

NO. 4 JUL-AUG 2024

FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES



The Magazine
of Saint Rita of Cascia

BIMONTHLY
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
MONASTERY
OF SAINT RITA
OF CASCIA

Poste Italiane S.p.A. - Postal subscription - Leg. Decree 353/2003 (subsequently Law 46 of 27 Feb 2004), Art. 1, Para 1, Auth. GIPACI/PG06/2012

CRY OF HUMANITY, PEACE AND HOPE

The Feast of Rita allows us to meet again

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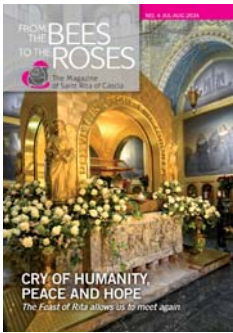
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FROM THE BEES TO THE ROSES

Bimonthly of the
Augustinian Monastery
of Saint Rita of Cascia
No. 4 July-August 2024

Auth. Court of Spoleto No. 9 of 26.06.1954. ROC Registry No. 29665
Italian edition: Year CI. English edition: Year LXIII.
French edition: Year LXII. Spanish edition: Year LII.
German edition: Year LII. Portuguese edition: Year XI.
Polish edition: Year I.

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**Massimo Chiappini, Stefano Dal Pozzolo, Giovanni Galardini.
Stock.adobe.com © AITTHIPHONG**

Graphic design and layout

Bruno Apostoli graphic designer - www.brunoapostoli.it



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06043 Cascia PG - Italy

IBAN CH830900000690085170

FOR GERMANY

Post office: a/c 14421706

Payable to: Superior of the Monastery of Saint Rita

06043 Cascia PG - Italy

IBAN DE11600100700014421706

Printed in June 2024 by Industria GraficaUmbra srl
Via Umbria 148, 06059 Todi (PG).



The *From the Bees to the Roses* magazine is printed on paper certified with the FSC mark



A silent and radiant cry



“**T**he holiness of our beloved Rita passes through her humanity, as a daughter, woman, wife, mother and nun descended into the world and in relationship with the other. I want to forcefully launch a new appeal for peace in the world, starting from tortured Ukraine and the Holy Land, remembering that peace depends precisely on the protection of our humanity. I invite everyone to cultivate care for others and dialogue, with the awareness that every life is sacred. And that there is no love without justice, nor justice without love.” It was with these words that our Prioress, Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis, closed the Feast dedicated to Saint Rita here in Cascia. I thought to use her words to open this magazine, with which we will tell you about the beauty that 22 May gave us this year, with thousands and thousands of devotees gathering in the name of Rita and with Rita from all over Italy and from all over the world. Sister Maria Rosa’s

reflection represents the silent and radiant cry of this feast, made up of humanity, peace and hope. Rita lived this humanity to the full and, in this inhuman world marked by unspeakable massacres, she asks us to rediscover it to make it our beacon. At a time when people were lost in violence, selfishness and hatred, peace seemed far off and yet Rita pointed it out to us as an essential destination that can always be reached, one to be conquered with courage, reconciliation and dialogue. And finally, regarding hope, Saint Augustine tells us “always cry out to God” because we are made of hope and Rita helps us to find it in us and in Him, in spite of all circumstances. Enlightened by these values, which pierce every darkness, outside and inside us, even if we feel lost, let us remember who we are: sons and daughters made in the image and likeness of God. Let us find ourselves and rediscover ourselves stronger, not with violence but with life, the only true power and gift that we have.



The truth of life is that we are loved

From the homily of Father Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Order of St. Augustine, for the Eucharistic Celebration of the Augustinians on 21 May 2024

Saint Rita is a saint who pushes us to love God and our neighbour, to forgive and live in harmony, to become instruments of dialogue and peace. She lived in humility and charity, in prayer and penance and, above all, in the love that comes from God. Saint Rita was a wise woman, united with God and guided by the Spirit. She carried out the words of Jesus in St. Paul's letter to the Romans: "hate evil, cling to good; love one another with brotherly affection, outdo one

another in showing honour. Do not be lazy in doing good, but be fervent in the Spirit." Proclaiming the Gospel, the Mercy and Love of God towards all of us, the Fraternity and Peace... this is the mission that Jesus asked his disciples to carry out (and us too). That is why he sent us the Holy Spirit, which guides us in new existential situations while turning his gaze to Jesus. He helps us to walk in history firmly rooted in the Gospel. It is precisely in the Gospel that the Lord invites us to remain united to

the true vine that he is in order to have life, that is, the love of God (the Holy Spirit) that will guide our hearts and lead us to bear fruit of this love, to live in charity. The Lord says of himself that he is the vine, wanting to show the necessity of us being rooted in his love, and the advantage that comes to us from being united with him. He compares those who are united with him to shoots. And they are made partakers of his very nature, through the communication of the Holy Spirit. We are built on Christ, our support and foundation. St. John explains how we are in Christ

to him by faith. He grants them every kind of holiness, confers affinity and kinship with his and the Father's nature, nourishes love and procures the knowledge of every virtue and goodness. The Gospel reminds us of the truth of life: we are loved. And this is our value: we are loved. As for Saint Rita, so also for us, holiness is above all letting ourselves be transfigured by the power of God's love. Saint Augustine teaches us that God has poured out his Spirit on us as an anticipation of the gift he has prepared for us: eternal life together with his love. He says:



and he in us: "By this we know that we remain in him and he in us: he has given us his Spirit" (1 Jn 4:13). Just as the root communicates the qualities and condition of its nature to the branches, so the one and only Word of God confers his Spirit on people, and especially on those who are united

"The Holy Spirit is our path, our guide and our encouragement so that we do not get lost along the way and reach the goal: to live eternally of his love." Saint Rita, a worthy daughter of Augustine, invites us to live our faith in humility: "Be humble because humility is a reflection of God's love."





With Rita we become agents of peace

From the homily of Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost OSA, Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, delivered at the Solemn Pontifical of 22 May 2024

Today is a great feast day because we celebrate the holiness of God that became visible in the life of Saint Rita. With the help of God's grace, she embodied faith, hope and Christian charity. The Word of God that today's liturgy offers for our reflection highlights some of the virtues that Saint Rita lived out in a superlative and heroic way and which we can imitate in the daily life of faith. Saint Rita lived united to God through a constant prayerful dialogue with Him that was not reduced to specific moments of the day, rather every personal and community activity became an opportunity to raise her soul to the Lord. Pope Francis invited us to experience 2024 as the Year of Prayer in

preparation for the 2025 Jubilee, and Saint Rita will help us rediscover the value of dialogue with God that is fundamental in spiritual life. In the book of Proverbs (Proverbs 2:1-15) we hear the words that a father addresses to his son. God speaks through the words of a father, through the good advice of parents. In this way, Saint Rita presents herself today as a beautiful example of a mother and wife. With pure love, she helped her husband Paolo to lead an authentically Christian life, and she also showed her two children the path of faith. This is the mission of spouses and parents: to express the love of God for his people with words but above all by example, as this is the love of Christ the Bridegroom for the

Church, his faithful Bride, and to reflect the paternity of God towards their children like a mirror. Children will know God as Father in the care, tenderness, and love of their parents. The family is a school of faith and there we learn to know and love God. Moreover, in these times marked by the violence of war, where it seems that rivalry and



hatred have the last word, Saint Rita clearly appears as an agent of authentic peace and reconciliation. As she managed to achieve reconciliation between her family and that of her late husband, with our prayer, we ask that she helps us to have the gift of peace in the world, especially in the Middle East, Ukraine and in many places where the cry of the innocent is not heard. But we know that external peace is the fruit of internal peace, spiritual peace. From man's friendship with God comes friendship between men, that is, peace between peoples. The Lord always



awaits the conversion of His children, He awaits our conversion. How many conversions have been made with the intercession of Saint Rita, how many reconciliations between men, how many miracles in the past and present. This is why we call her the Saint of the impossible. Nothing is impossible to God, you just have to pray with unwavering faith. Let us ask for peace for the world with the same faith as Saint Rita and God will listen to our voice.

Nothing is impossible to God, you just have to pray

We thank the hardworking charity network

From the homily of Father Mario De Santis, Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita of Cascia, for the Eucharistic Celebration for the benefactors of the Sanctuary on 22 May 2024





On the feast day of Saint Rita, it is our duty to remember those who loved her, to remember those who built this beautiful Temple for her and have supported and still support the many works that have arisen alongside the Sanctuary and the Monastery. An example that stands out is the Beehive of Saint Rita (a project by the nuns that has hosted minors in Cascia since 1938, to support them in the path of human and spiritual growth, ed.). There “the queen bee” does not produce honey but rather love, charity and solidarity, spreading these wonderful human and moral values to human lives, caring for, educating and supporting these lives as they grow and project themselves towards a future we hope is rosy and decent. “The queen bee” was Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce (historical Abbess of the Monastery, ed.), the first great benefactor of the Sanctuary, the architect of the Beehive, the promoter “in pectore” of all Ritian works and the worship of Rita in Italy and in the world. It was she, “the Mother”, as her sisters used to call her, who trusted in that beautiful saying by Jesus “without me you can do nothing”,

and blindly entrusted herself to Divine Providence, so that she was able to erect this beautiful Temple to her Rita, which allows us and her many devotees to gather in prayer and praise and magnify God, the Blessed Virgin Mary and many Augustinian Saints. But it would not have been possible for Mother Teresa to go that far if she had not benefited from the charity and solidarity of so many of Rita's devotees, whom we call benefactors. Today is their exaltation. This celebration is for them, whether they now live in heaven, or still walk as pilgrims to heaven. Today we embrace them all. Today we thank you all in the name of Rita and Blessed Mother Teresa and wish you all peace in heaven and a blessed and beautiful life on earth. We also want to include all the operators of the Monastery and the Basilica and all the Ritian works, as well as all the Cascians, within this great network of love. The dream of Saint Rita and Blessed Mother Fasce was for people in Cascia to live, work and act in harmony and unity, to welcome and serve pilgrims or tourists of the spirit with religiosity and true humanity.

We also want to include all the operators within this great network of love



by Marta Ferraro

Cascia and Enna allies for Rita and for peace

And so 22 May arrived once again this year: it's her day, it's a feast! It is always good to see Cascia decorated for a feast, to find the pilgrims happy to honour their beloved protector. Many came from all over Italy and many others from abroad.

Saint Rita, with her very current message, fascinates, consoles, unites – just as she joined Cascia and Enna this year. The Twinning of Faith and Peace that the Augustinian family carry out on the occasion of the Ritian celebrations, together with the municipal administration and the Archdiocese of Spoleto Norcia, is now a well-established tradition. Every year they choose an Italian or foreign city to connect with to spread Rita's message and values. This year it was the turn of Enna, in Sicily. The main symbol of the event is the Torch of Peace and Forgiveness, a sign of light and hope. This year it was lit in the Sicilian city on 16 March, and then it touched the Umbrian land on 20 May in Roccaporena, the birthplace of Saint Rita, and on 21 May it came to Cascia, where that same flame was used to light the votive tripod, marking the official start of the festival. The memory of the Cascia delegation's visit to Enna is still alive in my heart. An impeccable welcome was expertly organised by the Enna branch of the Primary Pious Union of Saint Rita, led by Filomena Greco, known to everyone as Melina. They were days full of emotion, stories and devotion. For the first time in the history of the Twinning, which has been repeated for 61 editions,

The decision to unite Cascia and Enna was taken during an open-door city council meeting





the decision to unite Cascia and Enna was taken during an open-door city council meeting. There was much participation, so many institutional and non-institutional discussions. There was only one goal: to unite and strengthen the relationship between the two cities in love with Saint Rita. The torchlight procession in the streets of the city to invoke peace was also very moving. The torches that lit up the streets of the historic centre brought to mind the illumination that is organised in Cascia every May 21, to remember when the people of Cascia learned the





news of Rita's imminent passing and went to greet her...

It is always very emotional to take part in the twinning. These are important moments in which we realise just how much Saint Rita is loved and honoured all over the world. They are opportunities to strengthen your devotion, to create friendships that remain alive over time. It's always nice to spend 22 May in Cascia, to see the avenue of the Sanctuary filled with the love of pilgrims, their stories of devotion, their expectations and hopes. That atmosphere also fascinated the large delegation from Enna, which returned the visit during the days of the festivities, led by mayor Maurizio Dipietro and parish priest Don Giuseppe Fausciana. Rita, the mother, the wife, the widow, the nun, the lover of Jesus, once again gave us unforgettable moments of friendship, of brotherhood, of hope. May Ri-



FEAST OF SAINT RITA SPECIAL

ta, that woman of peace who pacified the opposing factions of her era with prayer and trust in God, help us to believe that a world of peace is still possible. We hope for the sake of our war-torn world that she may protect us from heaven and support us in this ambitious but essential purpose. Long live Saint Rita. See you next year, see you at the next feast. Today and always: long live Saint Rita!

TOOLS OF LIFE WITH THE WOMEN OF RITA 2024

In this time that is moving further into chaos, between the death toll of wars and a climate of general mistrust, celebrating and honouring Saint Rita, teacher of dialogue, humanity, hope and peace, invests us with a great responsibility. I refer to the task of making her live in each of us, carrying on her legacy, which is more precious than ever today, to put an end to situations of fragility.

That is why every year the festival begins with the International Recognition of Saint Rita, which, since 1988, has awarded women who, like Rita, are living witnesses. In 2024 these women are Cristina Fazzi, a doctor in Zambia who treats children who are the most downtrodden in society, Virginia Campanile, who lost her son but is a mother to many parents and children in difficulty, and Anna Jabbour, a Syrian refugee who went through the war to become a witness of peace.

These three women are different but united, like so many in the world, by the choice to be instruments of life today, like Saint Rita did in the past. From them, we learn to be cradles for life and wings of hope.



The stories of the three Women of Rita were told by the well-known host and journalist Roberto Giacobbo

*Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis
Prioress of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia*



by Alessia Nicoletti

You are also part of the foundations of Namu Hospital

The Feast of Saint Rita is always a special occasion of spirituality and solidarity, thanks to those who, like you, allow our Foundation to be reached by an immense love, with which we come together to support fragile people in Italy and in the world. Today, on the path of this precious love, we bring you to Namu, Nigeria, one of the projects that has been supported starting from the 2023 feast,

now stand. Those foundations include you and all those who helped us to set aside over 130,000 euros, which we will allocate to Namu as the work progresses, which is expected to end within 2024. In February, we disbursed the first 19,000 euros to cover preliminary operations, such as the demolition of the burned hospital, and these first interventions that are now underway, which **mean a life and future for many children and their families**. From Namu and from us, THANK YOU for always being by our side on this journey of love.



where workers are making great efforts to give life to the new “Virgilius Memorial” hospital. Brick by brick, the hospital is finally **rising from the ashes of the old structure, which was destroyed by a fire in 2019**, and all thanks to you. If more than **20,000 people**, who live without life's essential services **will soon be able to receive care again**, it is thanks to the donations received that they are making what seemed impossible a reality. The first step was the blessing of the land, which took place with the community in celebration, on which the foundations of the new building

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THANK YOU!



by Marta Ferraro

A wave of fraternity and devotion

The General Meeting of Cascia: to come together and explore the Ritian charism

The atmosphere felt during the days of the General Meeting of the Primary Pious Union that takes place in Cascia every year is always beautiful. To tell the truth, that air of celebration, fraternity and sharing can already be sensed in the days prior, with the preparations.

This is when Alessandra Paoloni, secretary of the group, begins to prepare the reception of the participants together with the volunteers, when the members begin to arrive in small groups with their blue scarves, a distinctive sign of the PPU, when the first banners peek through the streets of Cascia,



The final blessing at the end of the procession with the statue through the streets of Cascia



The affiliation ceremony for the seven new groups

when Father Ludovico Maria Centra, spiritual guide of the PPU, arrives, dispensing greetings and jokes to everyone with his innate sympathy. All this always anticipates that beautiful wave of friendship and devotion that has become the National Meeting over the years.

This year, the event was held on 6 and 7 April. About 50 groups from all over Italy took part, as well as many devotees enrolled individually. On this occasion, the new affiliated groups were those of Gioia Tauro (Reggio Calabria), Rombiolo and Sant'Onofrio (Vibo Valentia), Giugliano in Campania (Naples), Selargius (Cagliari),

Militello in Val di Catania and Palermo.

There were also fixed appointments: the meeting with the Augustinian nuns for the group leaders, the catechesis, which this year was held by the Augustinian nun Sister Lucia Solerà, from the Monastery of Rossano (Calabria), entitled *Rita, artisan of the future as a woman of hope*, the Eucharistic Adoration and prayer with the passage to the Saint's Urn, up to the procession through the city streets, ending on the Sanctuary avenue. The procession was so well attended that it recalled the historic one that takes place on 22 May. A jubilant display of roses, of devotion, of love for this great saint ended under the gaze of the nuns, who greeted the groups from the monastery terrace, just like during the feast of Saint Rita!

There are many devotees who participate in these two days, who wait for the meeting for a whole year just to see each other again, to embrace, to pray together or to exchange a few words with the nuns. Every devotee comes here with their share of problems, expectations, hopes. They are just like those 'imperfect vessels' of which Sister Lucia spoke in her catechesis, from which artisans, masters of craftsmanship, art and precision learn the most. In this regard, I like to remember the story of a devotee, Rossana, who underwent a real ordeal in the past year, first through mourning and then for health reasons. She attended the meeting to fulfil her promise: to come and



Father Ludovico Maria Centra introduced the lecture by Sister Lucia Solerà



The entrance to the Urn of Saint Rita is always special

thank the sisters, who supported her from afar with prayers throughout her illness and convalescence. “I came to meet them and thank them,” she told me.

Saint Rita had a very long life for the time in which she was born and she lived through all the phases of a woman's life. I believe, however, that it is the first time I have heard her mentioned as an artisan of the future. For this reason, I refer to the words of Saint Augustine that Sister Lucia used to introduce the theme: “To hope means to believe in the adventure of love,

to trust in humanity, to make the leap into uncertainty and to entrust oneself completely to God”. These are words that fit her like a tailored suit: Rita is an artisan because she built the future – the benefits of which we are still experiencing – in everyday simplicity, believing in God and starting from ‘imperfect artefacts’ like the people who were next to her.

It being the jubilee year, the next national event of the PPU in 2025 will be on 7 and 8 June in Rome, for a very different but equally exciting experience.

UPCOMING REGIONAL MEETINGS

Central Italy on **31 August** in Galliciano in Lazio (Rome), **Northern Italy** on **22 September** in Sanctuary of Saint Rita La Barona Milano, **Calabria** on **13 October** in San Marco Argentano with the affiliation of Spezzano Albanese.

For more info piaunione@santaritadacascia.org



by Sister M. Lucia Solera OSA

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

With adoration we give God the reins of life

Together with Rita to learn how to bring out
the voice of silence from the heart

Adoration is
that feeling
that takes
shape when
we find
ourselves
before the
mystery
of God

Saint Augustine began his most famous work, the *Confessions*, with a wonderful expression of adoration: “You are great, Lord, and worthy of the highest praise (...) And so we, the human part of your creation, we long to praise you... You incite us to delight in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” Faced with the greatness of God, Augustine said: “Lord, you are. I am small, indeed I am not, to put it better, because I am so full of weakness. But You are, and that is enough for me; your being makes me exist.”

Adoration is that feeling that takes shape when we find ourselves before the mystery of God: we feel that he is always beyond what we can grasp of him. The words gradually diminish, until they are silent: and yes, we find ourselves “putting a hand on our

mouths”, as the word adoration literally suggests (etymologically it refers to the gesture of putting your hand to your mouth as a sign of amazement before the divine, *ed.*).

Who among us, faced with an extraordinarily beautiful event, has not felt our words to express it were inadequate? Or who among us has not faced extremely tiring moments, where the only voice that comes from the heart is silence? These are moments of adoration.

How did Rita nurture her sense of worship? In a very simple way: putting God in first place in her choices, in the steps to be taken, in even small everyday things. And so Rita grew up feeling that her story was dear to God and that the Father's loving gaze was on her. A mutual belonging. Let's try to get closer to Rita in the time of her desolation, when she found herself wid-



Words
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owed and without children. How did she experience that period, no doubt stained by many tears? Again, adoration came to her aid: with her heart heavy with silence, she found herself before God and told him only: “You are. I am so poor, but You are. Again and again, like the poor widow of the Gospel (cf. Le 21: 4), I cast into You all the life I have”. When we worship, we come to surrender the reins of our lives to God, with a willingness stripped of so many unnecessary things. Rita lived in that way.

*Rita, woman of adoring silence,
looking to you
I recognise that for me too
worship
is a vital necessity:
being with the humble Jesus and
feeling
that his presence
is the truest, the best,
the most important.
May I walk
in worship as you did,
until, with full willingness,
I put my entire life
into God's hands.*



by Mauro Papalini, Augustinian historian

The figure of Mother Fasce is reinterpreted within the historical and social framework of her time

She reformed the monastery with Love

“She restored the strict seclusion, but inside she opened up her community”

The suppressive laws of the Italian State from 1866 had caused a deterioration and laxness in convents and monasteries, as the young Maria Teresa Fasce experienced. In the early 1900s things changed and many monasteries flourished again: the

Poor Clares discovered the rule of Saint Clare, which gradually replaced that of Urban IV; reform movements such as the Trappists developed. In 1917 Benedict XV declared the first code of canon law. Maria Teresa's reforming work should be considered within this framework. As soon as she was elected Abbess, she

worked hard to radically reform her community, but she did not impose anything by force; with her teachings and above all with her example, she became the cornerstone on which to rebuild a religious community proper. She herself became the mother and teacher of her nuns: her ideals, her guides in this great work of reform were the Gospel, the Rule of St. Augustine and the constitutions of the Augustinian Order then in force. The first thing she fully achieved was perfect community life; she knew well that charity is at the heart of everything, with the attributes that we read about in St. Paul (First Letter to Corinthians 13:

1-13). First of all, she took particular care over the spiritual training of the nuns. She followed pedagogical methods to educate and guide the community, knowing well that each nun was a case in their own right and that each one had their own spiritual and material needs. In this she was very demanding, that is, she demanded the ut-



most from everyone, according to their respective abilities, of course. All the sisters had to have their own tasks and always keep themselves busy, first of all in contemplation, meditation and prayer, but also in the many material activities necessary to carry on the daily life of the monastery. Even in free moments, they had a rosary to recite, a thought to meditate on, a space to clean or the monastery garden to tend to. Blessed Maria Theresa made every effort to ensure that no one lacked what was necessary and succeeded excellently according to the testimonies of the sisters, who confirmed the various aspects of her spiritual motherhood in great detail. She also possessed a fine intuition and a deep psychological insight that allowed her to know what the sisters were thinking at that moment; she did so by deciphering the expression on their faces and making the most of the divine graces that the Holy Spirit had bestowed on her. This was very important because it allowed the Blessed Mother to have the situation under her maternal gaze at all times in order to avoid laxity and other defects that hurt consecrated souls so much. It is also said that she was very strict and if severity means always demanding the maximum, yes, she was: strict in the scrupulous observance of the Augustinian Rule and the constitutions of her Order. She did not compromise on even the smallest details. She had a particular concern for silence, which she always called for, demanding its strict respect by ringing a bell. She restored the strict seclusion, but inside she opened up her community to love.

100 years of From the Bees to the Roses

Come to Saint Rita: the magazine and the pilgrimages

From the pages of the Bulletin, describing and showing the places of Saint Rita, Mother Fasce increased devotees' desire for pilgrimage. And, in 1925, she proposed one departing from Rome from 20 to 22 June: it would become an annual event. In addition, in order to offer more, extraordinary openings of some significant areas of the Monastery were scheduled.

Also for pilgrims, the Bulletin published useful information and advice, from the schedules of the Spoleto-Norcia electric railway, to accommodation (with the Casa del Pellegrino created in 1955, now Hotel delle Rose) to reassurances on weather conditions. *From the exhibition "From the Bees to the Roses: 100 years on display (1923-2023)"*





by Mother Maria Rosa Bernardinis OSA

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

How do you become a family with God?

Man and woman need to live in a relationship with others in order to grow, progress, know themselves, fulfil themselves; this is what God

wanted, creating us in His image and likeness. But that's not all. God desires to enter into relationship with us, not only as a friend, but also as a family member. And,



to carry out his plans, he sent his Son into the world. After the sin of Adam and Eve, in fact, God did not abandon them to themselves; He prepared a people who, in the fullness of time, would receive the Word become flesh, in the virginal womb of Mary.

He learned to live as a man within a family. He experienced the family relationship, father and mother, parents and child, to grow in love with God the Father and his neighbours. At the age of thirty, after leaving the house in Nazareth, he began his ministry of proclaiming the Gospel, bringing the proclamation that God the Father loves us and wants everyone to come to salvation. Jesus then called men to follow him and be with him, to instruct and train them at his school. To become part of His family, Jesus Himself told us what to do: "Whoever does the will of my Father is my brother, sister and mother." This was

also his characteristic strength of love, to go so far as to sacrifice his life to redeem many. In this way he carried out the divine plan. United to Jesus Christ we form a body with him: he is the Head and we are the members, and we are adopted children in the Son.

We can all become part of the Trinitarian Family. On the day of Baptism, the single soul becomes an adoptive daughter; in the natural family, it grows in faith, in hope in love and experiences the domestic Church; the family inserted in the local Church, opening its horizons, discovers the universal Church, all children of the same Father.

This is fascinating and makes our hearts open to the challenges they encounter along the way. Let us fear nothing. The Holy Spirit guides us; it knows God's thoughts and our deep aspirations.

We can
all become
part of the
Trinitarian
Family

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.

Alfreda Carlet (Ronchi dei Legionari GO - Italy)
Antionietta Piccioni (Marano Vicentino VI - Italy)
Augusto Bevilacqua (Cascia PG - Italy)
Carlo Rositani (Reggio Calabria - Italy)
Davidina Galloni (Paullo MI - Italy)

Divina Mattei Maringalli (Logna di Cascia PG - Italy)
Don Franco Sancilio (Molfetta BA - Italy)
Gabriella Mattei (Trieste - Italy)
Liliana Giordan (Marmirolo MN - Italy)
Lucia Pugliese (Bisceglie BT - Italy)
Luigina Pelosi widow Pezzani (Goito MN - Italy)
Maria Assunta Turrise (San Vito dei Normanni BR - Italy)
Mario Bigini (Rivotorto di Assisi PG - Italy)
Michele Gioia (Laino Borgo CS - Italy)
Natalino Carin (Dueville VI - Italy)
Nazzareno Barbato (Taranto - Italy)
Rita Rodi (Tordandrea di Assisi PG - Italy)
Zaira Dal Zotto (Marano Vicentino VI - Italy)



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

The influencer of Heaven bringing hope to young people

Dear Saint Rita,

My name is Giulia and my story is a journey through the darkness of illness into the light of faith and healing. In 2020 my life was turned upside down by the unexpected. Hodgkin's lymphoma made its way into my existence, casting shadows of fear and uncertainty over my future.

One night I had a dream, a meeting that changed everything: a figure wrapped in light reassured me that everything would be fine, but I would have to enter the hospital four times, a detail related to the treatment cycles.

The same figure invited me to go to a church dedicated to Saint Rita and pray for her. This is how I understood that you were behind that light and that voice. As I entered the church for the first time a sweet smell of roses welcomed me and, as I approached the chapel, I saw the statue of Saint Rita wrapped in an intense light; the same light as in the dream. The church of Saint Rita became my refuge, in times of de-

spair and need. When healing finally arrived, I made the trip to Cascia to thank you for your constant presence and your infinite love from my heart.

Through prayer I have learned that I am never alone and that the light of hope always shines in the dark. Giulia, a young girl who testifies to the power of faith and divine grace, transmits freshness, innocence and purity. She invites her peers to go against the tide, to take their lives in their hands, not to waste themselves, not to fritter away their resources, their talents, their time, their energy. Life is eternal. It's wonderful. The heart has no boundary, the more love you put into it the more it expands. So, let's give the gift of gestures of love, hugs, kisses, handshakes, smiles. Let's meet people and not isolate ourselves. Giulia echoes Pope Francis, who invites young people "to stand before life, don't sit on the sofa to become professionals in compulsive typing. Get up and go!" In a world of influencers who have an effect on the behaviour and choices of many, Giulia follows only one; the one who has shown her where true beauty lies, that is, in inner strength, in trust in divine faith. Our saint has no other aim.





by Marta Ferraro

A living martyr visits the Saint of the Impossible

Cardinal Ernest Simoni, a prisoner of the Albanian communist regime for 28 years, prayed with the nuns before Rita's body

“Without Our Lady nothing happens! As you eat every day, so must you recite the Rosary every day.” This is what remained in my heart and mind after the meeting with His Eminence Cardinal Ernest Simoni. The cardinal, described by

the Pope as “a flower for the whole Church, a living martyr”, accepted the invitation from the Augustinian Community of Cascia and, to the great joy of the nuns and fathers, visited Rita's Sanctuary on 24 March, praying and also entering into dialogue with the





If God came
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cloisters, after celebrating the Solemn Mass of Palm Sunday for pilgrims in the Basilica.

I was struck by what he said to me because it was not a phrase that was just casually tossed out: it was uttered by a man who suffered the bite of hunger to the point of grazing on grass and eating the vomit of others, a man who responded to the cruelty of imprisonment by making himself look crazy, just because he constantly moved his mouth to recite the Rosary. Cardinal Simoni, born in Scutari in Albania on 18 October 1928, spent 28 years condemned to imprisonment and forced labour in sewers and mines starting on Christmas 1963. He was considered an ‘enemy of the people’ in the years of the communist and atheist dictatorship of Enver Hoxha, when even making a sign of the Cross cost up to 10 years in prison. However, he never stopped celebrating Mass in Latin and, covered by Muslim prisoners, he took some flour mixed with water and drops of grapes and turned them into the Body and Blood of Christ.

His life, which is now based in the Archdiocese of Florence, is the

page of a painful history book but also one of hope, because it is imbued with the love of God. Meeting him, I felt like I was with a saint, as a true witness of faith. He says that it is all the work of God and all the love he has for Jesus Christ and Our Lady shines through from his eyes. “Every Holy Mass is the blood of Jesus that illuminates and protects,” he said in the homily. When I asked him what had given him strength during the years of his imprisonment, he replied: “Being faithful to Jesus, praying from time to time, praying for our enemies because the reward will be great in heaven”.

In his homily he also advised the faithful: “God must come first. If God came first today the world would be a garden full of flowers. Without Jesus, we can see how it is!” In our meeting, speaking of war, he confided in me: “The moral obligation of every good Catholic is to kneel before Jesus with tears to ask for a peaceful resolution for all nations, for all tears to be wiped away and for everyone to have temporal happiness. Above all, they should ask for the happiness filled with

light that awaits us.” This has more value when it is said by a man who has experienced human cruelty for its own sake; a man who, after a day of harassment in captivity, pronounced the words “Love your enemies, forgive your enemies, give your life for enemies. I pray for the president to do good for the Albanian people.” He recommended the devotees of Saint Rita to follow his example in prayer, in penance, in fasting, in love for Jesus, to have all the joy in this world and above all happiness for eternity.

At 96, he continues to work for the Church and bear witness to

Christ, praying for those who entrust themselves to him, performing exorcisms and visiting shrines. He receives up to 120 calls a day, which he never avoids. However, he does not attribute any merit to himself, saying “it is all grace and divine protection”, and never ends a sentence without including a word of thanks to Jesus and Our Lady. He often repeats that “those who have not felt hunger have not felt anything.”

In 2014 Pope Francis went to Albania and asked to meet him. After listening to his words he was moved to tears and two years later he made him Cardinal.

At 96,
he continues
to work for
the Church
and bear
witness to
Christ

«CREATING A HOME»

(CHRISTUS VIVIT, 217)

“If our gaze could cross the sky, if it could look through the history and facts of life, it would only see that the Christ who comes to reach us – to come to us – is the only thing that he also ardently desires; to be in our company, to make a home with us: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” (Revelation 3:20)

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

**FEMALE VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION COURSE
FROM 5 (dinner) TO 10 (breakfast) AUGUST 2024**

For more information:

Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia - Viale Santa Rita, 13
06043 Cascia (PG) - tel. +39 (0)74376221 - email: 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. Stay close to us, your love is the most solid foundation on which to build new hopes. alveare@santaritadacascia.org • santaritadacascia.org/beehive

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