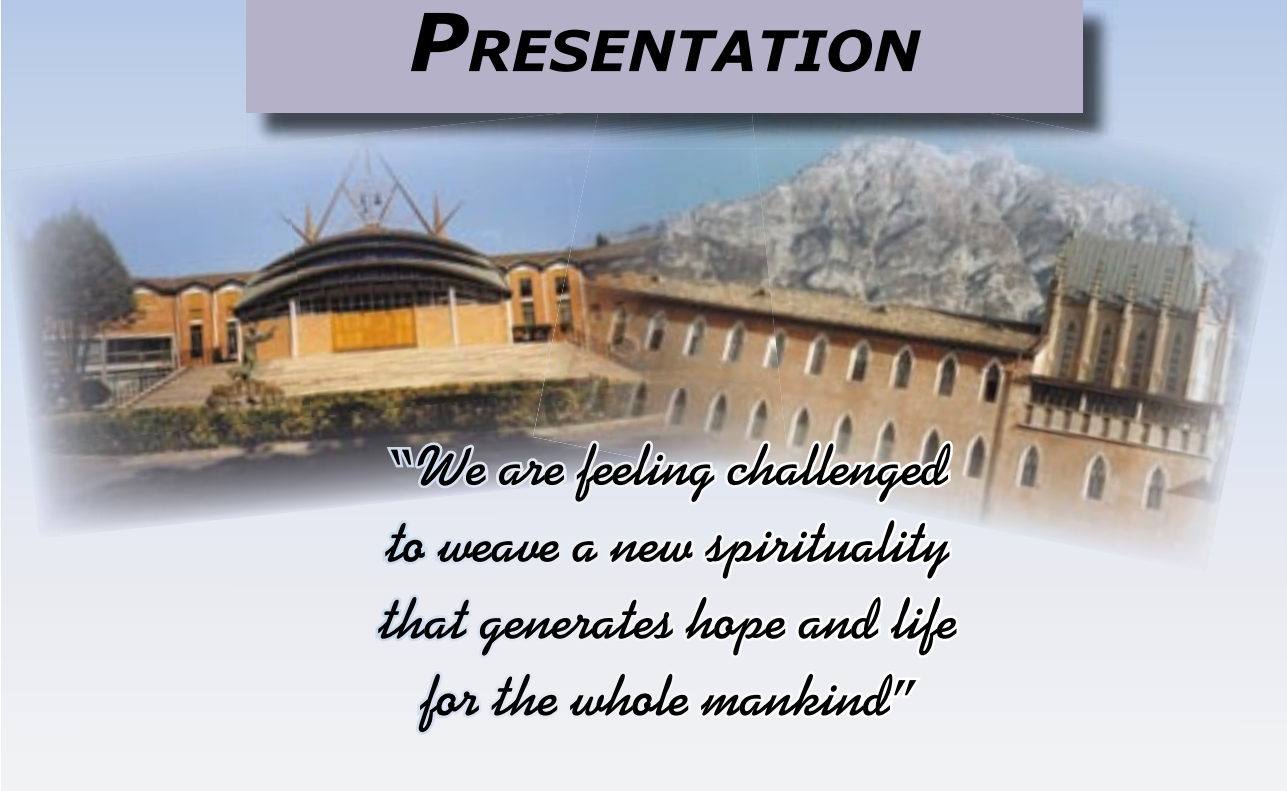


PRESENTATION



*"We are feeling challenged
to weave a new spirituality
that generates hope and life
for the whole mankind"*

This provocation, which was expressed during a recent meeting, opens to hope and life and introduces us into a reflection that fits well into the context of our congregational program, which in this year 2007 is dedicated to initial and permanent formation.

Weaving is creating something new by using old and new threads. We are called to weave a new spirituality that prompts us to face positively the challenges that today's world places in front of us.

A spirituality that is new not in the contents, but in what is experienced, which is an integration and balance between the vertical and horizontal dimensions. It is a challenge! But challenges arise out of real situations, out of the situations in which our communities, which are spread in the most diverse countries, live.

By what do we feel mostly challenged today? The main challenge, from which all others derive, is being faithful to our true identity, which does not reside in updating or increasing our deeds, but rather in our way of being Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, always and everywhere.

We all have at heart to weave something new that could generate hope and life for ourselves and the whole mankind. This requires above all to understand the dynamics of God, who keeps creating new things, as the prophet Isaiah tells us: "See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isiah 43:19) and as St. Paul says: "...all creation is groaning in labor pains" (Romans 8:22).

We frequently experience this moaning and suffering inside ourselves. We are aware of emergencies and we struggle with our impotence and inability to accomplish what we deem necessary. This may discourage us and make us suffer, but God himself with his Word helps us discern what is good, what He pleases.

As He has done in the history of the people of God: the Word has sustained, encouraged and kept alive the divine project of salvation.

That Word is now incarnated through the charisms given by the Spirit to the Church and to the world in order to continue the project of Jesus Christ. We should not be worried about the institutional expression of the charism, but rather about our specific prophetic mission. We must keep a faithful, living and strong adhesion to the charism, which is the Word that God entrusted to our

Founders and that He entrusts to us today.

The whole general Council felt involved by this huge responsibility, which entails more formation, especially an adequate formation, which is pertaining to our charism. The meetings that took place this year are a sign of a strong formative commitment that will certainly benefit all the sisters of the Congregation.

We are pleased to supervise the careful work of the sisters of the historic-formative Commission who, after taking profitably part in the January meeting, co-responsibly with the Provincial Superiors, are letting all the sisters of their Institute know what they have learned.

I hope that each Institute will promptly hold such meetings with all the sisters.

The meeting held in April with all the initial formation teachers was of great help because it made us aware of the need for a unitary formation in the whole Congregation. All the numerous problems that the teachers have to face with commitment and spirit of sacrifice have emerged. What was repeatedly said, even on the part of the experts that had been invited for the occasion, is that permanent formation is the cradle of initial formation. If all the communities of the province or of the apostolic region are not the ground for formation, there can be no formation for the new sisters.

Each one of us must develop the awareness of our responsibility in this common project: the building up of the community.

This inspires us to love our own community as a place of actual growth and self-fulfilment, where giving and receiving are the fabric in which old and new threads harmoniously interweave in the respect of diversity.

A daring project in this year was the “Quarter of formation to interculturality”, which is also in line with the formation commitment at the congregational level. The answer of the Institutes has been very positive, since 32 youths took part in it. Let us thank the Superiors and their Councils, who have believed in the effectiveness of such experience and have not backed down in the face of the difficulties entailed by the replacement of the sisters in their activities.

The three months lived in Gemona, Rome and Assisi led the young sisters to experience the

universality of the Church and the Congregation, to understand the importance and meaning of interculturality, which was introduced into our Congregation right with its charism and the scope of Franciscan spirit, which inevitably leads to universal fraternity.

During these three months, the young sisters were able to acquire a strong specific formation, which is an experience that cannot be erased by time and is of good omen for the whole Congregation.

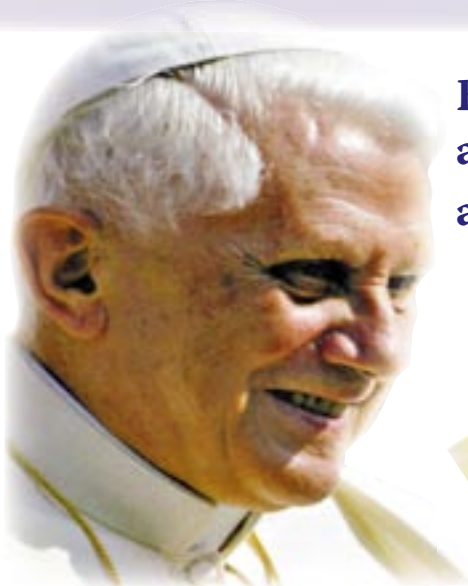
Back to where I started from, it is with confidence that I can conclude by stating that we possess the essential threads to weave a programme of congregational life, which is a harmonious composition of community and personal projects. The clear and stable warp remains the charismatic one, which was lived heroically by our first sisters, both those who crossed the ocean and those who stayed in Gemona as a spiritual support for the sisters who, rich only in charism and in the love for God, left for unknown countries without carrying anything personal with them.

Let us model ourselves on our sacred history to be the followers of a charism that is a living expression of the sequel of Jesus.

Sister Emmapia Bottamedi



WALKING WITH THE CHURCH



Benedict XVI envisions Latin America as not only the “continent of hope”, but also as the “continent of love”



General Conference of the Episcopate of Latin America

13 - 31 may 2007 - BRAZIL

Pontiff Set Clear Goals for Aparecida Conference

He was commenting on the Pope’s homily at the inaugural Mass of the 5th General Conference of the Episcopate of Latin America and the Caribbean, which is being held through the end of May near the national shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida.

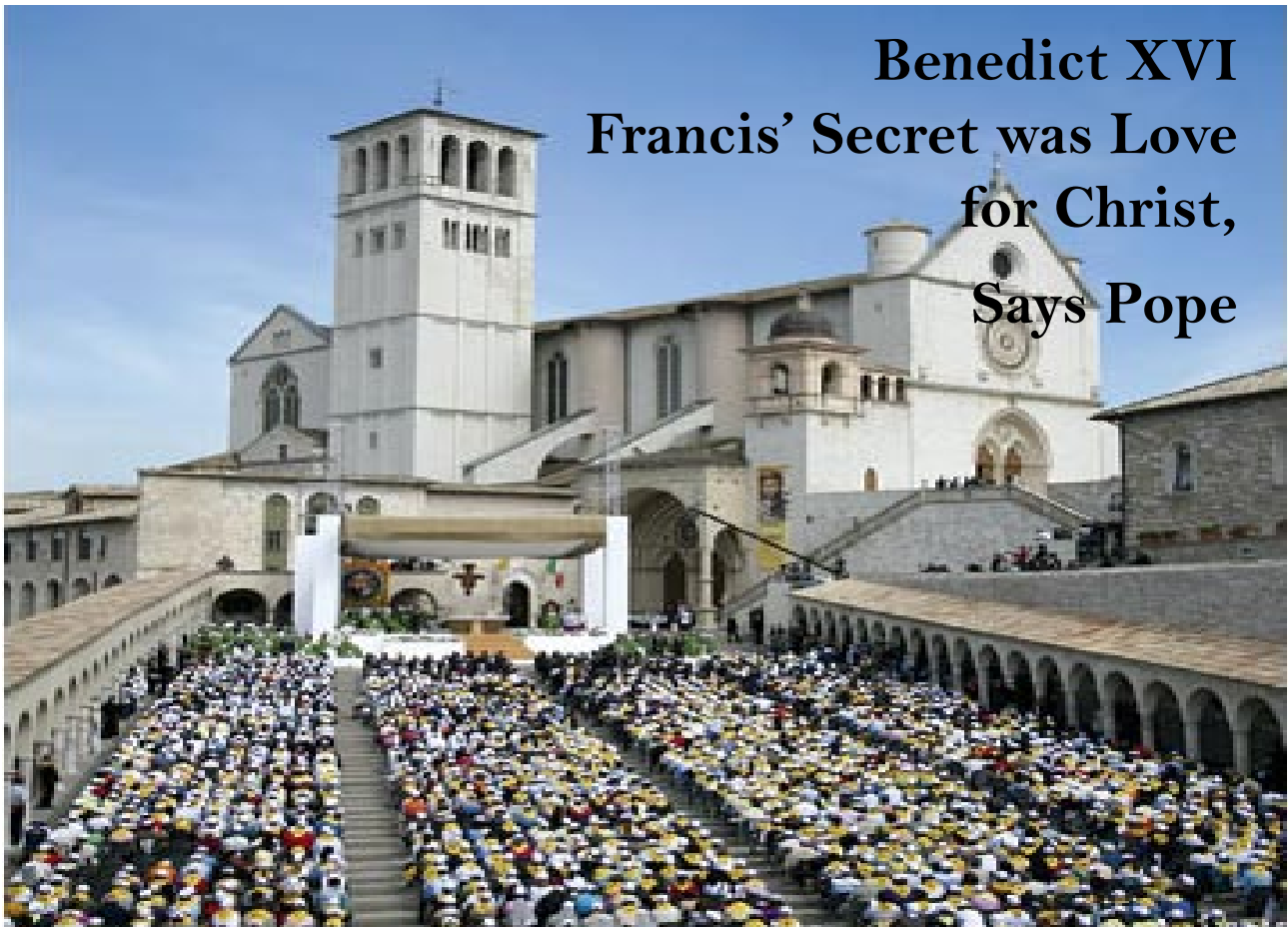
The spokesman said that the homily was “broad but delivered with extraordinary vivacity and effectiveness.” Father Lombardi added that the Pope “painted a vast and articulate picture for the conference’s work, responding to the lively expectations for orientation on fundamental themes: the relationship between culture and the proclamation of the



faith, the center of the faith, the pastoral problem posed by sects, the relationship between the work of the Church and the construction of justice in the social and political sphere, the Christian vision of the family.”

He continued: “The sermon, in line with the previous magisterium, but characterized by the ‘Ratzinger style’ in its systematization and linearity, in its conceptual profundity and in some crucial themes, such as the reaffirmation of a vision of reality and life from which God must not be marginalized, and cannot be if we do not want to risk endangering the well-being of humanity today and tomorrow.

“Fundamental directions for a continent that, thanks to its history of faith, is -- according to the Pope -- not only a ‘continent of hope,’ but also a ‘continent of love.’”



Benedict XVI Francis' Secret was Love for Christ, Says Pope

Assisi Trip Marks 800th Anniversary of Saint's Conversion

Benedict XVI visited the main sites connected to the lives of Sts. Francis and Clare in his one-day trip to Assisi. The Pope says the key to understanding the life of Francis lies in the saint's love for Christ.

The Holy Father arrived by helicopter to Assisi today in a journey that marked the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' conversion. He celebrated Mass in the piazza in front of the Lower Church of the Basilica of St. Francis.

"What is St. Francis' life, once he converted, but a great act of love?" the Pontiff asked during the homily.

He continued: "This conversion to Christ, to the point of wanting to be 'transformed' into him, converting himself into a complete image, explains his unique life, a uniqueness that makes him still relevant to the great issues of our day."

Among these issues, the Pope highlighted "the search for peace, the preservation of the environment and the promotion of dialogue among people." He said: "Francis is a true teacher in these matters.

"But he is so with Christ as his starting point. Christ is in fact 'our peace.' Christ is the origin of the cos-

mos, since in him, all things have been made."

A pilgrimage

Benedict XVI's pilgrimage began early this morning. He first visited Rivotorto, where in Francis' time "lepers were confined, whom the saint approached with such mercy, thus beginning his life as a penitent," the Holy Father recalled.

"To serve the lepers to the point of kissing them was not a mere philanthropic gesture, a 'social conversion' so to speak, but an authentic religious experience brought about by grace and love of God," he added.

The Bishop of Rome later visited the sanctuary that houses the "humble dwelling" of Francis and his early followers, in the church of San Damiano.

He then visited the Basilica of St. Clare and, in the Poor Clares' chapel, adored the Blessed Sacrament and venerated the Crucifix from which Francis heard the directive that would change his life: "Go, Francis, rebuild my church."

"It was a mission that began with the full conversion of his heart, later to become Gospel leaven handed abundantly to the Church and society at large," recalled the Pope.

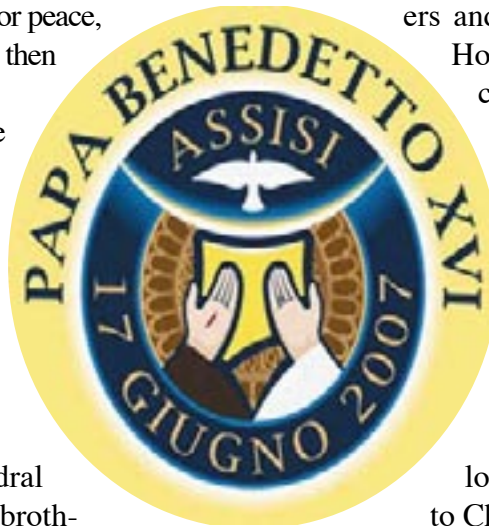
Peace appeal

After celebrating Mass, the Holy Father dedicated



“THIS CONVERSION
TO CHRIST,
TO THE POINT
OF WANTING TO BE
‘TRANSFORMED’
INTO HIM

his Angelus address to an appeal for peace, particularly in the Middle East. He then visited the tomb of St. Francis. Benedict XVI ate lunch with the Franciscan friars of the Sacred Convent. He also greeted the German-born Capuchin Poor Clare Nuns. The Pope later met with the participants of the General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, currently in session. After his meeting in the cathedral with priests, deacons, religious broth-



ers and sisters, and seminarians, the Holy Father visited the Porziuncola, the chapel restored by St. Francis after discovering the vocation that would later lead him to the founding of the Franciscan Order. In the plaza adjacent to the basilica, Benedict XVI was scheduled to conclude his visit to Assisi with an evening youth gathering aimed “to allow the young Francis, converted to Christ, to speak to their hearts.”

*WHAT IS
ST. FRANCIS' LIFE,
ONCE HE CONVERTED,
BUT A GREAT ACT
OF LOVE*



WALKING WITH THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY



BR.

JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ
CARBALLO, OFM

Letter of the Minister General
to the young Friars on the occasion
of the 3rd Chapter of Mats
Rome 2007

LET US PRESENT SOME OF THE PASSAGES OF THIS BEAUTIFUL LETTER TO THE YOUNG FRIARS ASSEMBLED TOGETHER AT JESRUSALEN FOR THE CHAPTER OF MATS.

We are about to celebrate the III International Chapter of Mats for the young Friars of the Order. The first was celebrated in Santiago de Compostela (Spain) in 1995, the second in Canindé (Brazil) in 2001, and the third will be celebrated in the Holy Land from the 1st to the 8th July 2007. Taking advantage of the occasion, I would like to address you all, dear young Friars of the Order.

I do so in order to continue the dialogue which I have maintained with many of you on visiting the Provinces and Custodies of our Order. I do so in order to say how much I love you and how much I expect of you, and how much the Order loves and expects of you. I do so with the firm desire of making myself present on your journey. I would like to be able to answer your questions and to shed a little light on your searching, but, if I fail to do so, you should, at least, know that your brother Minister and servant does not feel indifferent to your questions, or a stranger to your searching, but shares your joys and expectations¹, your struggles, difficulties and joys, as well as your fears and sufferings in the following of Jesus. I write this letter thinking, first of all, of you, dear young Friars, but what I say to you, I say first of all to myself and I also say it to all the Friars of the universal Fraternity. I write it with the Sacred Scriptures in my hand and in my heart so that it may be the Word, that is, Christ Himself, who guides your existence – your searching for and encounter with the Lord, your following

of Jesus and your witness - by questioning you, enlightening you and transforming you, as in the case of the disciples of Emmaus. I greet all of you who read this fraternal communication from your Minister and servant with the words revealed to Francis by the Most High: “May the Lord give you peace!” (...).

I know your possibilities and your generosity. I know your thirst for fullness. I know that a strong desire for authenticity in the following of Jesus Christ burns within many of you and that, moved by the fire of the Spirit, you sincerely seek the greatly loved God, you seek radicalism in your way of living the values of the Franciscan life, you seek fullness in your adhesion to the Gospel, you seek to be counted among the friends of the Lord, confidants of Christ, collaborators of the Most High Son of God in the proclamation and fulfilment of the Gospel. I know you dream of following more closely in the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ, just as you promised on the day of your profession, without domesticating “the prophetic words of the Gospel in order to adapt them to a comfortable style of life”³. . Based on this certainty, I do not hesitate to ask you, from now on, for a radical option of faith and life, and that you accept the message of Jesus in its totality and in its radicalism, no matter how demanding it may be and even when it is marked by the Cross. Because I know you and love you, I cannot avoid asking you to dare to live the Gospel in the style of Francis. And while I ask you for all this, I do not hesitate to point out a beautiful and tremendous task to you also, as John Paul II did in his time to the young people of the whole world, that of becoming “sentinels of the morning” in the Church and in the Order at this time when we wish to celebrate, with eyes fixed on the future⁵, the VIII Centenary of the foundation of our Order . The image of the sentinel is applied repeatedly to the prophets by Sacred Scripture. Be prophets! And even when you do not know when it will dawn, as was the case with some of the prophets be creators of the future, open up the future to today, arouse hope. . If I ask you all this, it is because I have placed my hope in you and, above all, because I firmly believe in the power of the Spirit who dwells in you. Let yourselves be enlightened by Him, allow yourselves to be moved by



Him and you will be salt and light, Good News, to all who approach you. The world, the Church, the Order, but above all the young people like you, need your light, need your salt, need you in order to see and taste what the Most High Son of God has called you to be. Will you have the clarity and the audacity to be what you professed you wished to be? Will you have the clarity and the audacity to be what the Lord has lovingly asked you to be? Will you have the clarity and the audacity to be what the world, the Church and the Order expect of you for the good of all

and, above all, for your own good?

Dear brothers, in the same way that I ask myself each day what the Lord is asking of me, how my life should be, in order to fulfil His holy will in everything, I now wonder about how your life must be so that you may please the Lord and fulfil His most holy will, which the Love who called you is asking of you, that the Order, which lovingly received you, is asking of you.

BR. JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ CARBALLO, OFM



**SAINT ELIZABETH
“THE PRINCESS OF THE
POOR”**



The eight centennial of the birth of St Elizabeth of Hungary that we celebrate this year offers us the opportunity to get to know better this “princess of the poor”, our special protector, and, by knowing her, to revive our devotion.

In February 2007, the Pontifical University “Antonianum” dedicated two days to analyze thoroughly the historic sources on her life and spirituality; the figure that emerged was that of an extraordinary woman, noble by birth, Franciscan by formation, who, in the brief course of 24 years, left a luminous trail of charity, service to the poor, as a spouse, mother and Franciscan penitent.

Never in history has the devotion to this “Star of the East” abated. She was only four when she was brought from the royal palace of Hungary to Thuringia, a region of today’s Germany, to be raised according to the requirements of the court of his future husband, Ludwig IV, heir to the throne. At twenty, she was left an incon-

solable widow with three children. The fame of her sanctity spread quite rapidly after her death, which took place in Marburg in 1231, so much so that she was proclaimed a saint in 1235 by Pope Gregory IX, after a quick canonization process.

Even our foundress, Laura Leroux, was fascinated by the example of virtue of this young mother and so, during her trip to Ostende with our founder Fr Gregory, in 1860, she visited Eisenach and the Wartburg castle, where St Elizabeth had lived. Moreover, she wanted the first profession to take place on 19 November 1860, which was a sacred day to St Elizabeth of Hungary, protectress of the Tertiaries (see *Historic Memoirs* pages 14 and 25).

The General Ministers of the Conference of the Franciscan Family, in the letter that they sent to all the brothers and sisters of the Franciscan family on the occasion of this centennial, went over the meaningful stages of her life, presenting her as a model of life and sanctity. So they wrote: “without any doubt, Elizabeth was able to coordinate both dimensions of life in the intimacy with God and life in the active service of the poor: she wore Mary’s clothes without

taking out Martha’s. Today, TOR female Congregations are about 400, with about one hundred thousand professed religious who follow in Elizabeth’s footsteps in active and contemplative life and can be considered her heiresses. Elizabeth’s short life was full of loving service, joy and pain. She did not hesitate to empty the county barns to help those in need during famine. Elizabeth served the poor, frail and sick personally. She cured the lepers, discarded by

society, as Francis did. Day by day, poor among the poor, she lived and she practised God’s mercy in the ocean of pain and destitution that surrounded her. She saw the person of Christ in the wretched (Matthew 25:40). Elizabeth did not use only her heart but also intelligence in her assistance services. She participated in the foundation of two hospitals, where she set up a religious fraternity with her friends and maids. Her person is a song to love, made of service and self-sacrifice, turned to the sowing of good. She proposed to live the Gospel in a simple way and put into effect the Gospel’s programme of life: “Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it.” (Luke 17:33).

Elizabeth walked the path of Christian love as a happy wife and loving mother. But after her second profession, after her husband died during a crusade, she became a woman totally consecrated to God and to the relief of human poverty. If we remember her birth, her special personality and her sensitiveness, it is because, through knowledge and admiration, we too can become instruments of peace and learn to pour some balm over the wounds of today’s outcasts, to make our environment more human and to weep some tears. Let us spread the goodness of heart where

there is no room for the mercy of the Father. Elizabeth’s commitment may spur our own commitment. Her example and her intercession may enlight our journey towards the Father, the source of all love: the good, all the good, the true and supreme good”.

Following in our founders’ footsteps, let us too revive the devotion to this sister of the poor, by getting to know her better and make her known, so that we can all imitate her.





THE GRACE OF THE ORIGINS



CHRONICLE OF THE FIRST FRANCISCAN TERTIARY MISSIONARIES OF GEMONA IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)

CHAPTER IV

The Franciscan Sisters beg for St. Anthony's intercession

The number of nuns was constantly increasing because some aspirants embraced the rule and also because three other Sisters came from Italy. Since it was no longer possible to stay in the small house in New York, it was therefore necessary to find a more decent house to accommodate a religious community. The nuns prayed, said novenas especially to St. Anthony, so that the Lord would graciously give them the means to buy a house. There was a Protestant man in Peekskill, who was willing to sell them his house in a nice estate. But how could they pay for it? The Lord who said: "Ask and it will be given to you", would certainly not disappoint his

daughters. Some people, who were acquainted with the nuns, joined them to organize raffles and all the benefits were devolved to the Institute. Moreover, the nuns, beside running the school night and day and making works to be used as prizes in the lottery, also collected alms in order to get a living and put something aside to buy the house. They gave their word to buy it, with permission from the Archbishop, together with several thousand dollars in earnest, and some nuns went immediately to live in it. Oh, the beautiful Peekskill estate! It fascinates all those who seek solitude and love to contemplate the wonders of nature. The nuns' house is built near

the seashore and near a beautiful hill, only half a mile away from the village. It is built almost in the middle of a pine, fir and fruit trees grove. In addition, there is a beautiful garden, which is not levelled but ends in an embankment on which, in time, will be built a Convent dedicated to St. Joseph, as the house is now. Next to the house there is a rich fountain that delivers abundant water for the whole household; through a machine, the water is brought in every room, either warm or cold. The house is square-shaped and is big enough to hold three dozens nuns and as many girls. It has a nice small chapel, with a small sacristy; a room for the school, a parlour and a refectory. Of course, there are not as many cells as you would find in a big Convent. However, the nuns' poverty is ingenious and they form new cells using curtains. For the boarding school girls' increased comfort as well as to the nuns' relief, on the second floor the house is surrounded by a pleasant balcony, which is very useful, as it serves to walk in winter or in rainy weather. Near the house, in the wooded meadow, there are four small cot-



tages, which also belong to the nuns. In one of them there is the school for the poor boys and girls of the village; another one is inhabited by the Convent Chaplain; the remaining two are for the use of the Community. The property borders on the sea and is separated from it only by the space occupied by the railway. On one side of the hill, there are walls or hedges. At a convenient distance, but in the same estate, there is a small graveyard, so that the nuns, who have been united in life, should not be divided by death. So, by visiting it and thinking about death, the nuns learn how to live well, how to die well, as well as to pray for the souls of those who already sleep in the Lord. The hill has a gentle slope so that people can get over it in a carriage.

From this short description, and from what the careful reader can imagine, the place was an opportunity that we could not let slip, once we had given our word that we would buy it. The nuns, however, had come to the point of losing it for lack of money, and should have had to give up if the Lord had not helped them by intercession of St. Anthony. One day, some nuns discussed about the ways to pay for



the house and decided to pray every day, at the time of the Elevation during Holy Mass, so that the good Lord, by intercession of St. Anthony, would provide them with thirteen thousand dollars in three years' time. The request was a little excessive, but St. Anthony can do a lot in favour of his devotees. Three years had passed, and the thirteen thousand dollars had not come! What should they do? Lose hope, perhaps, and stop praying? Oh, no! On the contrary, they should pray more! Do like those people who, having knocked at the door two or three times, instead of going away, keep knocking even harder until the owner, fed up with the annoyingness, opens and lets them in. The nuns did not tire to

pray St. Anthony. They even thanked him, I should say, as if they had already received the grace. And the Saint, who does not want to seem to lack generosity to those who are so faithful to him, instead of the thirteen thousand they asked, a few months later, when the three-year period had expired, provided the nuns with fifteen thousand dollars, as if he meant to pay also the interest on arrears. Indeed, it is rumoured among the nuns that St. Anthony not only always grants what he is asked for, but gives even more to those who pray him fervently. We can obtain anything through prayer. Let us pray and never tire of praying. Cheers for St. Anthony!

CHAPTER V

How St. Anthony provided the Franciscan Sisters with 15 thousand dollars

How St. Anthony provided the Franciscan Sisters with 15 thousand dollars Some Franciscan nuns went to the city of New York to collect alms and the Lord disposed that they enter a house whose owner, after suffering a second stroke, was dictating his will. His maid, who had opened the door, thought it would not be good to disturb him at that moment, so she sent them away. They asked her to tell him that they had come asking for charity, when she had the chance. As soon as the owner heard that the nuns had asked for him, he ordered the maid to call them, as he wanted to talk to them alone. Once they got in, the sisters were immediately ushered into the sick man's room. He asked them the reason for their begging and the name of their Superior. He wrote in his will that he donated five thousand dollars to their Community. Then he asked the nuns to pray for him and to tell the Superior that he would like to meet her. That man was a good Catholic and he regarded the visit that the nuns did, right at the moment when he was bequeathing his properties, as a sign from Heaven, so that he would be enabled to give some alms, for God's sake, to those who were committed to the good of their neighbour. The Superior

promptly visited him and thanked him for his generosity, and he appreciated the visit so much that he asked her not to abandon him. Therefore, although she lived in Peekskill, over 40 miles away from N.Y., she visited him at least every ten days (and each time she stayed with him for a while) during his sickness and until his death. One day, the man added in his will another five thousand dollars for the nuns. And later, after selling a property, he gave the Superior a note for another five thousand dollars, asking her to keep it secret to those who would have to pay the first ten thousand. Let us admire the dispositions of the Divine Providence. That man did not know that the nuns were praying to obtain thirteen thousand dollars and yet, inspired by God, he left them fifteen thousand. He did not have any heirs but he had an adopted daughter who was dying and whom he entrusted to the nuns. Not only did he want to be assisted by them in his life, until his last moment, but he also begged them to pray for his soul. The nuns, grateful for the good that they had received, gladly complied with such a pious request.



Sr Stefany Coundouris: The recovered Misician

Returning to the Origins

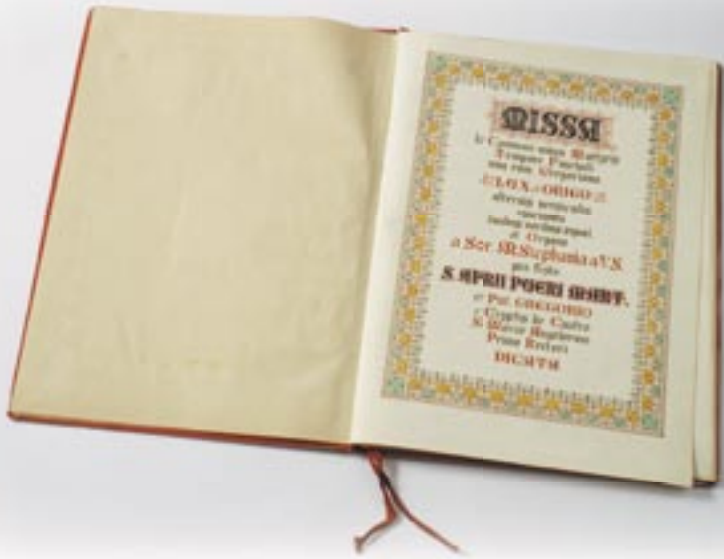


On a February evening, the Nuns of the Oasis got an unusual and surprising phone call. At the other end of the line, a male voice asked: *“Among your sisters, is there a Sr Stefany of the Holy Face? Have you ever met her? I no longer know where to look for her! This is my last attempt, because now I have lost all hope: I will meet her in Paradise!”* When the nun, with some pride, said that Sr Stefany had in fact lived among them, Father Giovanni Brocca exulted with indescribable joy for managing to find out, after about forty years of research, the religious Institute to which the unforgettable Sr Stefany had belonged. Father Giovanni himself, through a letter that we quote, tells us the reason why he longed so much to meet our sister and explains how he managed to reach the much desired

goal of at least finding out Sr Stefany’s Congregation. Here is what he wrote: *“I am unable to express my thanks to St. Joseph and St. Anthony of Padua for Sr Ritapia Panzarin’s article that was published on the newspaper “Il Messaggero” (“The Messenger”) (it is an article about the testimony of a young plane pilot who spends her holidays in our mission in Congo) as well as the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who were founded in Gemona del Friuli in 1861. My curiosity made me look for the telephone number and get acquainted with these nuns and ask them if maybe they had had something to do with Sr Stefany of the Holy Face. After almost 40 years of fruitless research, I doubted that I would ever be able to find out which religious Congregation Sr Stefany had belonged to. I will not even mention the number of phone calls that I did during all these years to find out the music- composing nun.*

It all started in 1967 when I was attending the gymnasium of my Diocesan Seminary in Cremona. I saw in the music Library a booklet entitled “Let us praise the Lord” (only music and text without accompaniment) published by Giovanni Galla house of Vicenza in 1920 or 1924. In the title page, there was the following note: the songs in Italian, the hymns and motets of the present booklet were drawn from the manual of piety written by the priest Angelo Gattesco and from the Eucharistic manual “God with us”. Who Father Angelo Gattesco was and where he came from I found in 1980 in Turin, when I consulted the Liturgical Review. But back to the booklet “Let us praise the Lord”. It contained songs by Sr Stefany of the Holy Face (Oh sweetest Heart, 4 songs for the hour of Eucharistic adoration and Oh sweetest Mary) without mentioning “of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart”. That is why it all seemed impossible. Even Father Emanuele Castagnoli of the Passionists, who in 1950 had composed an anthology of songs for the popular missions in the parishes, when he introduced Sr Stefany of the Holy Face in his collection, thought that maybe she was a Carmelite religious or anyway an enclosed one or from Cottolengo in Turin. 10 years ago, I called the Curia in Udine to learn something about Father A. Gattesco, his manual of piety and the songs by Sr Stefany of the Holy Face, yet the archivist found the little volume, but nothing about Sr Stefany’s songs!”

As he is keen on sacred music, Father Giovanni ends his letter asking for a copy of Sr Stefany’s



THE MANUSCRIPT BOOK OF MUSIC "LUX ET ORIGO" HOLY MASS COMPOSED BY SR STEFANY IN HONOUR OF ST APRIO AND DEDICATED TO FATHER GREGORY FIORAVANTI

songs with the musical accompaniments that he has been searching for so many years.

His request has reminded us of a sister who "blessed with good qualities of the mind and heart, distinguished herself for her musical genius, that she used especially to sing the praises of the Lord" (from the magazine "Peace and Good", June 1960).

We consider it nice and useful to share with all the sisters in the Institute, especially the younger

ones, the autobiography that Sr Stefany wrote on 23 June 1956 and that was found among Mrs Cecilia Lazzeri's documents.

"My father, Nicola Coundouris of Constantinople, was a schismatic Greek, a grower of Turk tobacco. Mother, Clara Hills from Liverpool, was a protestant and a concert artist.

I was born in London on 25 March 1878, twelve days after St Gemma Galgani.

Since my life was in danger, I was christened by my uncle (a schismatic Greek) with the small lamp that was lit in front of Holy Mary.

The following day, our protestant relatives called their minister, who baptized me in the Methodist protestant faith, which I professed until I was about ten. Mother died in 1886, when I was eight. Immediately my father took me to Smirne (Asia Minor) but, since he was always travelling for business and had to go to America, he entrusted me to a schismatic Greek family, who had me follow their church and their practices. They also made me go to Communion.

I practiced this religion for two or three years.

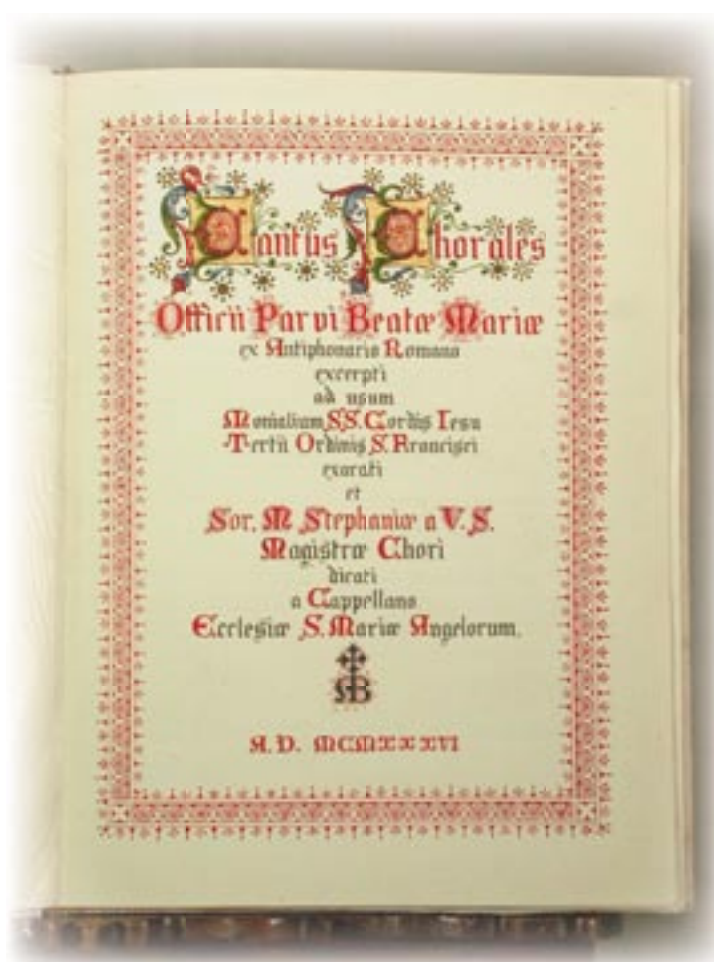
In 1888, 15 days before St Therese of the Child Jesus entered the Carmelite monastery of Lisieux, I was sent to a boarding school in Bondjâ, a small village near Smirne, run by the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul.

In 1894, my father married the Irish-American catholic Lillian Ibeegam, my sister Frances' mother. She first asked me if I was glad to become a catholic and I was happy to give my conditional consent.

I was baptized conditionally and stayed in the boarding school until 30 September 1897, the day St Teresina died, then I went back home with my step-mother, who was like a dear elder sister, very good to me. She always loved me. She was only 5 years older than I. She died in 1947 as a saint! I did not think at all about becoming a religious person. I thought I would become a concert artist and go to Paris to take a diploma as a fulfilment of the studies that I had done with a good Italian Maestro: Giuseppe Moroni. But my plans were thwarted and it was on 9 December 1898 that God let me know his Will.

It was in the evening and I was alone. I was reading a famous French novel from Di Vos, "The Countess Sarah". I was sad and was not interested by the reading. Suddenly I heard a bell toll.

In that moment I remembered my First Communion! I took my veil and went out towards the bell that was still tolling. It was the bell of the Church of the Capuchin Fathers, who run the Theological



The whole manuscript book of music by Fr. Agapito Bonitti - Chaplain close to the mother House from april 1920 to march 1945 - in honour of Sister Stefany

Seminar in the village of Bondjà.

I opened the little Church door: the Holy Sacrament was exposed and was surrounded by the young student friars, like so many Angels.

I fell on my knees and heard inside my heart a divine voice that told me: "Can't you too be like tem? Saint Francis calls you, he wants you as his daughter!"

The following day I went to the Father Superior and I placed myself under his direction. He got me in touch with the Provincial Father of Constantinople, who had some of our sisters in charge of assisting Saint Stephen's Seminarists. In this way, I could get acquainted with our Institute.

My father, however, was absolutely against my vocation and, after fighting for one and a half years, I fled from home and went to Constantinople.

Mother Caterina Ridolfi and Sister Eleonora Falischia, Teacher of the Novices, had come to the harbour to welcome me. For about ten years my father (who at first made some noise with Greek threats) never wrote to me, but then he pardoned me and was happy about my choice.

I entered the convent on 1st February

1900 and in July 1903 I came to Gemona and now I have been happily here for 53 years.

My little sister and goddaughter Athena (Sr Francesca Teresa), who was born in 1898, decided to follow me into the convent 25 years later.

She went to Peekskill in America. When I celebrated the golden wedding, she celebrated the silver one. Now I must only prepare for the Eternal Wedding!"

"Sr M. Stefany Coundouris of the Holy Face, born in London on 25 March 1878, died in Gemona on 31 July 1960. She entered the Novitiate in Constantinople on 1st February 1900; she took the habit on 2nd August 1900; she professed on 19 August 1901 and made her Perpetual Vows in Gemona in 1907. She was endowed with a good brain and a good heart and she distinguished herself for her talent for music that she used above all to sing praises to the Lord. She composed several Marian songs, which were very successful, as well as other songs to the Sacred Heart, in which you can hear vibrate the deeply religious feelings of her simple and delicate soul that was able to relish the sacred hymns of the divine liturgy.

She was full of enthusiasm and cooperated with parish activities and for the entertainment of young girls in summer camps. Her joviality endeared her to all and she was an excellent influence on the young minds.

In her spare time, her gifted hands interwove wonderful motifs on the lace pillow to decorate the Lord's tabernacles and altars. She was happy when she was able to embellish a poor bare church with her small works, that could be used to adorn a bare altar. She carried the same note of Franciscan joy in all her activities in the community, so that she enjoyed the benevolence of all her sisters and Superiors, who



THE WHALE PAGES OF THE MANUSCRIPT

found in her a devout daughter, sweet and obedience-loving.

In a word: Sr Stephany lived serenely her days in the house of the Lord, always devoted to her piano to teach with an invincible patience the divine art of harmony to her small pupils, who were also bestowed with her wise advices about goodness.

She lived as a good religious and left us a dear memory of her virtues, especially of her resignation to suffering and her willing acceptance.

Sister Ernesta Bilibio

The Picture of Our Lady painted in cedar of lebano with one golden aura. The frame is of polished silver. Iconography is of oriental bizantine style. The picture was belonged to the Turkish Sultan Selim III (1761-1808) who donated to a merchant of tabacco, called kamboux Costi Teodoridis. His wife, Cassandra Maruzzi, Greek princess left it to the daughter Ferronia who preserved it with great devotion till his death. It was inherited to his son Giovanni, father of Sister Stefany Condouris (1818 - 1960) who kept it with affection and just before his death he sent it to his religious daughter, willing to make sure to Mary that the veneration which is transmilted almost two centuries in the family by father and then to the son.

According to the testimony of Sister Stefany the picture may be dated from 9th to 11th century.



LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

Activity of the General Council February – August 2007

The General Council, by “promoting the particular project expressed by the charism”, devoted itself to organizing the scheduled meetings and dealing with the problems concerning the Institutes or individual sisters in the Congregation. In particular:

1 - The General Council confirmed with joy and deep satisfaction the admission to perpetual Profession of

Sr M. Josie E. Enaje
Sr M. Amela O. Nol of the “Mary Immacolate” Roman Province;
Sr M. Petrona Choré
Sr M. Luz Marina Velasquez
Sr M. Claudia Muñoz of the “St Anthony” Latin American Province.

2 - After a careful and difficult preparation, the meeting of the sisters formator, coming from various Institutes, took place in Assisi in April.

Under the supervision of the General Vicar Sr Cecilia Subiabre, the fourteen sisters who participated shared the problems and perspectives of initial formation and analyzed and updated the Congregational Formation Project. A valued contribution was brought by the experts who made a speech: Fr. Massimo Fusarelli ofm and Fr. Giannantonio Fincato. In order to work out the suggestions to modify the Formation Project, a commission was set up which is made of Sr Cecilia Subiabre, Sr Eliodora Battiston and Sr Marta Camerotto.

3 – The preparation of the “Quarter of formation to interculturality” was complex and articulated. It took place from 1 June to 30 August and was attended by thirty-two sisters from various Institutions in the missions of Italy, the USA, Cyprus, Lebanon, Bulgaria, France, the Philippines, Albania, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Cameroun and India.

The meeting was organized according to the suggestions of the 2005 Chapter Document, and included the visit of the historic places of Christianity in Rome, the most relevant Franciscan places and the Mother House in Gemona. It was a time of intense formation on specific subjects of Franciscanism, on the congregational charism, on subjects of Canon Law, on the Constitutions and on missionary activity. Those sisters from so many different countries were offered the opportunity of experiencing meaningful moments of fraternal life in some communities and especially in the General House. The celebration of the Perpetual Profession of three sisters, two Filipino women from the Roman Province, Sr Josie E. Enaje and Sr Amela O. Nol , and one Peruvian from the Latin American Province, Sr Zulma Ayma Quispe, crowned the events that provided much enrichment and formation.

4 – During the first few months of the year the agenda of the Extended General Council, which will take place in India next December, was fine-tuned. The important meeting will be focused on

the objectives provided for by Article no. 101 of the Directorium, as well as on three fundamental themes:

a) spirituality in life b) formation, c) missionary spirit.

- 5 – Since time is running fast, the preparation of the meetings scheduled for 2008 was started:
 - a) renewal course for the jubilee sisters, that will be held in July in Rome;
 - b) meeting of representatives from the schools and Houses for minors, that will be held in April in Chile;
 - c) second meeting of the historical-formative committee in September;
 - d) meeting of the provincial treasurers in October.
- 6 – In February, the Superior General, Sr Emmapia, as the spiritual guide of the sisters of the whole Congregation, dedicated herself to the canonical visit –prescribed by the Code of Canon Law and by the Directorium- to the communities which are directly subordinated to the General Council: the General House, the Viole Community and St Mary of the Angels in Assisi; in March to the “St Louis IX” community in the French Province; for the same reasons she will go to “St Elizabeth” Oriental Province in October.
- 7 - Particular care was required for the launching of the non-profit Association “Mission TAU”, which prepares its own projects and activities in close cooperation with the General Council.
- 8 – The General Council confirmed the nomination of:
Sr Annie Thomas Palamthattel to Teacher of Juniorate
Sr Lissy John Ayamkudiel to Teacher of Pre-novitiate for the “Holy Family” Province;
Sr Fabrizia Zanettin to Teacher of Pre-novitiate for the “Saint Martyrs of Uganda”
Apostolic Mission
- 9- In agreement with the Provincial Superiors concerned, the following transfers were deliberated:
Sr Agnes John Kadamthottu from “St. Mary of the Angels” to “Holy Family” Province;
Sr Mariangela Madappallil from “St. Mary of the Angels” to “Holy Family” Province;
Sr Lyssamma Sebastian Kapuzhyil from “Mary Immaculate” to “Holy Family” Province;
Sr Giovanna Oppenmakal from “Holy Family” to “St Francis” Province.

In addition, Sr Ancy Joseph Mailadoor and Sr Sherly Thomas Parappurath returned to India after three years of formation in Italy.

- 10– The General Council examined the requests for reduction and, albeit regretfully, authorized the Provincial Council of the “St Mary of the Angels” Venetian Province to close the community of the Spiritual Exercises Home in Tricesimo (near Udine) and the communities that operated at the Infancy Schools in Badoere (near Treviso) and Codroipo (near Udine); it also authorized the Provincial Council of the “Mary Immaculate” Roman Province to reduce the community in Montale (near Ancona) in order to make it the daughter-house of the community in Monteporzio (in the province of Pesaro-Urbino).



“Mission Tau” Onlus: Sharing a charism

Set up on 9 November 2006, “Mission Tau” is a new non-profit lay association which is actively committed to missionary service, especially in the developing countries where the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart operate.

It was at first conceived by the generous and personal commitment of its new president Sabrina Vivan and was strongly wanted by the Superior General, Sr Emmapia and by the General Council. The Association’s objective is solidarity, as expressed in the Statute, which adheres without reservations “to the missionary spirit which is authentically expressed by the constant and universal promotion of Good and Peace for a mission without borders, in the light of the example set by St Francis of Assisi, who considered it a privilege to be able to serve poor people, relishing the taste of a poverty that becomes welcome and donation”.

Therefore, the goal is to become part of an effective action of fight against poverty, which is entrenched and reaches intolerable levels in the countries of the South of the World; by announcing the Gospel of hope, in the joy of living among the poor and frail, the sick and the lepers; by providing an answer to new urgencies, in order to favour the promotion of men, women and children, so that every social group is able to manage itself autonomously in the respect of everybody’s dignity.

A small group of laypeople, together with the Sisters, immediately started some initiatives to the benefit of the mission in Sembé, Congo Brazzaville: the equipment of the medical center was supplemented and it is now finally possible to perform surgery in many cases where life is at risk; the Kribi school in Cameroun was provided with school equipment, a library and numerous computers as well as with the resources deriving from a microcredit that might favour job creation, in order to provide an income for many vulnerable women in Cameroun, some of which belong to the ethnic minority of Baka pygmies.

The fact that the two development projects were approved by the Italian Bishops’ Conference, new projects are being set up for other geographical areas such as Ecuador, self-financing initiatives have been implemented especially in the Italian region of Friuli, many long-distance adoptions have been made, new stuff has been collected to be sent through containers, mutual knowledge and friendship trips have been made to the missions of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in

Congo Brazzaville, Cameroun and India, contacts have been established with many people who care about solidarity and with other Italian associations, shows the strength of a commitment that must anyway become consolidated in time, for an increasingly incisive and determined missionary action.

The main objective is to offer a formation to international charity work that is capable of removing the causes of poverty and offer hints to devise new life and consumption styles: indeed, the objective is to walk a path of growth that presents the role of international charity work as a true lifestyle which is centered on the certainty that the “other”, the poor, the outcast, the excluded is a brother who needs that we share our life with him and walk “a few steps together”.

The “Mission TAU” voluntary association aims also at favouring a cultural change that would change economic and politic relations between the world’s North and South, to knock down obstacles and overcome divisions within the big human family, to enjoy together the resources that are everybody’s and for everybody, to sit down together at the same table, not like Lazarus and the Rich Man: a little less for everybody but something for all so that nobody falls under the line of human dignity.

Charity workers believe that the future of the world and of mankind must be built starting from the rights and needs of those who are still deprived of their dignity, everywhere on Earth, through the Franciscan spirit that immediately provides an added value and is a quality in itself.

Laypeople and religious together for a path of missionary charity in the name of St Francis: a history that must still be written but already contains the ingredients for a very good harvest, in the communion of one charism.

“Mission Tau” takes its first steps with the assurance of a drop of water in the ocean: without it, the sea would be deprived of an additional resource!

Luigi Lorenzato
Secretary of the “Mission Tau” Association

August 2007



Formators Meeting



*The formation looks...
to the configuration
to the Lord Jesus
in his total
oblation.*

Assisi 15 th– 25th april 2007

I thank the Lord who made it possible for us to meet here for a noble and very important mission. We all thank him for his goodness, because he renovated us in the spirit of Resurrection and he called us from the most distant places, sisters of a single Family united in his Name.

We met here, in the place which was sanctified by our Holy Patriarch Francis, in the eight centennial of the beginning of the great Franciscan movement. Under his powerful protection and especially under that of the Virgin Mary, whom we honour here with the title of St Mary of the Angels, we would like to start our meeting today to give a new impetus and renewed vigour to the spirit of our beloved Congregation. There is no doubt that the only instrument for renewal is formation. The whole life is a path of formation, but what makes one keep one's personal level high is the formation that received at a dedicated time, that is the initial formation: in pre-novitiate, novitiate and juniorate.

In each institute all formation must draw inspiration from a fundamental document which is the Ratio formationis wanted by the Church. On 1 January 1988 the Superior General Sr Ines Pavan promulgated the "Formation Project" of our Congregation. This event was a big step towards the renewal requested by the

Second Vatican Council. During the 1987 General Chapter, there emerged the belief that a specific formation project was much needed in order to implement what was the theme of the Chapter itself: "Franciscan Missionary Sister of the Sacred Heart, you should become what you are in the project of God". The Formation Project was the result of a journey, or better, of a stage in the journey of implementation of what was suggested by the Documents of the Second Vatican Council, especially the Perfectae Caritatis.

We are still in the path of formation renewal according to our specific charism, which was bequeathed to us by our Founders and lived especially by the first sisters.

Our vocational experience comes today in this particular time, in the trail traced by all the sisters that have preceded us, sisters who have implemented their vocation with different ways and means, because times were different, but who carried out with a missionary impetus their mandate for evangelization in the spirit of the FMSH charism. As was already mentioned, formation lasts all life long, but in order for the whole life to be a formation path, it is necessary to develop into the sisters a conscience of the need for formation.

Times have changed, society has undergone an ex-

traordinary evolution, but these are the times in which the Lord calls us to work, to sow the seed and cultivate it, free it from stones, thorns and everything that may prevent a vocation to flourish in the garden of God, in the Franciscan flower-bed, which is always rich in multicoloured flowers.

Since the setting up of our Formation Project, consecrated life, and with it our life as FMSH, guided by many wise orientations from the Church, has gone a long way, very often a difficult one, which has led us to a serious and deep reflection about the identity that we acquired and must still acquire through formation.

According to the Church documents, formation aims at “resembling our Lord Jesus in his total donation”, “increasingly assimilating the feelings of Christ toward the Father” (VC 65). In our specific charism, such assimilation spurs us to follow into the footsteps of Christ Crucified, from whose heart gushes the infinite and total Love for all men of all countries and all races. Following Jesus Christ Crucified leads us to commit ourselves, together with the Church, to place ourselves to the service of today’s mankind, especially of the poor and defenseless, as messengers of justice, reconciliation and peace, “with a profound benevolence, redemptive love and apostolic zeal for the whole mankind” as suggested by our Constitutions (no. 4).

Therefore, formation does not mean learning new concepts or new behaviours, but forming our heart so that it learns to love like the Heart of Jesus loves. It is necessary to train and be trained until we feel “the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5); in other words, we must acquire the ability to live the Easter Mystery every day, letting ourselves be reached by salvation, which is Jesus himself.

In his recent Apostolic Exhortation “*Sacramentum caritatis*” Pope Benedict XVI urged all religious to be profetic witnesses and said expressly: “... Though



they provide many services in the area of human formation and care for the poor, education and health care, consecrated men and women know that the principal purpose of their lives is “the contemplation of things divine and constant union with God in prayer.” The essential contribution that the Church expects from consecrated persons is much more in the order of being than of doing.” It is first of all the initial formation that provides the religious with the tools and lifestyle that will enable her—as the Pope says— to be a sign, in our own times too, of God’s gracious and fruitful love for humanity” (no. 81).

In past chapters it has been repeated many times that formation must be a truly priority choice; we have made some steps in that direction, but we have not

reached a full consistency. Nevertheless, we can say that the realization of the urgency and need for a greater fidelity to our own vocation-mission as FMSH has grown.

During these days here we must ask ourselves how our formation is in keeping with the rapid cultural change under way; there is no doubt that we must take this rapid change into consideration and, consequently, also formation has undergone and will





undergo a constant evolution. Today, as the speakers will confirm, the youth find it more difficult to grow personally and detach themselves from the world at all levels (things, affections, independence...).

Nowadays formation must be characterized by the care for a relational dimension which places interpersonal relations under the sign of reciprocity; this is what most helps the youth to detach herself, to be able to go against the stream, that is “to be in the world without belonging to the world”(John 15). Religious vows themselves, if they are lived in this light, reinforce our relation to Christ and to our sisters, to all mankind and the whole creation, according to the genuine Franciscan spirit. Each province is committed to set up formation programmes based on the congregational Project.

Visible progress has been made regarding the renewal of initial and permanent formation; as we will hear from your testimonies, programmes have been developed which are aimed at keeping the identity of FMSH alive and promote efficiently the conveyance of values in the reality of fraternity and apostolate. However, we should ask ourselves: how do we understand the missionary spirit which is so essential in the charism of the origins?

May the call of the Servant of God John Paul II at the beginning of the third millennium, to put out into deep water (*duc in altum*) be for us too, in this day, a strong spur to an unconditional faith in Jesus Christ, who urges us to bring the good news of the Gospel to the outermost bounds of the earth.

This adventure will be possible as far as we adhere faithfully to our Franciscan missionary charism and, “with spirit of might”, incarnate it in the different cultural backgrounds in which our Congregation oper-

ates.

There is no cultural expression that exhausts the scope of our charism; it is only by living it faithfully that we can pass it on, not only in the places where we have been present with our apostolic activity for quite some time now, but also in the new lands of mission where we planted our tent a short time ago or in new regions where the Lord will tell us to go.

I wish that news of our meeting reach the whole Congregation: may each sister be spurred to venture in a journey of faith, of strong adhesion to Jesus Christ Crucified.

In this hour of grace we need to entrust ourselves to the Holy Spirit to renew our life and mission as regards formation; that is why we need to center on He who is everything and concentrate our attention on Him, Jesus, the first missionary of the Father.

Mary is always the companion of our journey, the sister who is close to us in each season of our life, the mother who helps us be faithful and find out the outlines of a future that cannot be seen yet, but that we would like to be luminous and rich in good fruits. We ask Her to help us be faithful to the Lord, to our charism and to today’s mankind.

We feel that our Founders and the sisters that have preceded us in formation are alive and present among us; may they watch over our work, so that it is fruitful and brings a renewed vitality for the entire Congregation and for the Church.

The coordination of this meeting was entrusted to the Vicar General Sr Cecilia. All the Councillors, even those who are not present here, are fully involved in this fundamental subject for the future of our Congregation.

THE DAY of the SUPERIOR GENERAL



"How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity".



The Day of the Superior general is a fraternity celebration. It is a joyous meeting of sisters around she who is a sign of unity and communion. What better setting this year to gather around Sr Emmapia than June 10, the solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the day on which we celebrate the Sacrament of Love in the unique Body (unico Corpo) of Christ? In addition, the presence in the General House of young sisters who have come from the various institutions for the "Quarter of formation to interculturality" confers to the celebration a particular note of universal fraternity. The focal point of the day was certainly the Eucharistic Celebration presided by Fr Francesco Bravi, Vicar General of the Order, and animated by songs in English, Spanish, French, tagallo. The Offertory procession offered a living image of the cultural diversity through dances, musics and costumes from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. As the fruits of the earth and of work gather in the single bread, so the different gifts offered by sisters from various nations gather in the single charism that gushed from the Heart of Christ and in the single mission: to bring mankind to the Heart of Christ and bring the Heart of Christ to every man. After lunch, which



was shared with many guests and with the sisters from various communities in the Roman Province, there was a very joyful moment of fraternity, enlivened by the spontaneous and feisty creativity of the young sisters, who made original performances, which were expressions of their cultural backgrounds. It is really a new ray of light that crosses our history and propagates to future generations: the rediscovery of the richness and beauty of the congregational charism, which makes one relish the joy of fraternal life expressed, like in the origins, in so many different cultures.



PERPETUAL CONSECRATION

of SR M. JOSIE E. ENAJE,
SR M. AMELA O. NOL,
SR. M. ZULMA AYMA QUISPE

28 July 2007 - General House -
ROME, ITALIA

*"...If a grain of wheat dies,
it produces much fruit" (G^a 12,24)*

Under the banner of this demanding evangelical message, in the Chapel of the General House there was the stirring celebration of the perpetual Profession of three young sisters, Sr Josie and Sr Amela, from the Philippines, who belong to the "Mary Immaculate" Roman Province and Sr Zulma Ayma, from Peru, belonging to the "Saint Anthony" Latin American Province. An extraordinary and feisty frame to

this happy event was provided by the group of young participants to the "Quarter of formation to interculturality", as well as by the numerous sisters from the Asisium community and the neighbouring communities. The celebration was animated by songs in many languages sung by our young sisters and it crowned, as a luminous sign of life and hope for the whole Congregation, the intense period dedicated to formation on the charism and spirituality of our religious Family. The celebrant, Fr Vittorio Bellé, in his homily, stressed the connexion between our charism, which is founded on the love for Jesus Crucified, and the death of the grain of wheat as a consequence of the total self-donation consummated in the definitive consecration to the Lord.

In the light of such a great gift from the Heavenly Father, a joyous thanks sprang from the heart of our sisters, which was expressed as follows: "First of all, we would like to thank the Lord for the gift of our life in this day in which we accomplish our perpetual alliance through our definitive consecration to the Lord who has called us.

We would like to thank our families and this religious Family who welcomes us today in the Church as FMSH. A sincere thanks to the priests that joined us in presenting our offer to the Good Lord. Thanks to our Superior General, Sr Emmapia Bottamedi, and to her Council. Thanks to the provincial Superiors and to their Councils. Thanks to Sr Chiaremilia and to the sisters of the Asisium community. Thanks to all the people who are here, friends and acquaintances, and also to all those who would





have liked to be here with us on such an important day, including our relatives. We have felt the communion, the prayer and the true affection of all the sisters, far and near... Thank you! We ask you to continuously support us with your prayer, so that we can live with generosity our consecrated life, which is a total gift to God in the Church and in the world, where the Lord sends us as missionaries of his merciful and redemptive love. May the Lord bless us and allow us, through the intercession of our founders, to be instruments of a new spring of the Gospel, in the footsteps of our Father St Francis. Thanks to all of you and let us always rejoice in the Lord!"

Sr Josie, Sr Amela e Sr Zulma





FROM THE HOUSE OF FORMATION

Interprovincial Novitiate Viola d'Assisi - ITALY

The canonical year ended at the interprovincial novitiate in Viola di Assisi. Federica will become part of the community of Duronia, in the province of Campobasso, Italy, where she will serve among the elders in “Villa Serena”. The novices Mara and Julia went back to their respective provinces, Veneto and France, for their apostolic experiences. Mara Lorenzano was assigned to the Salzano community, where she will serve in the apostolic activity, and Julia to the Provincial House in Le Mans. Let us accompany them with our prayer and all our affection.



COMMUNITY OF MANILA - PHILIPPINES VOCATIONAL ANIMATION



The evangelization of vocational discernment may count on convinced and enthusiast sisters here, in our Philippines. On June 3 the residential observation week ended, which is an important stage in the vocational path of the youth. In the picture: the Manila community with the youth during discernment. For the moment only one of them will enter as an aspirant in Calbayog: Angel, the first to the left. The youth and vocational pastoral activity is intensifying also in the other communities.

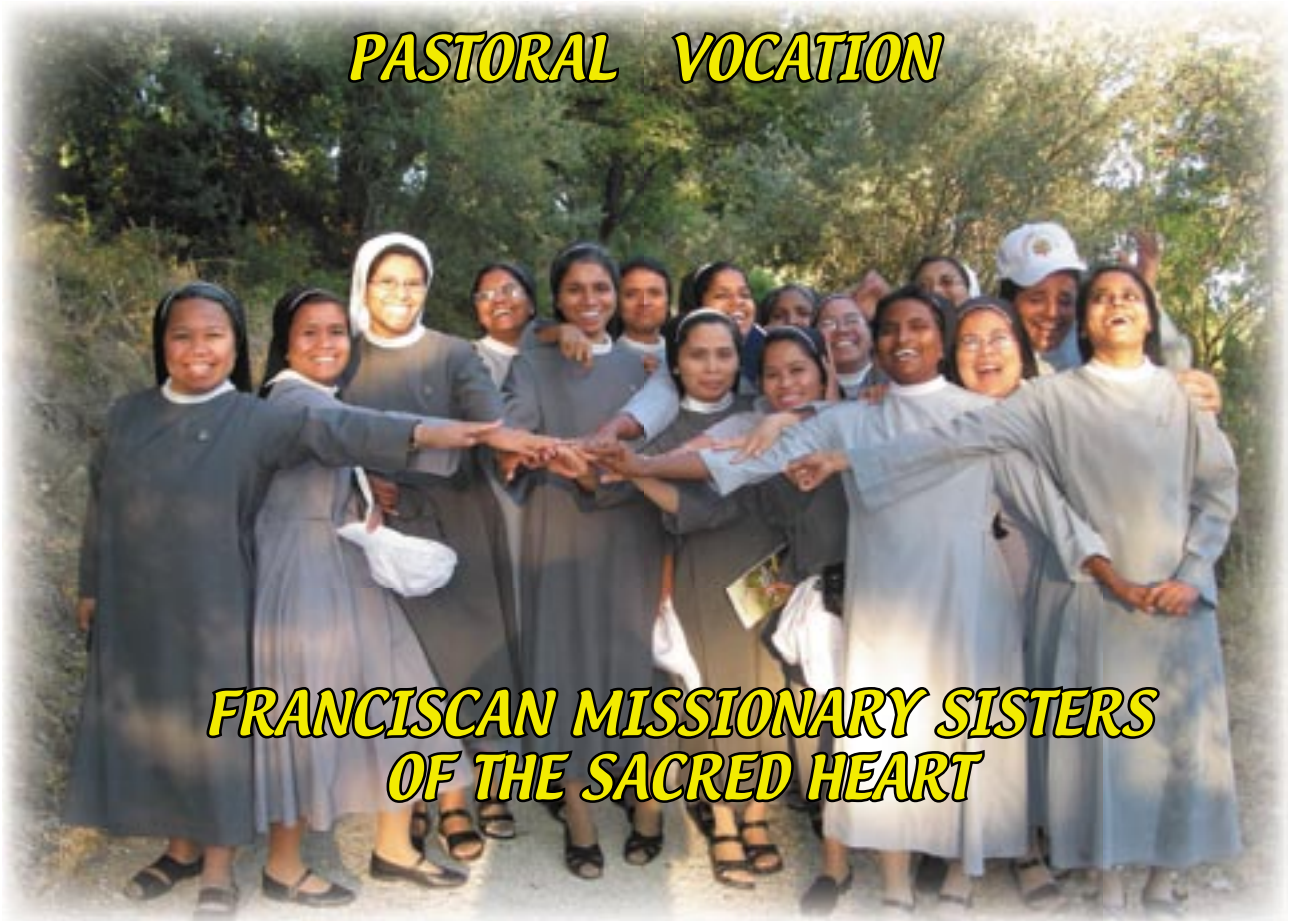
FROM THE MESSAGE OF BENEDICT XVI FOR THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATION

Lastly, we turn to Mary, who supported the first community where “all these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer” (Acts 1: 14), so that she may help the Church in today’s world to be an icon of the Trinity, an eloquent sign of divine love for all people. May the Virgin, who promptly answered the call of the Father saying, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord” (Lc 1: 38), intercede so that the Christian people will not lack servants of divine joy: priests who, in communion with their Bishops, announce the Gospel faithfully and celebrate the sacraments, take care of the people of God, and are ready to evangelize all humanity. May she ensure, also in our times, an increase in the number of consecrated persons, who go against the current, living the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, and give witness in a prophetic way to Christ and his liberating message of salvation. Dear brothers and sisters whom the Lord calls to particular vocations in the Church: I would like



to entrust you in a special way to Mary, so that she, who more than anyone else understood the meaning of the words of Jesus, “My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it” (Lk 8: 21), may teach you to listen to her divine Son. May she help you to say with your lives: “Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God” (cf. Heb 10: 7). With these wishes, I assure each one of you a special remembrance in prayer and from my heart I bless you all.

PASTORAL VOCATION



FRANCISCAN MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART

We would like to speak about the Pastoral Vocation this time, a topic very important for our Religious Family today even if this is not a meeting of the formators we believe that we all are called to collaborate in favour of the vocations drove out by the desire of carrying out, according to our charism and the plan of God.

Considering our vocation, we all have been called by the Lord : the dynamic faithfulness to this call cannot be limited only in the personal level, but must be an occasion of developing also for other vocations. The deep joy of one who found the hidden treasure (Mt. 13,44), one who feels to be called leads one to share his joy with everyone possible, through the explicit proclamation of the Gospel.

“Woe to me if I do

not proclaim the Gospel”, says St. Paul in (1Cor 9,16). One who received the good news of vocation can not do less of communicating it openly to others and to invite them explicitly and keep up in them the desire to follow Christ. It seems that be necessary to pass from a pastoral of waiting to a pastoral of proposal; from a pastoral of rearguards to a pastoral of vanguard.

The Lord never stops calling :This is our certainty which stays at the basis of our hope. At the same time He wants us to serve Him because his call resounds in our ears: this forces us to engage ourselves to invite others to follow him.

A vocation lived with joy is always an event, an enchanting story in which also the other persons participate. The vocation received with wonder and lived with enthusiasm, inevitably is transformed into an invitation: “Come and see”, (Jn 1,39)





To do the pastoral vocation, it is not enough to offer information and explanation: what needs is, above all to witness and to manifest “the beauty of total giving of oneself for the sake of the Gospel”.

Come and see: this is the golden rule which we have to take into consideration, is the best vocational propagation, the only result that we get from this long term and for which we must not lose our efforts.

A few criteria that can be considered in the pastoral vocation:

To promote the vocations we need to offer more opportunities to the youth by participating them somehow in our fraternal life

It is very important to work in harmony with the vocational centres in the unitary, national, regional or diocesan level.

It is underlined always with major intensity that the prayer and witness of our life are the indispensable requisite for an efficacious proposal for vocation

Even if the spiritual means are the primary importance, human means cannot be forgotten which very often become precious occasions at the service of the supreme call of the Lord.

The vocational animation needs a continuity and not occasional or improvisation (sudden) Together with the proclamation or suggestion it is necessary for a long time adequate accompaniment for the personal development.

Vocational animation is a major duty of all and also to each one of us because every Christian,

above all we consecrated we are the bearers of a message for the nature of her vocation. No one can neglect or appoint the others your fundamental duty.

To continue always in the revision of ones own life and of the community be always in the most coherent to the fundamental choices: human, Christian and Franciscan.

It remains always valid to direct the community to the vocational reception of the youngsters or youth groups.

It is advisable to have the vocational animators to continue the duty to stir up, to coordinate and to accompany the initiative of the sisters who work in the parishes or schools so that to be

aware of the vocational problems and to hear it really

And also there are many sisters who, when it is spoken of vocations, think that it is a problem that regards only to the in charged. It is necessary to pass from a mentality of the appointed to a mentality of the duty of all.

It is not sufficient to have a kind of emotional worry. It is necessary an explicit engagement of all in the operative level. It is not sufficient that all speak and worry about the scarcity of vocations; it is necessary that each one takes the proper responsibility to promote and support new vocations.



From our missionary world



*Province "S. Mary
of the Angels"*

Celebration of the centennial of the Sacred Heart Boarding School in Udine 15 June 2007 Solemnity of the Sacred Heart

More than 200 people were gathered at Udine on Friday, June 15, to celebrate 100 years from the foundation of S. Heart boarding house. During the solemn celebration of Eucharist, highest moment of the feast, animated by the residing young ladies. The celebrant, msgr. Alfredo Battisti, emeritus Achbishop of Udine, with emotion recalled the delicate phase of life after the hearth quake till the beginning of the new service of welcoming young ladies studying at the University. He thanked a lot our Congregation for the availability in answering to any requests to the pastoral needs of the local church. Sr. Emmapia Bottamedi, superior general, addressing to authorities, sisters, the boarders of today and yesterday, welcomed in the house, Traced the meaning and value of the presence of the sisters in such a service, so useful for youth formation.

"We have gathered here in this solemnity to give thanks to the Lord for the 100 years of the boarding school dedicated to the Sacred Heart. We are here to celebrate his love, to renew the homage that, one hundred years ago, the General Superior Sr Assunta Ménard offered Him by dedicating our first work in Italy to the Heart of Jesus. Indeed, this institution was really born as "Sacred Heart Boarding School". It could not be otherwise, because the devotion to the Sacred Heart had already spread all around the world, especially under the influence of Pope Leone XIII who, some years before, at the opening of the 1900 Anno Santo, had promulgated the encyclical "Annum Sacrum", through which he consecrated the whole world and the universe to the Sacred Heart. Therefore, back in 1907, it was to the Sacred Heart that this work was entrusted, which was destined to welcome and educate young girls from villages that were far away

from secondary schools and who needed hospitality to be able to go on with their studies.

In the course of these 100 years, society and culture have enormously evolved and so the Sacred Heart Boarding School to has undergone a subsequent transformation. The building itself, due to the destructions caused by the world wars, had been redone several times; however, the present arrangement was deter-



mined after the terrible 1976 earthquake that had made it totally unfit for use. The total renovation transformed it in a much more comfortable place, suited to welcome University students in a formative environment.

Those who ask to be part of this youth community today do not look only for a place where to sleep and study, but their presence is active and responsible.

At the Sacred Heart Boarding Schools, the youth coming from Friuli and other regions grow a relational dimension, characterized by niceness, welcome and sharing and are accompanied along a spiritual path of faith.

The whole environment, and especially the artistic chapel, helps assimilate a Biblical and Franciscan message which favours a atmosphere of quiet and relief for the mind and the soul.

Even the beautiful mosaic of the Sacred Heart that welcomes us as soon as we get in expresses the unmistakable invitation of his Heart to have faith and trust in his continuous help.

The sisters of this community walk with dedication beside the youth, trying to share their joys and hopes, their worries and anxieties, always ready to stimulate or reactivate faith and optimism even in the face of

the small or great defeats that university life has in store. Their main objective is to convey to the youth the love for life and make it grow, as well as the ability to be themselves without fear of going against the mainstream.

Every single person who has lived in the “Sacred Heart Boarding School” has certainly something meaningful to remember today; people’s faces or particular moments in life which, right in this circumstance, come back to mind with an increased emotion and that they might like to share”.

Remember moments of one’s life in a certain environment, is cause of a thanksgiving song to the Lord first of all. Sr Emmapia ended up : “a thanksgiving song sprouts out even by bounding together remembrances, by revisiting the mysterious signs of Divine Providence, that always goes before us and accompany us “At the end she wished that every person may draw “living water from the springs of the Lord’s love and she may discern that He, his Sacred Heart is the only source of life, to get from Him the balm for their souls, serenity an harmony for their families and for the future.

***I will exalt the Lord at all times
for the 65th, 60th and 50th
years of religious life***



This year the jubilee celebration was held in an atmosphere of particular joy, thanks also to the participation of young sisters coming from the various institutions of the Congregation, who were staying in the Mother House to live a strong family experience, right where the FMSH charism has stemmed.

The jubilee celebration was preceded by a pilgrimage to the Marian sanctuary of Castelmonte, where the Eucharist was celebrated by Fr Silvano Moro OFMcapp and solemnly animated by the young sisters.

In this way, the jubilee sisters were able to raise to the Lord their “thanks” of blessing and praise, recollecting 50, 60 or 65 years of religious profession and extolling God’s faithfulness in the history of their vocation and in the years of their life.

We wish our sisters that they fully live this beatitude by allowing themselves to be totally involved by Christ, by his conjugal Presence, which draws to the open Heart of the Cross, to that source of life where it is possible to experience the mutual belonging in love.

From our missionary world



Province "St. Elizabeth"

"let us open our heart to Jesus"

Youth Retrent Rakovski -Gitnitza - BULGARIA

The sisters of two communities, Rakovski e Gitnitza, held three days of spiritual retreat for the youth in the Rakovski House, from 1 to 3 April 2007.

The programme was full of prayers and reflections. Father Dimitar Dimitrov, who guided the retreat as a Good Shepherd, spoke about original sin and the mysteries of our redemption. Those were very special days.

We quote a brief testimony by one of the girls who had that beautiful experience with our sisters. Her name is Nadia Jokova, from Gitnitza:



"During the retreat I found out what it means to be a Christian (...). We must become witnesses of God's love, we must make many other youth understand that Jesus loves all of us. Jesus loves everybody in a special way, we must feel in our heart where lies the true source of the love that Jesus has for each one of us.

(...) I have chosen the motto for my life: "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you". I think that the good you do is given back to you, but very few are those among the youth who realize it. I have also understood another great truth, that Jesus is my true friend and I can tell him everything without fearing of being betrayed. He is always close to us, He holds our hand and leads us on the path of truth, justice and love (...).

These words help us realize how much our youth are in need of a word that helps them journey through life.

“Let us draw with joy to the sources of salvation” The Franciscan Third Orden - Gitnitza - BULGARIA

After the Holy Mass celebrated on 13 March 2007, the Franciscan Third Order for laypeople had a meeting in our Gitnitza Parish. There are about forty adult and elderly women who follow St Francis with enthusiasm. We, as Franciscan sisters, wanted to show them, through the overhead projector, the meaning of the Holy Mass in order to help them approach this Mystery even closer. We wanted to explain to them the correct way to perform each Eucharistic Sign and enlighten traditions by giving an increased meaning to the sign and symbols that the Church offers us. It was really interesting to read on their faces a true interest for the explanations and the desire to live this Mystery more intensely.



“An unusual first communion”

JUNE 2007-LIBANO



Thursday 1 June 2007 was the day before First Communion for the children of our school. Everything was ready and, in their innocence, our children were happy and anxious. Only a few thought about the explosions that, only a few miles away from our village, sent dozens of soldiers to the hospital and many souls to eternal rest. Here was the first phone call: “Sisters, my husband was called into battle and will not be able to participate to the funzione with our daughter...”; “Sisters,

the roads are closed and my husband cannot pass...”; “Sisters...”; “Sisters...” What could we do?

Everything was ready, we could not change anything. “Up to work, children, we must pray, let us kneel down and ask God for just a couple of hours’ truce”.

Saturday came. It was three o’clock p.m. The children gathered to dress up. Some were missing... their daddies had not arrived yet. And then there was the miracle!!!

Thirty minutes before the celebration began, everything changed! They were all here, the daddies were all here. The children cried, and so did the mommies and the sisters. They had not been able to change their soldier uniforms, but they had come. They confessed, they went into the church and they took part in the Mass for their children’s communion.

“The lord is good and great in love”

Jubilarians - Limassol - CIPRO

On 07 July 2007 in St Catherine Parish in Limassol took place the solemn Jubilee celebration for 5 of our sisters: Sr Lorenza Girotto, Sr Veronica Hadjijiseph, Sr Patrick Frantjia, Sr Josephine Vrahimi and Sr Radia Matar.

The Holy Mass was presided by the Patriarchal Vicar in Jerusalem, Rev Father Umberto Barato, with 19 other priests from the Diocese, of Latin and Maronite rite, together with the Parish priest.

The Church was full of relatives, friends and acquaintances, who had come from the different parts of the island and also from

abroad, both Catholic and Orthodox, and they attended the Liturgy with devotion.

After the reading of the Gospel, our five Jubilee sisters, carrying lit lamps, to the sound of the organ, renewed with joy and emotion the Holy Vows, asking the Lord for the grace to be faithful until the final encounter.



“Oh Lord, please save Lebanon”



The school year was coming to an end without any trouble. A last effort and the syllabus would have been happily completed.

It was May, Mary’s month, the month that Lebanese people prefer, the month of Rosary, of pilgrimages, of Our Lady’s solemn feasts, of Our Lady of Lebanon, of first communions. All the parishes had set the date for this event and tried to outdo one another in its preparation.

So, on 19 May, we all left for Adlabet, our parish priest’s village, to attend the First Communion of his daughter Mary (Maronite priests can marry). What a beautiful celebration! Everything spoke of innocence and joy. No one, at that moment, could ever imagine that, some kilometers away, terrorists had started their work of destruction in Lebanon too.

A massacre that would upset Lebanon once more.

This time, however, the target was not the South but the North, our region. It was no longer Israel that fired, but the terrorists and this is enough to explain all we had to face and still have to. It was a totally unexpected war. It would be all over in three days..., but months go by and still there is no end in sight. The Way of the Cross of schools started. Catholic schools were especially threatened. They spoke about explo-

sions, kidnappings, cold-blooded killings. Fear increased when the person responsible for Catholic schools warned us that each school had to fend for itself.

And yet we had to complete our syllabus. We could not make our pupils waste a year of efforts. With many guards all around the school, with a lot of prayer at the feet of our heavenly Mother, we managed to make examinations and hand out school reports.

It is impossible to describe all we suffered in those days. We feel the need to thank our Superiors and the sisters who encouraged us to go on, to finish school and then leave for Cyprus. Prayer sustained us, gave us the strength to do our duty, to stay with our children who had been so faithful, so calm, so hard-working until the last minute. And the Lord rewarded them. Almost all of them have passed.

Our greatest comfort were the State examination results for our intermediate school pupils: 18 candidates, 18 passed, 5 of whom with honours. We must thank the Lord who helped us because it is the first time that our children have all passed at the first attempt. We wish them best and we thank you immensely for your fraternity and

interest in this nation that has been so tried.



From our missionary world



Province "St Louis IX"

"An Unusual trip"

Paris - France



In the middle of the canonical visit of our Superior General Sr Emmapia Bottamedi (13 March – 10 April), our Provincial Superior, Elisabeth Varikkakuzhyil, had the good idea to make a surprise for us: a trip.

Date: 19 March: feast of St. Joseph;

Destination: Nevers, to the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity, where St. Bernardette SOUBIROUS began her novitiate and then remained until her death

The group, made up of 14 sisters, left at about

half past six a.m. after having a good breakfast, which was prepared with so much care and love by Sr Catherine.

After leaving Paris with all its chattering, here we were in the suburbs, where a wonderful nature appeared in front of us. It must be said that the weather is quite unusual this year: we have been enjoying an early spring for at least a month! The clothes worn by the landscape that we were gradually discovering were increasingly coloured and already shining under the sun that bathed the

sky!

What better way to bless the Lord for what we were already experiencing than the Song of Praise? Now we had well realized why St. Francis composed the Chant of Creatures, he who lived a great part of his life in the middle of nature!!! We too could not stop looking around us not to “miss” so much beauty. And, meanwhile, our cars sped up...

At a certain point, we felt the need to make a stop and, thanks to the cell phones, we agreed to stop at the next service area... It seems that the sky wanted to surprise us: as we got out, some snowflakes started falling and we hastened to take cover, naturally surprised by the change of weather. Once we resumed our trip, it seemed that even the sky regained its blue colour and the glittering sun made it golden at times. However, the nearer we got to Nevers, the more the sky darkened and... it started pouring with rain, then the sun appeared again, then all of a sudden greyness and... a lot of hail, so much so that the landscape looked like it was covered in snow! Luckily, this lasted a short time and for a short stretch of the road, then it was sunny again, with all the beautiful colours that the season is giving us.

Wonderful!!! Accompanied by some rays of sun, big snow flakes started dotting the landscape. Was it a little “surprised and frightened” by the consequences that this strong weather change would leave behind?... In fact, in Nevers there were already some inches of snow, which kept falling thickly. When we got out of the cars, we could see Sr Ines Portugal, who had recently arrived from Bolivia, all amazed and looking all around, wondering what was that phenomenon that she had never seen before!!! We certainly had not thought that it looked extraordinary to her, but we understood her wish to take a photograph of herself in

the middle of multicoloured flowers which were being covered in white by “something” new! She had to take a photograph of every corner, so that she would be able to show it to her relatives and friends who, like her, had never seen and maybe would never see such a snowfall over their landscapes.

A nun was waiting for us; she welcomed us with so much kindness and, in order to get us acquainted with Bernadette, she immediately accompanied us in the Capitular Hall, the place where she was welcomed by the Superior General and by the Nuns that were there (about 300 of them!!!) to be received into the Congregation.

With great veneration, devotion and realism, she told us about the feelings that Bernadette had certainly experienced as she left for the first time and for ever her family that she loved so much and as she came in front of that multitude of nuns to recount, “for the first and last time” (as was the categorical request from her Superior General), the experience she had had at the Cave of Massabielle. Then, the nun showed us into the room where the Saint finished her days here on Earth. The way with which she narrated her last gestures, will and prayers was dense of spiritual meaning and enabled us to experience deep emotions and feelings, each according to her own sensitivity. After some time dedicated to silent meditation, she led us into the chapel where St. Bernadette’s embalmed body lies and where, for a couple of minutes, we had the grace to attend the celebration of the Holy Mass with a group of French pilgrims.

We spent the rest of the day convivially and fraternally. During the return trip, the weather was peaceful and we were full of joy for sharing the meaningful moments that we had lived

A daytripper



From our missionary world



Province "Mary Immaculate"

"50° years to the service of the kingdom"

25 MARCH BORGIO GRAPPA - ITALY

On Sunday 25 March, in Borgo Grappa, Italy, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the nursery school and the 75th anniversary of the Parish. The solemn and well-prepared ceremony was attended by many parishioners, who expressed their gratitude to the congregation, which was represented by:

Sr. Ermenegilda Cavasin, Provincial Superior, and by the General Councillors: Sr. Cecilia Subiabre, Sr. Paola Dotto and Sr. Germana Tomat as well as the Provincial Councillors: Sr. Marta Camerotto and Sr. Rosaria Iacobucci.

(from the Diocesan bulletin)

From the words addressed by Sr. Ermenegilda, Provincial Superior, to the participants to the celebration:

"I take the floor on this occasion that is so meaningful to us who are here, with simplicity, but also with deep gratitude, in order to point out the blessing presence of God, who performs all good, in our celebration: indeed, it is He who makes us capable of expressing gratitude and joy for what has been implemented for 50 years of history that has been written, in this Parish, also by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

We all know that every achievement is the fruit of intelligence, commitment, cooperation with parish priests and civilian authorities, labour and sacrifices from all, but in our case, I would add the generous contribution of our nuns, whom you



are kindly celebrating.

All around the world, ours is an unobtrusive and ordinary history, written by simple people, but it is a history that has a meaning within the plan of salvation of the Providence, since it is a history of the Church, a history of the Redemptive Love of Christ Crucified.

That is why I am grateful to the persons who are

here today, as a token of their esteem, recognizing that we are a "Church that works for the Kingdom of God".

My thanks goes first of all to the Bishop of the Diocese Msgr Giuseppe Petracchi: to him who, in the wake of his predecessors, represents the unity in the Church, as well as to the clergy and the authorities of the Diocese we would like to express our Franciscan devotion.

Thanks to all the authorities: first of all to the Mayor, Mr Vincenzo Zaccheo, for his contribution and his actual participation to our proposals.

However, my most heartfelt thanks goes to the Parish priest, Don Massimiliano Di Pastina: his support and his helpfulness have enabled us to offer an effective and active cooperation in agreement with our Congregational charism.

And thanks to you all, who have gathered here and displayed, with your participation, the feelings of affection and gratitude of our big parish family.

In this village, our history started in 1957 and it is a history that, although limited, has shown dynamism and vitality. The sisters, supported by their love for Christ and spurred by the only desire to help people realize themselves, have used all their energies, with enthusiasm and generosity.

The parish pastoral in its entirety, including the activity of the nursing school, is the real space in which a meaningful aspect of our missionary



charism appears. It is the place where we can walk both with youth and adults, to blaze together trails of hope, faith, mutual trust and participation, while events unfold.

The sisters who stayed here felt at home among you; each one of them was able to take part in the cultural, social and economic life; each one of them could rejoice and cry with you, as well as help with the formation and the human and Christian progress of the community; each one of them could grow with you.

Many of them still talk about this with gratitude. It is nice to sense that the sisters have measured their progress on the rhythm of your daily lives, wishing only to walk by your side in the stretch of path that they were assigned, to share sacrifices and renew hopes, to start again new projects even in the face of difficulties, suffering, sacrifices and family tragedies of every kind.

Our satisfaction and the importance of celebrating 50 years of presence among you are really inexpressible!

Allow me to remind also the religious vocations that Borgo Grappa offered the Congregation. I wish that other young girls feel in their heart the call from Jesus, who spurs them to a generous answer on the roads of mission. The Church still needs youth that are open to the gratuitousness of service and willing to welcome into their lives



Pace e Bene

the dream of God for humanity.

Let me conclude by thanking the Parish in general: my sincere thanks to the whole population for allowing us to express, at any time, the charism of our religious family, welcoming it in its evolution and supporting it in its search for an ecclesial expression.

With all my heart, thanks also on behalf of the Superior General and her Council. Thanks from all the FMSH sisters and from me.

*Sr Ermenegilda Cavasin
Provincial Superior - Rome*



“Spring Marathon”

6 MAY - MARY IMMACULATE ISTITUTE - ROME ITALY

The “Mary Immaculate” Institute in Centocelle, Italy, took part, like every year, to the Spring Marathon which has been held since 1981. Much merriment and liveliness... and a plaque as a prize and memento.

The first engagement for the marathon runners was a meeting, which has taken place every year since 1986, with the POPE, in front of whom two thousand boys and girls from primary and secondary schools created a spectacular effect in the world unique backdrop of St.

Peter’s Square, in the presence of the civilian and religious authorities.

In the framework of this nice event, all the members of the educational community and the Catholic School organizations are invited. Even many sport groups and students of State schools join in. An average of over 80,000 participants have run each year 5 km through the historic center of Rome on foot, on rollers and by bicycle.

The families, youngsters and athletes that compete are witnesses to the educational values of fraternity, solidarity and joy, which are the unrenounceable foundations of a more just and peaceful society.



“Meeting with the Minister General ofm”

1-5 JUNE - MANILA - PHILIPPINES



The General Minister of the Minors Fr José Rodriquez C. went to visit the Philippines from 1 to 5 June for the building of the New Custody of St. Anthony of Padua. On this occasion, he wanted to meet all the Franciscan congregations.

After a brief reflection in preparation for the centennial of the Founding of the Order, he gave space to individual statements and to moments of sharing.

When he recognized

our sisters, he came near with naturalness and expressed his gratitude and esteem for our religious Family. He enquired about our activities in the Philippines and with a paternal and deeply felt attitude he urged us not to take any culture to extremes in order to be true Franciscan and true missionaries: “We belong to God and to the Church much more than to any specific culture”, he stated.

The Franciscan spirit with which he shared this reflection made the moment really precious and we took it as a gift from the Lord.

“Come and See”

14TH-15TH JULY - PHILIPPINES

On the island of Sa-mar, in St. Margarita and in Catbalogan, on July 14 and 15 two vocational days were organized and the theme was: “Discovering my vocation”. The animators were Sr. Tiziana and Sr. Marilyn and the novices were Marisol, Edita and Maita.

“At the first meeting we were waited with interest by 4 young girls: ours was the task to cultivate their desire.

In Catbalogan we found 21 youth, aged 20 to 29, who were waiting for us, thanks to the parish priest’s support.

The meeting was lively, profound and demanding. The atmosphere of mutual welcome and simplicity favoured the sharing, questions and sincerity in expressing doubts and difficulties.

There was a lot of interest for the presentation of our congregation.

We entrust the youth that we met to the action of the Holy Spirit, so that those who are called may have the strength and generosity to answer with joy”.

From our missionary world



Province "Saint Anthony"

PERPETUAL CONSECRATION

*of SR MARTINA ORELLANA
OF JESUS CRUCIFIED*

13 May 2007 - QUITO - ECUADOR

*"... My soul sings the greatness
of the Lord"*



In "Our Lady of Mercy" Parish in Quito, Ecuador, was celebrated the solemn Eucharist of perpetual Vows of Sr Martina, presided by Father Walter Heras, OFM Provincial Minister, at the presence of our Provincial Superior, Sr Inés Pavan, and of the sisters of the Guayaquil and Quito communities, as well as of other guests. Divine Providence could not think of a better date for such an important celebration, the day on which the Church remembers the apparition of Our Lady of Fatima, a Marian devotion that urges us to meditate on the mystery of God's Love, who keeps humbling himself and making communion with mankind.

Sister Martina, by the generous and definitive donation of her own life in our Religious family, expressed her thanks for the joy of being called by the Lord in order to be able, with benevolence and minority, to announce the Kingdom of God with the language of communion, which unites life and service as a Franciscan Missionary Sister of the Sacred Heart.

Sister Martina Orellana

PERPETUAL CONSECRATION

of SR LUZ MARINA VELÁSQUEZ

of the Emmanuel

SR ISAURA GUERRA

of the Merciful Love

9 junio 2007 - CUSCO - PERÚ



"We contemplated o, God the wonders of your love"."

The "Our Lady of Mount Carmel" Parish of Cuzco, Peru, rejoices again for being able to participate one more time to such an important ceremony as the perpetual Profession of two sisters who have started their vocational path right here.

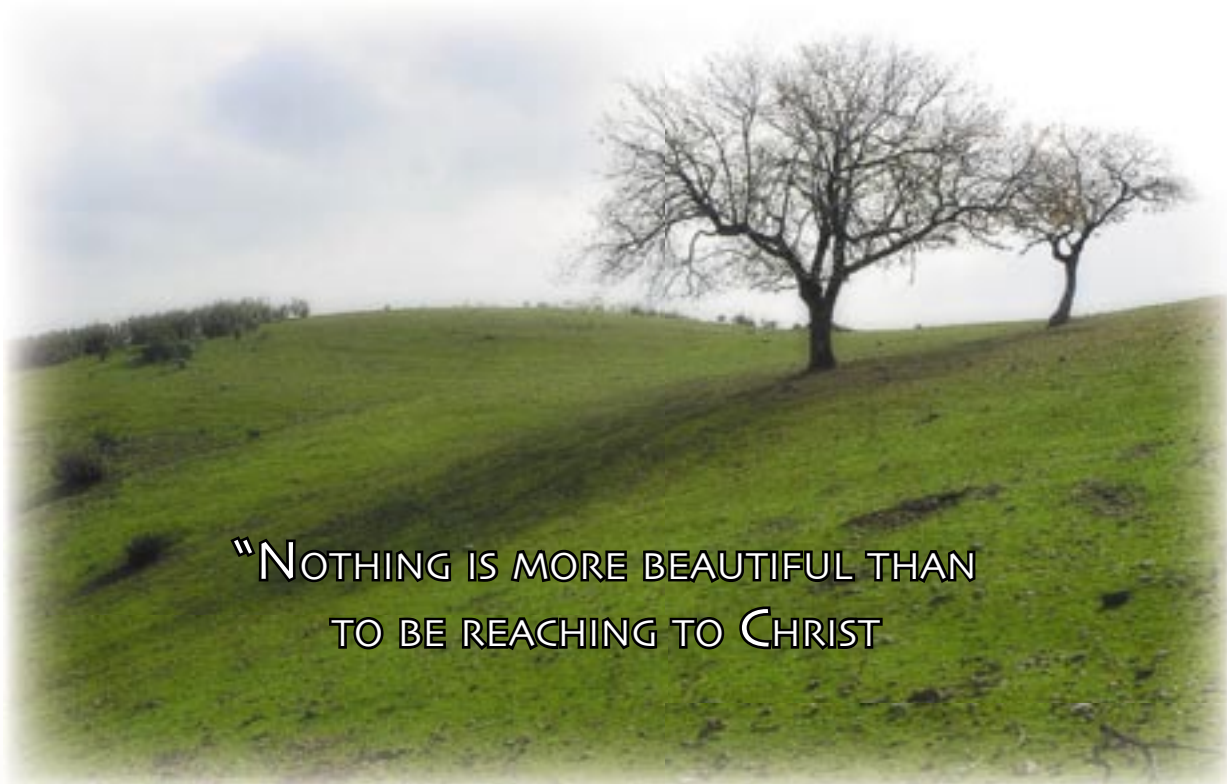
The solemn Eucharist was presided by Msgr Juan Antonio Ugarte Pérez, the Archbishop of Cuzco, together with other concelebrants, at the presence of Sr Inés Pavan, the Provincial Superior of the Latin American Province, as well as of the sisters of other neighbouring communities and the relatives and the faithful of the Parish.

The Holy Eucharist was lived very intensely. Everything called us to thank and praise God the Father: the Parish priest's welcome, the spirit of prayer and devotion with which we lived the Eucharist and the participation of all the faithful, the solemnity of the chants... we thanked God the Father for the gift of vocation, which urges one to donate oneself generously to Obedience, Poverty and Chastity.

Sr Luz Marina and Sr Isaura thank with affection and true merriment: "Gratitude is the feeling that gushes from our heart and that we would like to share with everyone. We ask God for the grace of being faithful, so that we are able to go on walking and answering like true Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart and all this for the greater glory of God".



*Sister Luz Marina of
Sister Isaura*



“NOTHING IS MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN
TO BE REACHING TO CHRIST



SR MARY RUPERT RAFFERTY
Agnes Rafferty
Born at Paterson N.Y (USA),
25.01.1917
Died at Peekskill (USA) ,
19.02.2007

Sister Mary Rupen , flee Agnes Rafferty was the second of eleven children born to Elizabeth and William Rafferty where she grew up in a faith-filled environment. In her early years she attended St Agnes 's Elementary School where she was taught

by the Sisters of Charity and then went to St. Bonaventure's High School graduating it 1935. While at St. Bonaventure's she was active in intramural sports, was manager of the girls varsity team was an ardent fan for her team and was voted as having the most school spirit. She was an associate editor, historian and typist of the first Yearbook to be published at St Bonaventure's, After graduation from St. Bonaventure's she remained at home for a year to help with her younger siblings before entering
She always remained close to her family and enjoyed her visits to Maryland with them and attending her grand nephews' little league and football games.

Sister spent many years in the classroom in both New York and New Jersey. her last teaching assignment being in I Icily Angels in Little Falls. NJ. After

her "teaching career" she was assigned as a staff member in St. Anthony's in the Bronx. And then. even though she was over 80 she continued to minister as a staff member at Mt. St. Francis until failing health forced her to retire from her many years in serving the lord wherever she was needed.

Sr. Mary Rupert enjoyed driving_ was an avid reader and truly enjoyed watching game shows on T.V.

She is survived by three brothers. Peter. William and Thomas and three sisters Elizabeth Shutt. Helen Wright and Patricia O'Dell as well as several nieces, nephews. grand nieces and grand nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial on Friday, February 23 was offered by Father Charles Reinhold and she was laid to rest in the Mt. St. Francis cemetery

MAY SHE REST IN PEACE



SR ANNAROSA MATTIUSSI
of the Heart of Jesus
Lucia Mattiussi
Born at Artegna (Ud),
11.11.1912
Born at Gemona,
25.03.2007

The Gospel of 25 March, Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, introduces us fully into the contemplation of the Mystery of the call-consecration.

Like Mary who, at the annunciation of the Angel, although she was amazed, answered her total and faithful "Fiat", so Sr Annarosa Mattiussi adhered to the project that God had for her, by consecrating herself to Him in religious life.

She was born in Artegna, near Gemona, to dad Francesco and mom Aurora Maria Madussi. Lucia Mattiussi (Sr Annarosa) grew up with her sister Annarita and her brothers Aldo and Enrico and was raised according to the Christian principles, based on a profound and strong faith. The spiritual wealth that she drew from her family soon led her to nurture the desire to consecrate her whole life to the Lord. Her brother Aldo, who entered the Congregation of Stigmatine Fathers, preceded and sustained her in the sequel of Christ.

When she was 22, Lucia too

knocked at the door of the "St Mary of the Angels" convent, resolute to donate herself to God and to the service of her brothers, anywhere the Lord would like to, since she had matured her missionary vocation from her mother, like she said herself: "In the long winter evenings, mommy, after supervising our school homework, gathered us around the table in the warm kitchen and read us the life of the missionaries in Africa from the magazine "La Nigrizia"(The Negritude). She recommended us lovingly and spurred us to follow with our prayers the hard and sacrificed life of those first good pioneers that brought to Africa the faith in Christ. Those were wonderful evenings for me and my brother, who was dreaming of going to mission in China. Surely mommy had a special feeling for missions, and she animated us in prayer, in the love for sacrifice and the Eucharist".

Indeed, soon after her religious



profession, Sr Annarosa was sent as a teacher to Rhodes, where she stayed for about two years to help the children of Italian soldiers and those who needed it. In 1950 she was called back to Italy, in the General House in Pitagora Square (Rome), where she continued teaching to the young girls that were entrusted to her.

However, after a few years, Sr Annarosa was again destined by obedience overseas, that is in Chile. That mission had been opened for only three years and therefore, as soon as she arrived, Sr Annarosa immediately became part of the environment by offering her best energies where they were most needed. An extraordinary woman, Sr Annarosa was able to be close to everyone, to give her contribution in all situations: she cooperated a lot with the Bishop in order to alleviate many cases of poverty and furnish the Seminary that had been rebuilt after the earthquake; she enlivened liturgical celebrations by playing the organ in the cathedral and, as a true Franciscan, she lovingly took care of sacred things.

She lived her fraternity life with love and gratitude and with a heart that was always open to hope, as she desired to sow true peace and good among her sisters and all the people that she met and approached in the 36 years that she stayed in Latin America, until her health conditions brought her back to Gemona, in the Mother House, in order to start, according to her words, "to walk my last stage, waiting for the Lord to come and take me into a new abode, but the important thing is... to

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be ready!”

It is with this spirit that Sr Annarosa lived her last few years, in a continuous attitude of silent prayer and open gratitude to God and everybody, which she expressed quite clearly until sister death united her “Fiat” to the one uttered by the Virgin Annunciated and handed to God for ever.

THANKS, LORD!

Thanks, Lord for the gift of vocation Thanks for the Christian family that you gave me, For the missionary help that I received from my parents.Thanks for the long years of missionary life that you gave me as a present.I gave you, Lord, everything that I could...Maybe I could have given more I entrust to you, Lord, my relatives And all the people that I met in the course of my life:I remember you all thankfully in my prayers Thanks to the Superiors and Sisters who gave me so much fraternal charity. To my relatives I owe everlasting gratitude, For, even in the distance, They have been always near to me. I shall remember them all in my prayers.
Thanks!



SR MARIA HILARY SCOTT
Anna Scott
Born at New York - USA,
24.10.1927
Died at Peekskill -USA,
30.03.2007

Born: October 24, 1927 Entered: September 8, 1946 Received: July 7, 1947 Professed: July 8, 1948 Final Profession: July 8, 1953 Died: March 30, 2007

Born Anna Mae Scott on October 24, 1927 she was the last of the nine children of George and Mary Scott. Her brother, George known to everyone as Father Hilary was a very special person in her life and she always talked about him with such love and pride. Sister was reared in a loving, Christian environment filled with a deep faith in God and Christian values. She learned from an early age that God is the center of a family.

As a young girl Anna Mae knew that “secular” life was not for her. Undoubtedly, her brother George, Father Hilary exhibited tremendous qualities that she admired - compassion, dependability, responsibility, cooperation, peace and the Franciscan spirit of joy and simplicity. So she followed in her brother’s footsteps to become a Franciscan and she also possessed these beautiful qualities and

attributes. She was gentle and always seemed to have a calming effect on those around her. Her classroom was a place of peacefulness and love as well as learning.

Sister Hilary was familiar with the Franciscan Sisters since she attended St. Joseph of the Palisades School directly across the street from where she lived (though she was frequently dashing after the bell rang for classes). She was inspired by their life style and kindness and followed their example.

Sister entered the community at a very young age, so anxious was she to become a religious. After professing vows Sr. Hilary was assigned as a groupmother to the baby girls in St. Joseph’s Home. Not even five feet tall (or shall we say small) herself, she was a good match for these little ones. And, oh, how kind, loving and gentle she was! And that is how she remained all through life - kind, loving and gentle.

Though she taught in various schools in New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia her “claim to fame” were the many years she spent in Hastings and Irvington as an excellent and proficient Montessori instructor. For 23 years she was involved in this program and truly excelled. The last ten years of her teaching career in St. Joseph’s, West New York, NJ were rewarding and truly successful. However, no matter where she served she made a strong and lasting impact on all - young and old.

When almost four years ago she retired from the classroom, and undertook a different career, she still endeared herself to all those with whom she came in contact.



SR MARIA SUJATHA MANDA
of Child Jesus
Born at Paidurupadu - India,
04.06.1985
Died at Vijayawada - India,
01.04.2007

“Death is not extinguishing the light It is only putting out the Lamp Because the Dawn has Come”

(Ravinra Nath Tagore)

Praised be you, my Lord, through our Sister bodily death, from whom no living can escape. (Cant, of the Creatures)

Dear Sisters,

In the spirit of our father Francis, once again let us praise the Lord, for the untimely, unexpected touch of Sister death to our Province. This time sister death embraced the most tender, the most fresh bud of our garden. Our human nature, which has not yet reached the spiritual maturity of St. Francis, shocked and puzzled, raises so many ‘why’ questions to the Lord: why Lord in such a tender, budding age? Why it could not happen in other way?

The Holy week started in this mood certainly might have given an answer to our many why questions, while looking at the one who was crucified for the sake of loving us personally unconditionally. He was dead

to be resurrected. He was dead to come into a new glorious life. Death is not an end in itself, rather it is a passage to a new life. “it is in dying that we are born to eternal life”

A little grain of wheat is once again fallen down to produce abundant fruits to our religious family, to the church. Yes, we firmly believe, Sr. Sujatha., the first grain from this soil, fallen will certainly produce a hundred fold fruits in the rich soil of Andhra Pradesh,

Sr. Mary Sujatha Manda, the only daughter of Mr. Charles and Mrs. Saramma was born on 4-6-1985 at Paidurupadu in Guntupally Parish, in the diocese of Vayawada, Andhra Pradesh, Brought up in the true Christian spirit, Sujatha fulfilled her great desire to be a religious by joining in the Franciscan Missionary sisters of the Sacred Heart, She made her first commitment on 6th September 2006. Soon after the profession she was sent to Holy Family community, Machilipatnam and assigned as the Asst. warden of Savio Hostel. Her simplicity and generosity captured the hearts of all who have acquainted with her in this short period of her life and service. Serious reasons are not required when it is our time destined to leave. Falling ill for a few days she passed away quietly on April V 2007. When all over the world, people sang ‘Hosanna’ to the King, she joined the choirs of angels and saints to sing eternal hosanna to her heavenly King.

Let us look at every event with the eyes of faith as every event brings us something new to

perceive and to grow further, personally and in community. The short but intensive suffering of our little sister Sujatha, along with the silent but piercing sorrow of her parents and ours, the heart rending pleas to the Heavenly Father for His compassionate healing touch, certainly will not remain unproductive. It will surely turn up on us in the form of blessings and graces. The deep conviction of our faith answers us that, our loving Father turns every thing good for the ones whom he loves, so let's submit our questioning hearts to His Holy will.

Sr. Sujatha, though lived only a short period of her life with us, left behind, very cherishing memories of her person. Her simplicity and loving nature left deep impressions in the people who know her personally. In all difficult moments of her life, she used to say “I only want to become a sister and then I don't mind to die”. Surprisingly, she grasped the nobility of this call, the values of religious life very deeply in this short time of her life: She put all her effort to achieve the single goal, to be a religious, once when she reached the goal, she tried to be maximum faithful to it. She expressed in her simplicity that she could not understand, why conflicts rise among us, who have the same purpose of being and living together.

In fact, this little one really understood the values of fraternity much more than many of us who lived longer. She seems grabbed heaven very early in her simplicity and humility.

Dear sisters, it is not a time for

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us to cry over for her loss, but it is a time to reflect on our own lives, the true meaning of our call our “being” more than our “doing” as, religious. Let us feel assured that we have one more saint in heaven to intercede for the growth of our Province.

This crucial event, in this moment of great sorrow brought all of us together, one in soul and in mind and reflected the same in our deeds. With out any special direction, everyone spontaneously took up the role of Martha and Mary; one side the generous service and the other side, the chain of prayers, Really, I thank God for all of you, who contributed unsparingly, foreseen every need, right from the time Sr. Sujatha was admitted in the hospital till the funeral. I also express my sincere gratitude to our dear Mother General, Concillors and all the sisters all over the world, who remained closer to us spiritually and conveyed their message of condolence at this moment of great sorrow. This unity is our strength and richness. Let us keep it unfading forever.

I sincerely thank each one in a special way for your generosity and love extended, to face this unexpected, trying event in the Province. May God bless you to grow in fraternal love.

With fraternal love Provincial Superior



SR JOSEPHINE
MARIE FERRAIOLI
of the Sacred Heart
Born at New York city (USA),
12.01.1908
Died at Peekskill (USA),
19.05.2007

Sr. Josephine Marie was born Rose Ferraioli on January 12, 1908, almost 100 years ago, the third child of Guiseppina and Antonio Ferraioli. She grew up in New York City with her four brothers and three sisters, all who have predeceased her. Her high school years were spent at Wadleigh, graduating from there in 1926.

In 1938 Sister was inclined to become a Franciscan Missionary Sister of the Sacred Heart following in the footsteps of her sister, Sister Miriam Antonia and through her association with Sr. Patricia. Her early years in community were spent in the Boys House of St. Joseph’s Home and the Kennedy Home. In 1950 she graduated from Ladycliff College with a B.A. in French but never pursued teaching the language. Instead she devoted her talents to the youngsters in St. Veronica’s, N,Y,C., St. Patrick’s in Verplanck, Immaculate Conception in Irvington, St. Teresa’s in Tarrytown and St. Ann’s in

Qssining. No matter where she served, she was loved by the children for her kindness and gentleness. All who knew her considered her as an example of a good religious who possessed a warm and generous nature and remained a faithful Sister to the end.

It could well be said of her as we read in Morning Prayer of the Fifth Saturday of Lent: “Jesus, meek and humble of heart, clothe us with compassion, kindness and humility. Make us want to be patient with everyone.”

Sister Josephine Marie of the Sacred Heart is survived by her sister in law , Renee and many nieces and nephews.

The wake for Sister was held at Mt. St. Francis on Sunday, May 20, 2007 from 2:00 P.M until 4:00 P.M. and 6:00P.M. until 8:00 PM., and a Mass of Christian Burial was offered by Msgr. Patrick Brown at 10:00 A.M on Monday, May 21, 2007 at Mt. St. Francis followed by interment in the Sisters’ Cemetery. Merciful Father we commend our sister into your hands. Welcome her into your kingdom.





SR ANNACHIARA DONATI
of the Heart Mary
Bice Donati
Born at Sedegliano (UD),
21.11.1921
Died at Gemona (UD),
22.05.2007

“Prein frute ... Pray... Let’s pray together... mercy!” These are the words that Sr Annachiara uttered frequently in her last few days and they are a clear indication that helps us understand where she had placed the foundation of her life.

Sr Annachiara, nee Beatrice (Bice) Donati, was born in a big, practising Christian family, from which a good three religious vocations have flourished: Sr Annachiara, Sr Rosalba and the niece, Sr Deodata Donati. The parents had infused into their children a strong love for the local Church and this helped considerably the young Bice cultivate her own faith, prayer, sacrifice and service: the virtues that gradually matured in her the desire to consecrate herself totally to the Lord and offer herself to her brothers.

After entering the St Mary of the Angels Convent in 1941, she went on with her formation, increasingly committing herself to prayer, sacrifice and the willingness to do everything for God’s sake.

Soon after her religious profession, Sr Annachiara was sent to the Sacred Heart boarding school in Udine as a cook, then she served as a knitter for 3 years in Mezzana; later, she kept offering her best energies in various nursery schools in the regions of Veneto, Friuli and Trentino.

Following the example of her sister, Sr Rosalba, who was a nun in another Congregation and offered her life for the salvation of a priest’s, Sr Annachiara strived to sublimate everything... she wanted to offer everything to the Lord and she asked Him to help her offer in a proper way. The Lord Jesus was at the center of her life and led her to recognize and love every brother in Him; indeed, so she used to say: “The other: understand him, help him, assist him, forgive him, look for him, introduce him to God, cooperate with him, praise his good qualities, walk with him by making yourself poor, offer yourself through time, understanding and patience, by accepting his and your shortcomings..., search for values, not marginal things: it is God who saves, not us!...”

In silence and in secret she liked to help everybody and she urged everybody to pray and listen to the Word of God... she saw, heard,... she did not judge but she entrusted everything to Jesus. She took Him as her model and said: “The true Jesus is understanding love, accepting the hard talk of the passion and sharing the anguish of the wounds caused by sin... Let us try to love Him and learn to love like Him...”

Sr Annachiara managed to draw many people into the trajectory of this kind of love: many of them, still today, feel that she is alive and present; they remember, with

gratitude and affection, the support, courage and testimony that she conveyed to them through the gift of her life.

The Word of God tells us: “what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ (1 John: 1-3)” and Sr Annachiara too wants to leave us the message of what she has experienced, lived and witnessed: “Let us love the Lord to love everybody, always!”



SR IGINA RINALDI
of the Eucharistic Heart
Laura Rinaldi
Born at Sedegliano (UD),
10.08.1926
Died at Roma,
02.07.2007

Laura was born in Sedegliano, a village of a certain importance in the southern part of the Italian province of Udine, especially for the strategic location which determined its history. She spent her childhood and teenage years there, raised in the simple and solid faith of a land where someone’s relations with God, homeland and family were the criteria used to measure one’s wisdom.

When she was twenty-five she was already quite mature ac-

according to the standards of that time. On September 29 she entered the Saint Mary of the Angels Convent in Gemona, quickly finished her formation and became Sr Igina of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.

She enjoyed a robust health and had a strong character, with which she would always have to deal, humbly recognizing her limits. Her superiors planned to send her immediately to a big community where her physical exuberance could be of great help. So, she was sent to Treviso, to the Casa Cronici "G. Menegazzi", where, from 1898, the nuns have assisted the poorest of the Treviso March with an admirable spirit of sacrifice. Two years later she went to Centocelle, then to Lido dei Pini, where the "Mater Amabilis" house had just opened to welcome children who had physical and familiar difficulties. She stayed there eight years, in charge of the various services that were necessary to community life. In 1964 she was again in Centocelle, in the Provincial house.

Subsequently, she was destined by obedience to the region of Marche as a cook, then to Ostia Lido, Tollo, Borgo Grappa and then back again to Ostia, until 1988.

It is in this period of 5 to 10 years that Sr Igina started feeling a certain physical malaise, which was not better identified. The superiors had her assigned to the provincial house in Centocelle, so that she could be better cured.

Her last stage (1995) was the infirmary in Saffi street, where,

quite tried both physically and psychologically, she would serve as wardrobe keeper as far as her strength allowed her. The thigh-bone fracture that she suffered irremediably aggravated her physical state and confined her to immobility, leading her, quite rapidly, to the final epilogue at the age of 81.

May the Lord welcome her in his light and reward her fidelity.



SR ZEFFIRINA ANDRETTA
of Agonizing Jesus
Marta Andretta

Born at Cavasagra (TV),
23.10.1931
Died at Roma,
12.07.2007

Marta was born on 23 October 1931 and welcomed with joy by her many siblings –later, Rita too would see the light. Twelve children in all, four of which prematurely dead. In any case a beautiful family, to which the parents, Antonia and Arcangelo, dedicated time and efforts without sparing themselves. Their plots were in Carpenedo, a village annexed to Cavasagra, in the plain of Treviso: a central core around the bell tower and other houses spread in the well-

cultivated fields. On weekday mornings, groups of children swarmed toward the school and, on Sundays, to the Holy Mass for children.

Marta was christened two days after she was born: at seven she received the sacrament of Confirmation. Her religious education continued during primary school, under the watchful eye of the Parish priest and the "Franciscan" sisters, who, every day at 7.30 a.m. called all the children for catechism before school.

Children grew up rapidly, and they soon had to learn to be in charge of their younger siblings and to do all those small but precious tasks that all children, in the Venetian farmland, alternate to school, catechism and noisy and lively games.

Childhood is short when resources are meagre and there are many mouths to feed! One must look for a job outside and Marta did not escape this reality, even if it cost her a lot to live away from her family! The big family slowly melted: her siblings, one by one, went to work away from Veneto, to France or Lombardy.

The decision of her life matured when she was 18: Marta would join the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Her sister, Sr Onorina, was already among the Dorotean Sisters in Vicenza and this encouraged her to donate her life to the Lord. She talked with the Parish priest who, after assessing her vocation, accompanied her to the novitiate of Gemona.

At the ceremony of taking the veil, in 1950, she was given the name of Sr Zeffirina of Agoniz-

ing Jesus; after the canonical year, she made her temporary profession and was destined by obedience to St. Joseph Casa Cronici in Treviso, where she stayed as a cook until 1957. The following years saw her committed to a fraternally precious service to the poor and to the sisters of various communities: Treppo Grande and Buia, in the province of Udine, and Treviso, until 1965, when she stayed for a while in Lido dei Pini with the numerous children welcomed in the Mater Amabilis house, and next in Centocelle, in the Provincial House. Subsequently, for eighteen years, she stayed in the quarters of Latina, where she kept being busy with preparing meals for the children until her provincial superior invited her to take a diploma for teaching in nursery schools.

It was a big change, achieved by means of summer crash courses! Sr Zeffirina was over 45, but she obeyed and tenaciously applied herself to her new task. In 1980 she was a nursery school teacher in Borgo Bainsizza and she became also a superior in the years 1981 to 1985.

Obedience, however, played so to say a trick on her, and destined her to go back to Centocelle to resume her service as a cook. It must not have been so easy, after so many efforts at studying, to abandon what she had reached with pain! Sr Zeffirina accepted with simplicity the change of place and service and was happy to be where the Lord placed her.

After 22 years in the community of the Provincial House of Centocelle, near Rome, sister death surprised her during the

treatment she underwent after orthopaedic surgery.

Her sudden departure deprives us of a customary presence and how difficult it is for us to realize this! Now Sr Zeffirina accompanies us from afar or, maybe, she is nearer than what we think: she looks at us from God's lap... quiet and serene, like a weaned child on its mother's lap, so is her soul (see Ps.131,2).



SR TERESINA MOOKENTHOTTATHIL
of Child Jesus
Theresiamma
Born at Kurumannu(INDIA),
25.07.1948
Died at INDIA,
30.07.2007

On 10 October 1969 the cloud of purple sari landed; they came from Kerala (India) and among them there was Devasia Thresiamma. A Pauline sister had preceded her the year before. They had come to consecrate themselves to the Lord among us FMSH: a great love, the light-heartedness of 20-year-old youth and their courage. They did not know us. Theirs was a gesture of total trust in the Lord.

That was how her life among us started, in the novitiate of "Mary Immaculate" Province,

which was then in the Asisium General House (Rome).

She had left her land and her parents, Anna and Devasio; her brothers ..., her habits. Like the rest of the group, she did not know the language of the country where they had landed... but they were trustful. Hers was a big faith, learned on her mother's knees, nourished by a solid tradition, strengthened by the natural cohabitation with the other religious expressions of her India. This change of life must not have been easy! Teresina (we immediately found it easier to call her so), together with the others, opened up willingly to novelties as a normal aspect of her vocational choice and, at the end of the two initial years of formation, she reached the goal of her first profession on 18 March 1973, in the novitiate of Centocelle, where the formation house of the Roman Province had been recently moved. Two years of institutional juniorate and then the first apostolic experience with the children of the permanent holiday camp 'Mater Amabilis', in Lido dei Pini. Here she already displayed the attitudes that prompted her superiors to initiate her into nursing studies: it was a successful choice, because Sr Teresina was really inclined to it.

Indeed, nursing would always be her service, rendered with competence and helpfulness in the different places where she operated: in the mission in Cameroun, among the sisters of the infirmary of Saffi street, among the elders of Villa Serena in Duronia and in the mission of Dushaj, Albania, in circumstances of utter poverty and

need, similar to those she had experienced in Africa.

Simple people entrusted themselves to her zealous cures: they called her 'the doctress'. It was really providential to be able to count on her presence in those mountains!

"Her loss is a particular pain for us", wrote the sisters from Dushaj "in our community she had been a true sister and an model religious". It was there that, in 1998, the disease that would slowly consume her for nine years was first revealed.

Sr. Teresina did not surrender, she wanted to fight, live and serve again. Even after surgery, she tenaciously did all that she could in Duronia and then, when her conditions became more precarious and she required special cures, back in Saffi street.

Her continuous suffering during those years prepared her to the Encounter. She remained serene, aware of her physical state, but sure that she was in the hands of the Lord, to whom she had consecrated all her life. At the beginning of 2007 "the time is running out". She knew it and wanted to see her family again before leaving. She asked to return to India: she could not afford to postpone her departure! So, on 11 February, under the auspices of the Immaculate Virgin, she left Rome, accompanied by her sister Sr Paolina and arrived in Kerala. Her health did not hold out, she could no longer feed herself and, little by little, like a small light, she extinguished herself to shine in the light of the Father. It was 30 July 2007. Goodbye sisters from the Roman Province



SR MASSIMINA BIONDO
del Cuore Immacolato di
Maria
Luigia Biondo
Born at Castagnole (TV),
23.01.1915
Died at Roma
13.08.2007

A life on tiptoe: silent, meek, humble, expecting no appreciation whatsoever. These adjectives qualify Sr Massimina, our sister who passed away on 13 August 2007, after many months spent in the watchful wait for the Lord. By then she could only say "thank you" and make someone aware, although increasingly feebly, of her thankful presence.

Precious in the sight of God is the death of his faithful ones! (Psalm 116)

Precious is her death, as precious was her life, marked by a humble and gratuitous service... a Eucharistic life, lived by continuously giving thanks: to God, to her sisters, to those who approached her: a smiling and gentle life. To those who, near the end, enquired about her last wish, she answered: "Do God's will, love him always more".

Brought at the baptismal font of Castagnole (near Treviso), her

native village, when she was five days old, Luigia grew under the watchful eye of her parents, Angela and Pietro, docile and serene in spite of the calamitous years of World War I. At seven, she received the Sacrament of Confirmation in Postioma (Treviso) and soon she felt the Lord's call.

We find her in Gemona, a very resolute aspirant, when she was only fourteen, too early even back then! But she was resolute; it was even quite strange that, frail as she was, she could muster so much strength! She grew by helping in the various tasks that were entrusted to her, increasingly confirming her Franciscan and missionary vocation.

In 1932 she was a postulant and had the joy to wear the grey habit of nuns on 4 May 1933, the Holy Year of the Redemption. After the twelve canonical months, she made her temporary Profession: she could finally fulfill the dream she had kept in her heart and she entrusted to the Lord, her Bridegroom, all her life. She was nineteen.

In view of her qualities, she is destined to study, and in 1937 she took a diploma of teaching after being trained in the nursery school of Idria (near Gorizia), where the sisters offered a careful and qualified service.

She started teaching immediately: four years in Rome-Centocelle, then back again in the North: Treppo Carnico (Udine) and Solagna (Vicenza). From 1960 to 1987 her mission was in Latina, in the various Borroughs of the Pontine marshes. Her longest stay was in Borgo Montello: 16 years. It is here

that, from 1969 to 1976, she also served as the authority. Everywhere she stayed, Sr Massimina left behind a luminous and serene memory, the image of a beneficial and peacemaking presence.

“I beg your pardon for my inadequacy. With the grace of God, I am ready to anything, I submit to his will, glad to obey forever, to please the Lord.” These are the words with which she gave back her mandate of authority... in these words there is her life. She was a woman of deep prayer, of great inner vitality, of clear and secure principles.

Her apostolic life closed in Montale, in the region of Marche, where her health started to be worrying. In 1994 she was transferred in the infirmary in Saffi Avenue, in the quarter of Trastevere, Rome. Even when she was sick and spent her time in hospital, she excited other people’s admiration for her silent and grateful behaviour: a true Franciscan minor.

So she passed away, quiet as she had lived: “the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them” (The Book of Wisdom 3:1). Now she lives forever in the One that she loved here on earth.



SR ALBA TODESCO
of the Holy Family
Noemi Todesco
Born at Solagna (VI),
24.04.1916
Died at Gemona
15.08.2007

The solemnity of Assumption reminds us of our glorious destiny: Mary, the first fruit of redemption, preceded us with his beloved Son in the joy of heaven, glorified in body and soul.

It is right that Sr Alba crossed Heaven’s gates on this meaningful day: Mary, Mother and Queen, took Sr Alba with her to introduce her as a faithful bride to the feast of the divine Son, her Bridegroom. As on the day of her profession, today Sr Alba was able to hear and answer the call:

“veni, veni, sponsa Christi,
veni accipe coronam
quam tibi Dominus preparavit in aeternum!

Sr. Alba, nee Todesco Noemi, was born on 26 April 1916 in a numerous family. It is in the faith which was nurtured at home by her parents Gaetano and Albina that Noemi saw her vocation to consecrated life flourish and mature. She fulfilled her dreams on 13 May 1935 with the religious Profession in Gemona, among

the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart: from then on, she was called Sr Alba. She was quite young (19) when she started her apostolate among nursery school children. This service marked her whole life: children would be her mission!

Her natural gifts, ability and commitment made of Sr Alba a true educator for entire generations. She left everywhere a memory of kindness and firmness. She served for a long time in Rome, in Pradamano, in Fontane, in Vedelago, in Paese and in Cavazzo Carnico. She was the local Superior in various communities more than once.

In 1997, at the age of 81, she retired from her activity, but she continued her mission in the mother house (Gemona) through prayer and the daily offering of her life, like she wrote herself in her diary that very year:

“It is necessary to follow Jesus, to always donate myself to Him. I trust in Him, who gives me the strength to live according to his Will... I accept with joy even my infirmities because they are means to love Jesus and the brothers more and more.”

Sister Alba, we would like to thank you for your testimony of goodness, faith and patience even during your painful sickness and in the supreme moment of death. Pray for your loved ones and for us all, so that we can learn to pray always like Jesus taught us: Father, your Will be done! Obtain from the Lord holy vocations who, with their lives, may keep bringing to their brothers, simply and humbly like you did, the Love for the Heart of Jesus.