastidious and critical but with the right sentiment

Sister Consolata's 70 years of consecrated life

"I am happy and thank the Lord for choosing me"

Sister Consolata Sabatelli reached an important milestone on 1 October last year. And knowing her, it will be an achievement she will use to start afresh, to keep giving herself fully to Her Lord every day.

"Dearest sister, receive the light of Christ; illuminated by him, walk without stopping, as a daughter of light; persevere in faith..." "...She confirmed her holy resolution to always do her utmost for the glory of Your name

and for the salvation of her siblings." These are important words for a consecrated woman. And indeed, Sister Consolata has lived her life of faith and always gave everyone a message of love, fidelity, goodness and serenity.

It was a beautiful and moving moment when she renewed her religious profession: "Sister Consolata Sabatelli, with all the impetus of my heart, I renew before you, Lord, before the sisters and brothers present, my vows of

A milestone
to start
afresh,
to keep
giving
herself fully
to Her Lord



Sister Consolata's feast was made even more joyful by her relatives and friends



With the Prioress, during the celebration in the Basilica

chastity, poverty and obedience, with the desire to serve the Augustinian Family and the Church until death.”

This vocation is the expression of the Lord's will, of his divine plan for every soul. Each vocation has its own history, especially the vocation of religious life. It is a special call of love that each of us has felt at the bottom of our hearts.

“After 70 years of consecrated life, I am happy and thank the Lord for having chosen me,” said Sister Consolata during the celebration, adding there was no shortage of difficulties, just as there are no shortages of them in any life choice, but that she overcame them thanks to the help of God, Our Lady and the Community. And with great humility she concluded: “I am always grateful to the Lord because he has not

looked at my limits and has always been generous with me. I want to continue to be generous with him, to always say ‘Yes, here I am!’ to his every request, and I pray that other young women are ready to respond generously to his call.”

Sister Consolata dedicated her life to the service of the Community every day, with the naturalness and simplicity of those who live by just one love, a love that is enough. She set herself aside for Jesus. She did not think too much about herself, she always made herself available.

Last October, a great celebration took place with relatives, family and friends who gathered around her to thank her for her perseverance in her holy resolution, walking side by side with the Lord without ever stopping... Deo gratias!

I pray that other young women will be ready to respond generously to Your call

The doctor, the friend and the politician

Angelo Gentili: one man, three hearts
at the service of others

He has left
many small
seeds
encapsulated
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testimonies
of those who
experienced
him

The Lord gives each of us gifts that allow us to carry out the plan that God himself has for each one of us here on Earth and, once in Heaven, to build an eternity of joy and peace by his side. The Lord has given many wonderful gifts to Angelo Gentili, a friend and doctor of our Augustinian communities in Cascia, and we are sure that even up above, where he arrived last August, the doctor is putting them to good use. Here, with many remembering him in prayer and example, Angelo has left many little seeds behind him. We wanted to collect some of them, encapsulated in the testimonies of those who experienced him, to tell you about a simple man with a big heart who took care of many people, not only in a medical sense, but above all in a human one.

As a doctor, Angelo Gentili gave and was very important for many and for the entire area between Cascia, Norcia and beyond. His willingness to help never ran out, not even after he retired. Many people have passed “through his hands” and for some his operations literally gave them life or

saved them. Dr Valentino Cariani, a cardiologist from Cascia, who worked with him for years, remembers this well: “For me he was more than a brother. He had an extra gear, professionally and humanly, as a doctor and a very special person. In the 1980s and 1990s we travelled night and day for emergencies of any kind and we had to carry out many operations, including very difficult ones. In the operating room there was often no hope, especially for some complex caesareans, and yet many times we managed. We saw proof of Angelo's value at his funeral, where all his colleagues were present, together with his patients... everyone clearly misses him”.

Angelo was someone who was there for others and, especially today, that's no small feat. “For me and for our family,” says Gianfranco Flammini, his neighbour in Cascia, “Angelo was a true friend. I've never met anyone so complete and selfless. He was part of the family, a confidant. We shared long chats, jokes, reflections on life's issues, even his jokes that didn't always really make us laugh! He was human with every-



A simple
man with
a big heart

one, even if it was a sacrifice to be so, because it could also mean reaching those in need at night.” Worldliness was not for him and, on the contrary, his first love was the land, the one from which he was born, as the son of peasants, the one to which he returned every day. “He spent his life between Cascia, his home and his family,” recalls Gianfranco, “and his hometown, San Giovenale (hamlet of Leonessa, province of Rieti, in Lazio), where he took care of his garden, rabbits, chickens and ducks. He was intensely passionate about it, so I called him the farmer-surgeon, because his farmer-side was never dormant, even when he carried out his important health mission.”

As a leftist, his commitment also saw him active politically, so much so that from 1999 to 2004 he held the position of deputy

mayor of the Municipality of Cascia. Gino Emili, the former mayor of the city who was by his side in those years and also later, remembers him as follows: “He seemed rough but he was a man of extraordinary sensitivity, especially regarding social issues and disability, and he taught me a lot about this. Speaking in the administration, he liked to spark debates, to have discussions and to say his piece, but he was always open to finding the solution together. Indeed, he also knew how to listen to those who proposed a case to him and came up against all kinds of situations. The years we administered Cascia were spent defending the health services, and when the rehabilitation centre was created at the Cascia hospital he was the first to get involved and start the department, which is now a hub of excellence.”

*We safeguard their future.
With joy.*



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