

*“Why do you seek
the living one
among the dead?”*

*He is not here,
but he has been raised”*

(Lk 24:5-6)

Christ is risen, He is really risen, the angel tells us!
The Risen Christ opens to the new life. He, the Risen, is the foundation on which our faith rests and the hope that changes and supports our life (see Spe Salvi 10).
Therefore, the resurrection does not involve only Christ, but every one of us, because He has risen to donate us his Spirit, his life itself. Believing this gives us the ability to change our life by starting a new one.

A new life which, for us Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, especially in this year, acquires also the meaning that emerges from the will to rekindle our true identity. No one will be able to wither the source of life anymore, which has sprung in the desert of mankind in the Easter night because, as the Prophet says, wherever this water comes, everything grows (see Ezekiel 47:6-12).

This water has come to us, it has given us spiritual freshness to make new foliage bud from the congregational tree, which has been giving fruits of love and goodness for 150 years in the whole world, especially where the poor are, making them partake in the joyful announcement of the Resurrection.

It all starts from a deep involvement in the Paschal Mystery that gives us a concrete faith, a faith that is expressed in our life and becomes operational in our love.

By rereading the beautiful pages of our Congregational Sources, which make us think back over our history, we recover the freshness of the original spirit of our charism, in order to witness the love, peace and joy of the Risen to all.

The Easter greetings that I address to everyone is to savour the joy and amazement of the Resurrection, which fills our hearts with living hope and makes all things new.
On behalf of the General Council

Sr Emma Pia Bottamedi





To recall
To preserve
To celebrate

Here is our

150th Jubilee

2

Remembering means recalling, recollecting, keeping in one's mind... However, it means above all keeping the thought of God's fidelity and mercy alive, and therefore it means renewing faith, announcing our faith, singing the wonders that the Lord has made for us!

Our centuries-old history is studded with such lights, burning bushes of faith, passed on through actual experiences, generously lived right from the dawning of our existence by those, Founders and Sisters, who welcomed them in the sign of the Word, and as such they have been constantly pronounced, sung and heard.

Indeed, '*memoria Dei*', remembering God:

- is what we live on every day; it means leaving the initiative of the saving Word to Him;
- is today's reality made history of salvation;
- is, above all, welcoming and keeping in one's heart his Word, which is eternally capable of giving life, saving and sanctifying.

Preparing to *live a Centennial* means above all *recognizing* that God is our only Creator and Saviour, and following and worshipping the countless marks of his presence by means of a process of new conversion of our life and a journey toward holiness, not so much to reaffirm our own will as to adhere warmly to his Word in obedient memory, which justifies and saves.

However, if we want to make memory a "*memorial*", that is celebrate the past to make it live again in the present, and show it again to ourselves as a reality that takes place time and again as a perpetual event of salvation... we need to *know*.

The first stage which is proper to remembering is **MEMORY**. This, in turn, in order to become "*memorial*", a new space of relation and sanctification, must first of all be *cultivated*, or even better, *known*, so as to become "listening", faithfully *preserved* as a sacred legacy and, finally, be *passed on*, *told* or *presented again* in its truth as a message of salvation.

We move in the dimension of time and we beat

...the grace of the origins

it according to regular and particular rhythms, which not only help us give a meaning to what we experience, but also organize time with the aim of keeping the mystery of Jesus Christ alive.

And this is what is now requested from us, FMSH, in a very special way. The lucky opportunity to live “our” jubilee leads us to “RE-EXAMINE” OUR 150-YEAR-LONG HISTORY in order to read in it the countless, indescribable signs of the divine goodness

- in the path of fidelity, commitment, sacrifice and hope, despite the many different trials that those who have preceded us have had to face,
- in the long wait for recognition and approval from the Church,
- in the daily exercise of fortitude and perseverance in extreme financial difficulties,
- in the examples of intrepid dedication for our missionary activity, etc.

In this way, we can really say that, since 1859, all the existence of our Institute has been based on God’s Word... a God who is fragile in his human nature, but who, like the Word, is vested with the strength of the Holy Spirit, who creates the world and builds history.

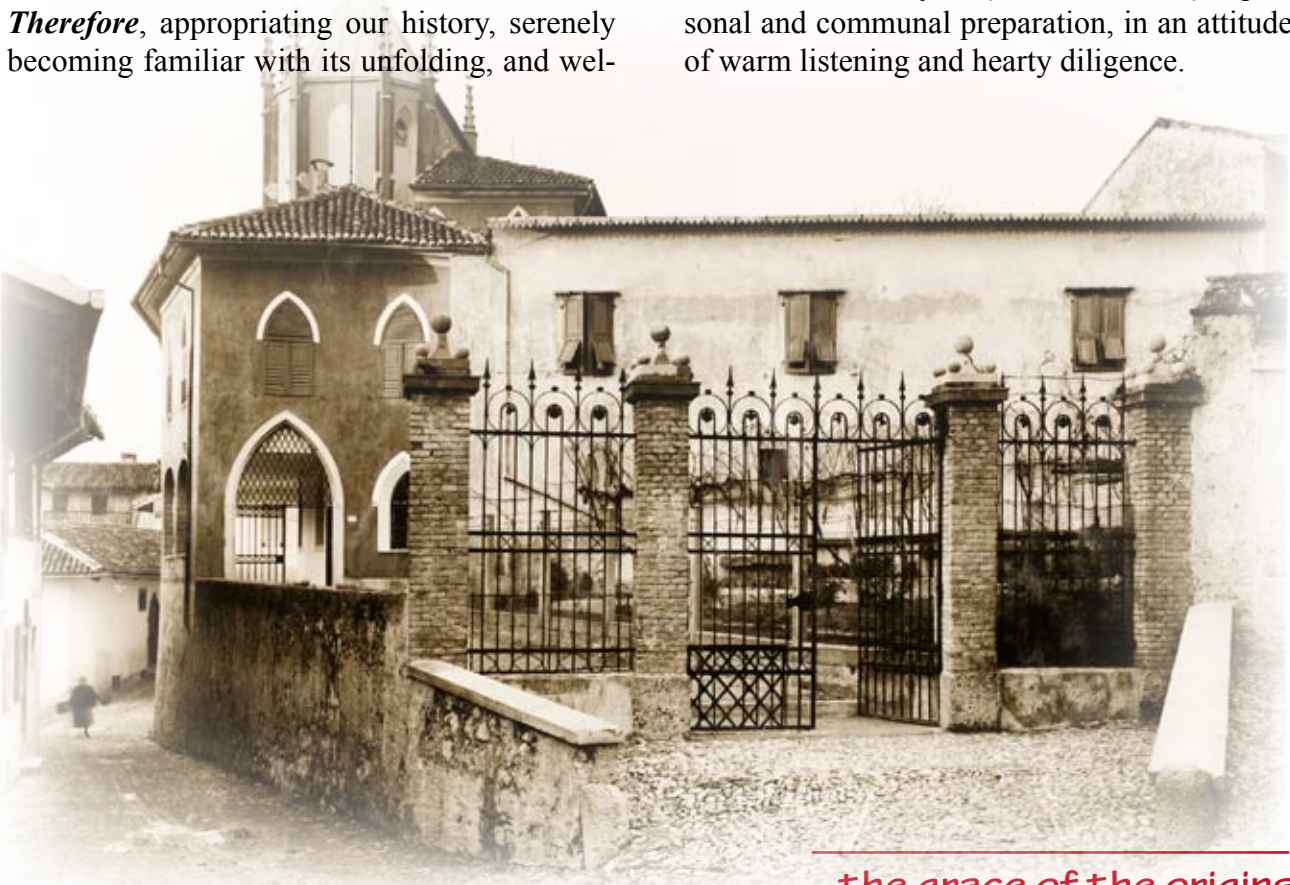
Therefore, appropriating our history, serenely becoming familiar with its unfolding, and wel-

coming it simply as a gift, still means believing in the fidelity of God, who uses ‘the weak of the world, the lowly and despised of the world in order to build his Kingdom’.

Therefore, we aim at recalling or recollecting what has happened not out of nostalgia for the past or because we want to keep jealously a human and Christian adventure or present a softened account of what is not, but as a prayerful and active expectation of a future which, exactly because it is rooted in that past, brings us to a new encounter with Jesus Christ and his Gospel..

Consequently, our MEMORY KEEPING too will progressively become an answer to the question that every one of us carries in her heart, together with the recognition of the abundance of gifts that have poured down on every path we have followed; in this way, memory keeping can disclose unexpected spheres of service and offering, in which every one of us gives and receives attention, welcome, listening, respect, and a communication of faith and deep joy.

In this manner, we are already *celebrating the first moments of the jubilee*. Let us live the next few months of the year (until November) in personal and communal preparation, in an attitude of warm listening and hearty diligence.



To make it easier for us to remember the most significant dates, we enclose a list of the most important or representative events that provide a reason for the celebration of the *150th Anniversary of our Foundation*, which we have already dealt with

YEAR 1859 (2009)

.....



PRIMO OCTOBER:

Sr M. Josepha, née Laura Leroux, princess of Bauffremont, clad as a Passionist, on her way back from her usual trip to the German coun-

At the beginning of October: first encounters between our two Founders

tries, halting by chance in Venice, and Fr. Gregorio Fioravanti, Friar minor, provincial minister of the observant “St Anthony” Venetian province.

29 OCTOBER

Laura, who is about to return to Rome, by greeting the Father, writes him that she is available to carry out any errands on his behalf in the city, which, however, she will be unable to reach be-

cause of the impending danger of war (second Italian independence war)

9 NOVEMBER

She no longer thinks about returning to Rome and stays in Venice, after asking the Father to find her more decorous lodgings for her standing: consequently, she will be a guest of the Tertiaries in St Francis of the Vineyard.

YEAR 1860 (2010)

.....

Gradual discernment of the divine will

23 JANUARY:

Laura receives from Fr. Gregory the first written certificate of merit, which he has signed on the usual form. He is now her spiritual director.

In the following weeks, Laura tells Fr Gregory about her intention to start a foundation of Franciscan Tertiaries, which will be later better defined as “devoted to apostolic Missions”.

23 FEBRUARY:

Fr Gregory is thinking about how to satisfy the “pious lady” who wants to start a foundation,

and after seeking the Minister General’s advice-obedience, is busy with finding a place which suits her needs.

27 MARCH:

Laura, overjoyed by the research made by Fr Gregory, sends Alice to Gemona del Friuli (Province of Udine), so that she can inquire about properties on sale; thanks to the local guardian, Fr Ambrogio da Pojano, she quickly finds a building on sale and Laura, who has become Duchess since March, immediately decides to purchase it. IT IS PALAZZO FERIGO



8 APRIL:

FR. GREGORY TELLS THE MINISTER GENERAL ABOUT THE DUCHESS' PROPOSALS AND CONDITIONS, without naming her for now; nor does he mention that he is the person she would like: he hopes that his Superior will deny permission.

14 APRIL:

1ST ANSWER: THE MINISTER GENERAL, FR. BERNARDINO TRIONFETTI DI MONTEFRANCO, ANSWERS FR. GREGORY THAT HE APPROVES THE PROJECT of the "pious distinguished person" and wishes that Fr Gregory himself supports it.

5 MAYO:

2nd answer from the Minister to Fr. Gregory: IT IS CLEARER AND MORE REASSURING, also as regards the person and the dispensation needed to follow the planned foundation with the duchess (who lives outside the convent); but it all refers to him, not to others!

27 MAY:

LAURA BECOMES A FRANCISCAN RELIGIOUS, keeping the previous religious name she had as a Passionist: Sr. Mary Josepha of Jesus. In the chapel of the Tertiaries of the Vineyard, she pronounces the usual vows of the Third Order Secular, as is then customary, and she declares in a handwritten letter to Fr. Gregory her full submission and obedience, as her special vicar of St. Anthony. From then on, she wears a grey habit and scapular, a black veil, a Franciscan cord and barefoot sandals, like her future Franciscan Tertiary missionaries in Gemona.

30 MAY:

After overcoming the initial hes-



itation, Fr. Gregory submits the project of the foundation to the judgment of the Archbishop of Udine, Msgr. G. L. Trevisanato, who is very much in favour of it, as long as "economic support by the pious person is guaranteed".

*Founding aim
takes its form*

5 JUNE:

The archbishop, Msgr. Trevisanato, assures Fr. Gregory that he is pleased by the foundation of the 'Franciscan Tertiary Nuns with the double aim of forming young women for the needs of Foreign Missions and providing free education to poor girls", provided that they are supported for their natural life.

11 JUNE:

FR. GREGORY IS FREED FROM HIS APPOINTMENT AS PROVINCIAL MINISTER, since the foundation will be outside Venice; he has also accepted, out of obedience, the firm condition imposed by the duchess: attend to her spiritual direction "for his whole life".

29 JUNE:

He is authorized by the Minister General to ACCOMPANY THE DUCHESS IN HER LONG TRIP ACROSS CENTRAL EUROPE. Out of obedience, he accepts this sacrifice too, which, however, will be very useful for him to get to know the foundress' character better.

2 JUNE:

DEPARTURE OF OUR TWO FOUNDERS TOWARDS NORTHERN EUROPE. They are accompanied by two young women from Rome and the personal doctor: the official aim is the usual homeopathic treatment, but the true goal is to consolidate the plan and recruit candidates.

26 JUNE:

Arrival in Ostend, Belgium, where the duchess undergoes thermal treatment at the town's famous therapeutic institute

2 SEPTEMBER:

While Laura is in Paris visiting relatives, he can hand to the royal publisher, Mr Elleboudt, the REGULATION OF THE FRANCISCAN TERTIARIES FOR THE MISSIONS, which he has meanwhile written down.

2 OCTOBER

They start the return trip to Venice, where they arrive on 18 October, after gathering the young women that they have picked up during these months.

19 OCTOBER:

After a short halt in Padua by "her" saint, Laura agrees with the Father on leaving for Gemona the next day; later, however, she decides to go on alone to GEMONA, WHERE SHE ARRIVES UNEXPECTED ON THE EVENING OF 19 OCTOBER 1860 ! She refuses to take up lodgings

at Palazzo Ferigo, which she has already bought and restored, because she does not like it. On the following day, having eyed the former Clarisse's convent, she immediately starts negotiations to buy it, because "it is only here that my Monastery will be!".

The next day, 20 October, she is joined by Fr Gregory, who takes upon himself the burden to negotiate with the owner, Mr Luccardi; shortly afterwards, the former Monastery of the Cell belongs to our foundress, at the cost of 56.000 zwanzigers.

30 OCTOBER

Following the General's advice, Laura accepts to present the sup-

plication to the Pope to start the new foundation, but she asks Fr Gregory that it should not be made in her name, as she maybe fears that it will be rejected, but rather in the name of the Order itself, by means of the Minister General.

8 NOVEMBER:

Reply by Fr Bernardino, along with useful suggestions, which also regard the Rule of the secular Tertiaries, and the methods to be followed.

14 NOVEMBER:

The archbishop Trevisanato answers Fr. Gregory that he gladly consents to the project, on condition that its financial support be

guaranteed. It is the DECREE OF FOUNDATION!

19 NOVEMBER:

On St. Elizabeth's day, the protectress of the Franciscan Tertiaries, THE FIRST 6 YOUNG WOMEN RECEIVE THE HABIT. With them, who make up the first founding core, THE NEW MONASTIC FOUNDATION IS EFFECTIVELY BORN in Gemona.

28 NOVEMBER:

Once some difficulties have been overcome, the Imperial Decree authorizing the foundation is also signed, and it arrives in Gemona in January.

(continues in the next number)



Marvelous are the ways of the Lord

no one has the right to ask why in this way and not otherwise! (Father Gregory)



“OUR” PAST AND PRESENT HISTORY!

We too... in the Garden of the Righteous, in Israele?

This question can certainly surprise us, but not after reading what follows.

For some years, and precisely since the defamation campaign against Pope Pacelli, Pius XII, has recovered its strength, the Associazione di Coordinamento Storici Religiosi (CSR) - Association for the Coordination of Religious Historians-, which was set up in Rome a few years ago, has undertaken to find out documents and testimonies referring to both male and female religious houses present in Rome during the Second World War, which hid Jewish people after the September 8, 1943 armistice.

By regularly attending the meetings of the said Association, we too could investigate, hopeful that we could give a meaningful contribution to the laudable initiative. Indeed, we

knew that, from time to time, the sisters of the community in our General House in Pitagora Square, called to mind those years and months, reliving the troubles and fears they had experienced, especially when they gave refuge to wanted people, since, of course, they were running a very high risk.

The aim of the research was not so much that of disclosing the generosity of so many friars and nuns, and ours too, as offering some testimonies about the way the call spread by word of mouth and the encouragement passed in the most unexpected ways by the Holy See, especially by Pius XII, worked among the religious so that the convents opened their doors to whoever was wanted. That “hour of charity”, as the operation that brought refugees into the convents was called, committed



our sisters too.

We know that the Roman Jews, although they had handed the Germans the 50 kilos of gold that had been forcibly required from them, nonetheless underwent a un sudden mopping up on October 16. On that tragic Saturday, 1259 Jews were arrested and imprisoned on the Tiber embankment, waiting to leave for the concentration camps, from which only 17 of them would eventually return.

In the face of the brutality of that intervention, the Christian community was first taken aback. Quite soon, however, solidarity became real and unhoped-for places of refuge were offered to those who

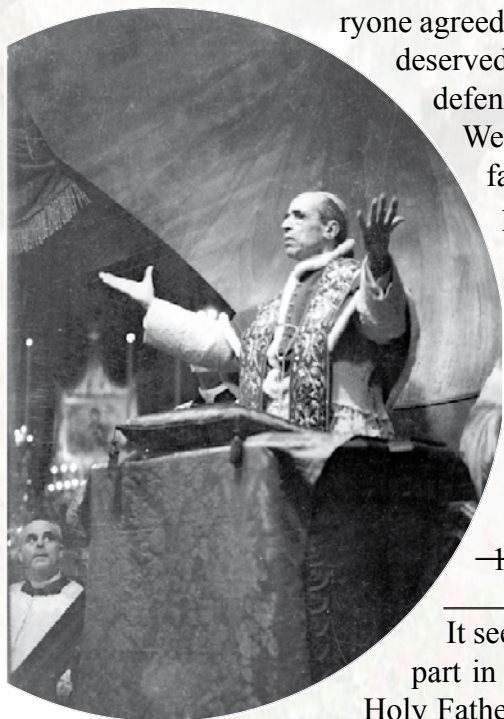
had escaped the first roundup. It was especially female convents, encouraged by the Holy See, that opened generously their doors to many Jewish families, who would have otherwise faced certain death. It is confirmed that between October 1943 and June 4, 1944, over 4,000 out of 10,000-12,000 Jews present in Rome found a secure asylum in religious institutes as well as in cloisters, with the direct support of the Holy See. To that end, many religious homes were registered by the Holy See as “Propriety of the State of the City of the Vatican”, “Diplomatic protection of the State of the City of the Vatican” or “in the service of the Holy See”.



8

As January 27, 2005, the Memorial Day, was drawing near, the CSR theme “Poverty and wealth of a hidden history” appeared very topi

cal and opened interesting perspectives to start an effective research. Everyone agreed that the fundamental role that the then religious played deserved to be adequately known and documented, first of all in defense of Pius XII’s honour.



We too made efforts: some sisters who had witnessed those facts were invited to write down their memories and impressions. Unfortunately, after about 60 years, the protagonists of this rescue work were for the most part deceased and the value of our research turned out to be modest, especially as regards the accounts -quite vague memories, uncertain or imprecise numbers and poor data for the recognition of identities.

Later, from the chronicles of St. Elizabeth’s house, in Pitagora Square, we found out a precious testimony of the dramatic season of terror that took place in winter -1943-1944. Here are some short excerpts:

It seemed to us to be a good document to show that we took part in the charity campaign, promoted and supported by the Holy Father. Meanwhile, however, a first volume on the research was printed and, of course, it did not mention our name in the list of the institutes. This absence struck even some people who had been directly involved. And this is

today's history.

A lady that is still anonymous, who had been looking for the sisters of St Elizabeth's house for some time, finally found out that these sisters were now located in Grottarossa street.

YEAR 1943

20. 10:

Raid against the Jews. Days of terror. There are 15 refugees hidden in our place, days of great anguish, fears and worry. There are rumours of pillages, fires and civil war.

14. 11:

Baptism of the formerly Jewish general and his wife; the ceremony took place in our Chapel.

23. 11:

November: Baptism of Mrs Musatto, Jewish.

15. 12:

December: During this month we welcomed major Petruzzelli, wanted by the Germans, who disguised himself as a gardener, under the false name of Bernardino Mas-saro. Together with him we took in two other carabinieri, who hid in our woodshed to escape deportation.

YEAR 1944

19. 2:

Every single day we are on the alert... The school's activity goes on... but many pupils are absent out of fear. We are terribly upset...

25. 5:

The barons Rodi di Pantelleria seek and find refuge in our Institute .

04. 6:

We waited full of fear until midnight... when the English and Americans came with a perfect aplomb.

On September 14, 2009, Sr M. Antonietta received the unexpected but very pleasant visit of LAURA SUPINO, a very kind Jewish woman, a distinguished architect, who wished to express their gratitude to the Sisters of Pitagora Square, where she, when she was 13, together with her younger sister Silvia, 8, had been a guest in the years 1943-1944, welcomed together with other fellow sufferers to escape the terrible racial laws against the Jews that were in force in Italy. The subsequent account was really moving and full of unheard details about the sisters who were back then in the General House of Pitagora Square.

It is with emotion that we listened to her while she was telling those facts, her adolescence as a fugitive, closed in a religious house, careful to act with self-assurance, learning unknown prayers, taking part in ceremonies and moments that meant nothing to her, always bearing in mind agreed signs and gestures in case of danger, coded words, and the ever looming fear of being uncovered even by her boarding mates or betraying her condition when her heart leapt at the thought of her dear ones who were far away or scattered in other hideouts.



During the comparison of the available data and documents, the lady, who revealed a lively, strong and bold personality and an air of resolute independence coupled with a great composure despite she was over 80, told us very interesting facts as well as first-hand episodes and anecdotes. She meant above all to let us know how deep was the wonderful memory of our sisters that she had been carrying with her, the admiration for their respect, the sweetness and goodness that they used with their young guests and with all the people that she could see in the house or in the garden, guessing that they too shared the same status of clandestine refugees.



*St Elizabeth - Rome, 8th 8th grade class.
The young Laura Supino is in the second line, 4th from
the right*

10

What is more, she wanted to make it clear that her aim, admirable and edifying, was that of making sure at all costs that the name of our Institute be included in the list of those who have helped people in need like her. “The memory of all that our sisters did can no longer be neglected”, she repeated.

That visit from Mrs Laura was followed by others, sometimes together with her sister Silvia. On one occasion, she gave us the most direct proof of her stay in St Elizabeth, forced and praised, as she likes to repeat: the photograph of her class, the school report and a moving account about these distant months, in which she also mentions some sisters, such as Sr Augustina, Sr Anastasia and others.

During her latest visit, in January, which was organized so that her experience could become a lesson of life for our pupils, she even brought us a precious document, that she had herself required and obtained for us from the Jewish Community in Rome: a parchment for **“St Elisabeth Institute of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, in memory of those who, at the peril of their own life, did their outmost to save Jews from Nazi and Fascist atrocities”**.

In addition, Mrs Laura, with her likable “grit”, is tirelessly busy to reach a daring goal: that our name be carved, together with that of many other people, in the so-called Graden of the Righteous next to the museum of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

The cultivation of a tree is dedicated to every *Righteous among the Nations* since such practice, in the Jewish tradition, expresses the desire to keep an everlasting memory of the dear one.



The parchment and a photograph of the moment in which it was handed over by Mrs Laura, on January 27, 2010, the Shoah Memorial Day





For 150 years following the steps of Providence

Life of the Congregation

Meeting of the treasurers of activities in Italy



12

On November 6, 2009 in the generalate house Asisium an updating meeting of the treasurers in Italy was held.

In the morning the Architect **Ciro Calabrese**, with his own competence and clarity, has shown the Book on the security of the work places, D.L. 81/2008 and the updating news of D.L. 106/09; he underlined the importance of formation of the persons who are working with us, of the documents needed so that the service of our activities: schools, institutions for children, boarding houses, home for the aged etc... will be done according to the respect of the person and the evangelical efficacy.

The topic that always provokes many questions, worries even in the economical aspect, was truly very interesting.

Once again he has helped us to understand that it is urgent to work together for the preparation of the documents as well as the responsibility each one has according to the different mansions.

But it is true that the only responsible for the whole Italy is sr. Paola Dotto as she is the Legal representative as manager.

In the afternoon we received a challenging formative input in the economical legal and administrative levels by our two consultants Doct. Aurelio Curina e il Doct. Federico Rossi who have shown us the legal and administrative duties to be done with attention, in the commerce and institutional area following the ongoing legal changes that our government is constantly approving. The topic should have required two days meeting as so many were the questions, the doubts and the clarifications.

On our part we are aware that we do not have a sufficient and competent preparation for such a duty, but, with the help of our experts and especially working together, we will be able to be precise in our work and evangelical witnesses in our service.



...the grace of the origins

Congregational meeting of all "Provincial Treasurers!"



From December 9 to 19 in Rome, in the Generalate House Asisium, it was held the first Congregational meeting of all provincial treasurers on the theme:

“Economy and administration of the goods of consecrated Life”

The meeting was organized under the care of the general Council, in particular of the general treasurer Sr. Paola Dotto. Expert speakers on Canon law, in Franciscanism and administration were present.

In the opening discourse the Superior general expressed her satisfaction to see gathered together the provincial treasurers of the all Congregation, and she emphasized the necessity to have a common journey even at the economic level. The globalization, as sign of the time, has to be read in a positive way as a challenge to have an open look that can embrace the whole situation, and not only that of our institute but even the external one to reach out the poor, the families that often do not have even the necessary for the living of their children.

To this regard Sr Antonietta Pozzebon, in her scheduled

report, she highlighted the need of witnessing the Franciscan pov-

erty according to the founding writings of the Institute and our tradition.

Various speakers took part in the discussion:

P. Agostino Montan csj, expert in canon Law, made us reflect on the possession of goods and their administration according to the directives of the Church. In particular he commented some articles of the canon law, difficult to be interpreted, but very important. All our goods are instruments to reach the charismatic goals given in the Constitution; one of those aims is the help to be given to the poor, because the imitation of the poor Christ cannot be separate from it.

13



Father Priamo Etzi ofm presented the theme: Franciscan poverty and administration of the goods. He insisted on the necessity of updating (aggiornamento) so that our congregational expression can be easily understood by the world of today even on keeping integral the charismatic patrimony. Religious poverty is always a unequivocal message for those who observe, as it is a sign of faith for the future goods. We do not make ourselves poor to increase the number of poor people but to conform ourselves to Christ. The honest



work is a witness of poverty, the speaker said, it is a source of life and takes away from idleness. He also gave references of evangelical values in the relationship and collaboration with the lay.



Sr Paola Dotto, as foreseen in the agenda, commented the norms of the Constitutions referring to the administration of goods. She spoke of the necessary duties for a good administration and she presented the “economic and administrative regulation” that is the exposition of the

Constitutions and Directory given a wider explanation for an easier, correct and unitary implementation. This regulation, given already by Father Montan, was read and commented by him for the whole assembly. Sr Antonietta Pozzebón explained in a very interesting way through a power point the theme given to her and prepared by her on the meaning that the terminology of poverty held along the journey of our Congregation.

14

Sr Germana Tomat showed the activities of the Mission Centre giving to the treasurer sisters the possibil-

ity of further questions to clarify about the adoptions from a distance.

Sabrina Vivan, Luigi Lorenzato, e Silvia Piccaluga, lay members of the directive of ONLUS Mission Tau, reminded us the importance of necessary projects and collaboration to give a fitted support to our mission.

The Superior general expressed her gratitude for all those who are working, without payment, to help the poor of our missions.

The Doct. Gabriele Torresan president of the Soc. “Soluzione” showed a program of accountancy that can make easier the work of the treasurers and, most of all, that is fitted for a network to be realized at all levels in our Congregation.

It was a very important convention for deepening, studying, evaluation and dialog among the treasurers and with the speakers who gave the guidelines for a service according to the civil, ecclesial and congregational laws.

All this work was challenging and fruitful, full of fraternity and of reciprocal knowledge about the various realities in the whole world.

Sure knowledge, confrontation and dialog are essential instruments to praise the Lord for who we are and for what we are doing in His kingdom.

We feel unqualified, we have poor economic means and persons but we trust in the Divine Providence that since the beginning has guided, sustained and assisted us.



***“... The Institute has no other patrimony
save Divine Providence and this shall
never be wanting to them, if they shall on their part do all
that is possible by applying themselves
according to the strength, ability and the talent wich
each one has received from God”***

(F 3, pgg 211-212)

For 150 years following the steps of Providence



Extended General Council

Roma, 4 - 12 January 2010

“...We have come here with a great desire: meet the Lord, and meet Him in the congregational project, a project that is not ours, but His...”

The congregational Jubilee gives us the opportunity to remind the past and express our gratitude to the Lord by remembering so many sisters who preceded us and wrote wonderful pages of history that today we can proudly call our history.

In our position as Major Superiors of the Congregation, we have a great responsibility: we want to be deeply grateful to the past, consistently careful about the present and confidently open to the future, well knowing that the future is built and cultivated insofar as we are able to live the present with passion, always ready to listen to events, to history and especially to the One who talks to us through the “signs of the times”...”

15

It is with this first greeting by the Superior General, Sr Emmapia B., that the **Extended General Council** opened in Rome, in the General House, from January 4 to January 12, 2010.

Such a meeting could only start with the entrusting to the Spirit, the source of charity in the Heart of Jesus Christ, in whose light we are able to find a clarity of intentions and truth in our search.

It is under this luminous Presence that the Superiors, who represented the various Organisms, spent ten days of intense work. Sr Emmapia, in her opening speech, pointed out the present challenges that must be dealt with during the congregational journey, first and foremost **“The path of growth in communion”**

which is expressed by congregational solidarity, the sharing of the life and mission of the Church, dialogue and the prophetic testimony of our consecrated life, as we are responsible for the mission shared with laypeople.

Fr Gabriele Ferrari himself, in his speech, insisted on pointing this out by highlighting the importance of fraternal life in the present of the Church:

“Fraternal life in community is certainly an important aspect of our religious and apostolic life. Indeed, I would say, it is a decisive one as regards the future of religious life. Fraternal life is the working instrument and the “place” in which the life consecrated to God is implemented and revealed; it is a decisive aspect of our witness, because communal testimony is the most visible one...”



In retrospect, by **assessing** the last three years, the Superiors stressed the many meaningful steps made in the provinces and in the apostolic region, the commitment of all the sisters to deepen their awareness of the wealth of our charism in its spiritual, communal and missionary dimension. The exchange of reflections on the present situation of the various Organisms, new or old, each presented with its own characteristics, was quite interesting. Perspectives, values, talents, qualities and also difficulties of different kinds have emerged, which testify to the desire and ef-

...the grace of the origins

fort to answer with great care to our apostolic and missionary vocation according to the spirit of the charism. Moreover, by an overall view of the whole religious family which celebrates its 150 years, the Superiors have examined the present historic time which is common to the Church and to the whole Consecrated Life: the hardship of the walk is being felt and it is sometimes hard to interpret the signs that God gives us today, which urge us to answer faithfully to the charism.

Fr Gabriele too reassured us:

“The road is already paved and expressed in the title of your Family: a Franciscan and missionary family of the Sacred Heart, a family that draws from the Heart of Christ Crucified the wealth of benevolence, redemptive love and apostolic zeal for mankind (see Const. 4)... in these words there is the guarantee for the future. Provided that you are faithful to them”.

With faithful hope, the subjects fixed in the agenda have been dealt with during the ten-day meeting:

➤ **Presentation of the works regarding the revision of the Constitutions laid down by the various organisms:**

It has been unanimously declared that the text of our Constitutions is rich and up-to-date, and that it fully meets the charismatic requirements and the needs of the whole religious family. A committee of sisters, together with an expert, will examine the submitted requests for modification.

➤ **Presentation of the suggestions for the celebration of the Congregation’s jubilee.**

The Jubilee year must be considered as a new big gift that the Lord bestows on our beloved religious family. We must feel the responsibility to come up to it with a special preparation, by regarding it as a “favourable moment, a time of grace”. Each Organism has presented several initiatives to be promoted in their own environment.

The General Council has agreed with a first programme:

- opening of the jubilee year on November 14, 2010 in Rome, with a solemn Eucharistic celebration and a commemorative symposium.

- main celebration day of the jubilee in Gemona, possibly on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart.

- closure of the jubilee year on November 14, 2011.

- preparation of multimedia tools to promote the knowledge of the charism and history of the Congregation, as well as its present missionary role in the world..

➤ **Suggestions regarding the involvement of all the sisters in the preparation of the General Chapter:**

Since the preparation and the celebration of the General Chapter are inserted in the jubilee year, there will be one formative theme to stress the congregational charism: for 150 years... in the footsteps of Providence, a theme that the Extended General Council has dealt with too.

There was an important speech by Fr Gabriele Ferrari on the value of the General Chapter. The main points may be summed up as follows:

* *Find out the path to be followed* in order to be still relevant for the Church in today’s world.

* *Recognize today’s poverties* as a “time of grace” to be lived in a paschal mood, in hope and joy, with a prophetic opening, dynamic fidelity and creative love.

* *Undertake our authentic mission: witnessing to our brothers* “the profound benevolence, the redemptive love and the apostolic zeal that appeared in the Heart of Jesus Christ Crucified”...

If we remain consistent with the charismatic gift, careful to the signs of the times that the Lord gives us, then the General Chapter will help us take the turning point that is required to be there for our brothers, in history, with our rich and fruitful charismatic identity.

➤ **Assessment of the problems concerning the General House:**

With the help from experts, the problems regarding the “Asisium” General House building have been examined.

Especially on this occasion, the importance of “*congregational solidarity*” has been stressed in support of the emergencies that the General Council must deal with.

The General Superior seized the occasion to express her gratitude for the ac-





tive involvement of all the Organisms which, depending on their means, offer a contribution to support the activities and the mission of the General Council.

➤ **Report on the Treasurers' meeting**

There was a report on the meeting of the provincial and regional treasurers, which took place in Asisium in December 2009.

The reflection on the provisions of the Canon Law regarding the administration of property, guided by experts, was quite significant. This reflection has guided the analysis of a regulation that fixed common criteria for the

administration of the Con-

gregation's possessions.

➤ **Comparison and sharing with the Missionary Centre and MISSIONE TAU non-profit organisation :**

The speech made by the President of the association, Sabrina Vivan, was quite meaningful. She presented with true passion and emotional involvement the activities that they have carried out in various parts of the congregation and wished that the cooperation between the association and the congregation will become increasingly stronger.

Another interesting speech was delivered by Mr Luigi Lorenzato, an active and enthusiast member of the non-profit organisation board. He clearly outlined the importance of "planning as a response for creative aid" and shared deep reflections on the value of "missionary solidarity".

These lay brothers work next to us and show us a heart that is open and extraordinarily missionary, as the spirit of the congregation requires.

➤ **Presentation of the book "Another Franciscanism: Franciscan Missionaries from Gemona to New York dealing with immigration and social services"**

Fr Giuseppe Buffon, together with Sr Antonietta Pozzebon, presented the study on St Francis Province, U.S.A.: a model history of the first missionary sisters in the United States and their rapid growth, thanks also to their attention to the signs of the times (immigrations) and the generous response of the sisters, who undertook to provide a generous answer to such needs.

A special "family" moment was the pilgrimage of the group to Grotte di Castro, the native village of our beloved Fr Gregory.

There, they could experience the exquisite fraternity of the sisters (Sr Margherita Menegazzi, Sr Martina Orellana and Sr Mini Alex) who welcomed them; the affability of the parish priest, Fr Tancredi Cuccioli, who celebrated the Holy Mass at the foot of "Our Lady of Suffrage"; the hospitality of the parishioners, who prepared the hall and the meal; the emotion of Fr Angelo Maria Patrizi, a true Guardian Angel of the Marian Sanctuary in Grotte; the welcome by Peppe, who opened wide the doors of his house (the one in which Fr Gregory was born) for the visit of the Superiors.

Each one of them has certainly left many prayer intentions for herself and the sisters of the whole congregation in the Sanctuary, under Mary's Mantle. It will be Her, Our Lady, who will bless and make fruitful

what has been sown during these days through common search, study and deepening: the suggestions that will be used to prepare the jubilee year of the Congregation.

At the end of this meeting we spontaneously gave our thanks to the Lord, who enabled us to live a strong experience of fraternity in sharing "our family matters". We are also grateful to the sisters of the General Council, who have prepared, guided and supported this meeting, which precedes the next much expected congregational events.



THE EGC TREATS IT SELF TO A PLEASANT

... BREAK FROM ITS WORK!

The members of the extended general Council, which took place from January 4 to January 14, relieved their intense days of reflection, listening and exchange of experiences through a visit-pilgrimage to Grotte di Castro, which has now become a welcome usual leg of every our meeting. The second Sunday of the new year, January 10th, was really a nice day, despite the freezing cold that we had to endure. We joyfully walked along the small streets and then stopped piously in the sanctuary that rises high on the tuff spur, in its cosy brightness, which clashes with the greyness outside: it was “our” Lady of Suffrage, who seems to be waiting for us every time, while from her drooping veil her sweet image appears, stretching out her arms towards each one of us.

We quickly warmly greeted the good rector, Fr Angelo Patrizi, the enthusiast promoter of the devotion to Fr Gregory and of our presence in Grotte, who is now seriously ill, but no less passionate than he once was. Then we paid a short but very appreciated visit to the Fioravanti's small house, where we spontaneously imagined our Founder's moments of life there.

Later, we attended the Holy Mass in the parish church, where the local people warmly smiled at us, rivaling in kindness and helpfulness with the incomparable parish priest, Fr Tancredi. We had another wonderful round of smiles and kindness at our sisters' small house, in the lovely decked out hall, where we were offered a “wedding”



lunch, seasoned with exquisite gestures of fraternal welcome, all thanks to the kind and loving work of some people, Fr Tancredi's faithful and generous co-operators, as well as the Sisters.

What else could we dream of for a break? The threatening weather tried in vain to dim our joy when the moment came to leave Grotte, but, warmly grateful

and refreshed by the nice relaxing day, we took our way back in prayer and silence, sometimes even touched by sleep, and ready to resume all the planned work with new vigour and confidence.



Perpetual Profession...



**Sister Shaiby
Sister Nirmala
Sister Karuna**



*“I will praise the Lord with all my heart,
I will tell all His wonders”*

ROMA, 27 DECEMBER 2009

19

At Asisium, on December 27, 2009, we lived a very joyful moment: the perpetual Profession of three sisters from the community of the International Juniorate: Sr Shaiby Paul, Sr Nirmala and Sr Karuna from Holy Family Province (India). In the last two years, they have been preparing, through a methodical, spiritual and intellectual formative path, to take the decisive step within our Religious Family: becoming FMSC for their whole life.

The celebration attracted in Franciscan joy many sisters and friends, who could enjoy the enthusiasm of our new sisters and the beauty of a matured and experienced Franciscan vocation. This was expressed by the words of the celebrating priest, Fr Ambrogio ofm, who with simplicity outlined a path of religious life based on testimony and gratuitous donation to the Lord, who has addressed his call: “come after me”.

As is customary, the celebrations continued with the fraternal meal, a moment that was propitious to thank “loudly” all the people who have contributed to the formation. Here are the words of our guests of honour:

“Thanks, Lord, for your great Love that has been guiding us in the journey of religious life.

We thank you for the gift of vocation in our family of Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart; we thank you because today, with a sincere and free heart, we have given ourselves totally to your service.

We wish also to thank, with our poor words, the persons who have shared our joy today. First of all we would like to thank the celebrant, Fr Ambrogio, who has accepted to prepare us with his edifying words in the last stage of our initial formation up to this meeting with Jesus. Thanks, Fr Ambrogio, for all what you have done, and thanks for your prayers. Thanks for your example of Franciscan kindness



and simplicity.

We would like to thank gratefully the Mother general, Sr Emmapia, and the whole Council, who with so much affection and trust allowed us to donate us totally to God though our solemn vows. We say thank you with all our heart and we promise you that we will pray for your intentions.

Our gratitude now goes to our provincial Superior, Sr Maddalena, and to the sisters of the

Council who have guided us in our initial path up to this beautiful and joyful meeting on the day of our perpetual Vows. Thanks to all the sisters of our Province, especially to our formators, who have helped us make our radical choice. Thanks!

Now we would like to thank our dearest teacher of the international Juniorate, Sr Bernarda, who has guided us in the last two years with her suggestions and prayers; we thank with all our heart the sisters with whom we have shared the formation in this period of time and who have helped us for everything. Thanks, sisters!

A special thanks goes to the “Sacred Heart” community of Asisium, guided by Sr Chiaremilia; to all the sisters of the community our heartfelt thanks for your cooperation, patience, affection and prayer.



We do not mean to forget any one of you who are present here today with your prayer and affection: to each and every one of you we would like to express our gratitude: and thanks to your patience and affection that today we are what we are.

May Our Lady and St Joseph guide us in our path together with our patron Saints.

Thanks!”.



Open letter to the lay volunteers that are members of the Boards of MISSION TAU ONLUS.

Dearest Sabrina, Luigi, Massimiliano and Silvia, you have been at our side for about three years to implement our missionary charismatic project. I wish to express our heartfelt thanks from this Web page. I am doing this after visiting, during the last five years, all the communities scattered in the 21 countries where we are present. I was able to get an overview of the situation of our Congregation, and now I wish to address you, my dearest friends and collaborators of MISSION TAU ONLUS.



Our founding charism states clearly that we are an Institute founded for “apostolic missions”, that is to be next to the poor for their human promotion and for evangelization. This mission that has been entrusted us by God requires, not secondarily, a resolute spirit of fortitude and an ability to cooperate. Cooperation on the spot and with those who can be at our side, since necessities are huge and require, especially nowadays, planning skills, commitment and intelligence. Today we cannot even contemplate the idea of

acting alone, without being supported by generous and available laypeople.

Our sisters, who are missionaries in the most secluded and abandoned places, need help, because, in order to become the voice of those who have no say and are eager to redeem themselves, they need support and hold out their hand to those who can help them.

Therefore, here comes God’s Providence, who has never abandoned us for 150 years of life of the Congregation and has directed you here, so that you can be the hand that clasps the outstretched hand, giving it in the first place the strength of solidarity, a miraculous force that prodigiously conveys certain hope and heroic courage.

Our sisters in the “faraway missions” need you and your precious work; but it is us, as a family, as a Congregation, who need you. The voluntary work that you perform here and in the mission lands is a precious support that we cannot do without, it is a blessing from the Lord, it is the manifestation that He is always present, because He is Providence.

Through this letter I intend to express my heartfelt thanks also on behalf of the sisters of the Council, of the sisters who work at the fore front and also on behalf of the numerous children, sick and families that you help.

Your service is a witness that I wish was known first of all by the sisters of our religious Family, then by other people as well,





our acquaintances and benefactors, and also on a large scale, since it is part of the vast array of charitable and voluntary service initiatives and it testifies that our Western world, especially Italy, is not the selfish and calculating world that the media like to depict; in Italy, especially, there is a lot of sensitivity and attention for those who suffer, above all poor children.

Our missionaries express personal and collective needs, hopes and aspirations in the name of those that they help.

ing dedi-

cation. Over 800 children are welcomed in the homes that

have been built for them (hostels and boarding schools), attended to with dignity in daily life and supported in their school years. This particular area of the mission has a great value before God and before men, as it keeps children away from the danger, quite impending in some countries, to fall prey to exploiters without any scruples. In developing countries, the life of many children is jeopardized by their families' poverty, by social injustices, by many people's badness and indifference, and by the state institutions' inability to defend their rights and their integrity.

Especially children and young people are the target of our sisters' commitment and loving

22

MISSION TAU ONLUS, that you have founded, is a golden seed that does not get lost in the big charity granary, but shines as it is fed by a wonderful light, the light of gratuitousness.

Thanks Sabrina. Thanks Luigi. Thanks Silvia. May the Father of the poor bless you.



With love,
Sr Emmapia Bottamedi



Sisters who celebrate the jubilee of their religious Profession 2010

75°

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sr M. Franca Franzato | Prof. 13-05-1935 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|

70°

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sr M. Battista Lorenzetto | Prof 24-08-1940 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
| 2. Sr M. Patrizia Dotto | Prof 24-08-1940 | Prov. "M. Immacolata" |
| 3. Sr M. Tomasina Toso | Prof 24-08-1940 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |

65°

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sr M. Gianmarca Fracalanza | Prof 21-07-1945 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
| 2. Sr M. Terlisa Pattaro | Prof 21-07-1945 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
| 3. Sr M. Teodosia Conte | Prof 21-07-1945 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
| 4. Sr M. Rachele Menis | Prof 21-07-1945 | Prov. "S. Luigi IX" |

60°

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sr M. Ann Charles | Prof 19-04-1950 | Prov. "S. Francis" |
| 2. Sr M. Carmen Netto | Prof. 10-05-1950 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
| 3. Sr M. Loredana Favaro | Prof. 10-05-1950 | Prov. "S. Antonio" |
| 4. Sr M. Rosapia Cuzzolin | Prof. 10-05-1950 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
| 5. Sr M. Matilde Comietto | Prof. 10-05-1950 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
| 6. Sr M. Mafalda Porato | Prof 10-05-1950 | Prov. "S. Luigi IX" |
| 7. Sr M. Petra Zanghi | Prof. 07-07-1950 | Prov. "S. Francis" |
| 8. Sr Mariafederica Volpato | Prof 04-10-1950 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
| 9. Sr M. Odilia Bonanni | Prof. 04-10-1950 | Prov. "M. Immacolata" |
| 10. Sr M. Apriana Mazzocato | Prof 04-10-1950 | Prov. "S. Maria degli Angeli" |
| 11. Sr M. Luigia Miglioranza | Prof. 04-10-1950 | Prov. "S. Elisabetta" |
| 12. Sr M. Beatrice Di Luca | Prof. 04-10-1950 | Prov. "M. Immacolata" |

50°

1. Sr M. Isabel Oyarzun	Prof. 05-03-1960	Prov. "S. Antonio"
2. Sr Mariarina Menoncello	Prof. 03-05-1960	Prov. "S. M. d. Angeli"
3. Sr Maria Paola Grespan	Prof. 03-05-1960	Prov. "M. Immacolata"
4. Sr M. Teofana Quagliotto	Prof. 03-05-1960	Prov. "S. M. d. Angeli"
5. Sr M. Loredana Borsato	Prof. 03-05-1960	Prov. "S. M. d. Angeli"
6. Sr M. Françoise Aletrari	Prof. 10-05-1960	Prov. "S. Elisabetta"
7. Sr M. Monica Hannoulli	Prof. 10-05-1960	Prov. "S. Elisabetta"
8. Sr M. Ellen Marie Mulloy	Prof. 13-08-1960	Prov. "St Francis"
9. Sr M. Margherita Di Giovanna	Prof. 14-09-1960	Prov. "S. M. d. Angeli"
10. Sr M. Fabiola Sbrizzai	Prof. 14-09-1960	Prov. "S. M. d. Angeli"
11. Sr M. Giancarla Bresolin	Prof. 14-09-1960	Prov. "S. M. d. Angeli"
12. Sr Mariabruna Severin	Prof. 14-09-1960	Prov. "S. M. d. Angeli"
13. Sr M. Ermellina Callegari	Prof. 14-09-1960	Prov. "S. M. d. Angeli"
14. Sr M. Enrica Bordignon	Prof. 14-09-1960	Prov. "S. Antonio"
15. Sr M. Adolfina Landi	Prof. 29-09-1960	Prov. "M. Immacolata"
16. Sr M. Elda Cecchetto	Prof. 29-09-1960	Prov. "M. Immacolata"
17. Sr M. Terenzia Bortolato	Prof. 29-09-1960	Prov. "M. Immacolata"
18. Sr M. Mirella Venturin	Prof. 29-09-1960	Prov. "S. Antonio"

25°

1. Sr M. Elsa Castillo	Prof. 11-02-1985	Prov. "S. Antonio"
2. Sr M. Soraida Portello	Prof. 11-02-1985	Prov. "S. Antonio"
3. Sr M. Donatella Toso	Prof. 15-08-1985	Prov. "M. Immacolata"



Province
“S. Mary of the Angels”



The first celebration in the Central African Republic

Perpetual Profession

Sr Elodie Semdouto

Bouar, 7 March 2010

At Bouar’s Cathedral of the Central African Republic, on March the 7th, and with a large presence of the people, was celebrated the Perpetual Profession of Sr. Elodie Semdouto, our first sister from that nation. The Holy Mass, presided over by the Bishop of Bouar, Msgr. Armando Gianni, was experienced by everybody with much exultation, expressed by the abundance of chants, music and dance. This country’s culture was evidenced throughout many different moments, and it contributed to heighten the participation and rejoicing. The enthronement of the Word was both characteristic and expressive: dancing while walking through the central corridor of the magnificent cathedral, a group of girls from our School in Maigarò carried on their shoulders the “tripoi” (a sort of litter with a chair on top) on which was sitting, with a dignified behaviour, a three-year-old girl who stood tall holding the Holy Book, then handed it over, at the foot of the altar, to the priest. The numerous and varied offerings carried over to the altar from Sr. Elodie’s parents and relatives were expressive of their culture as well.

But above all, the most important was the understanding of what Sr. Elodie has accomplished by signaling with her definitive “yes” her union with God. Let’s hear from herself her testimony.

The Perpetual Profession is a “definitive bonding” in following Christ according to the example of Abraham, who abandoned everything: his land, his father’s home, his family, to follow God’s will, with whom he made an “alliance”.

The Eucharistic celebration of my perpetual votes, even if it was celebrated in the middle of Lent, assumed a solemn character. It was in fact a day of feast and rejoicing, an anticipation of the great rejoicing of Easter.

Bouar’s Cathedral “Mary Mother of the Church” was extraordinarily full with a crowd of faithful, with friars and nuns, relatives, girls from our convent, even with administrative and local authorities from the city of Bouar.



The Holy Mass was presided by His Excellency, Msgr. Armando Gianni, our Ordinary of the place, who wanted to preside himself the celebration, accompanied by some priests from the Bouar Diocese. I also bless the Lord, my Shepherd and my Everything, for the special grace with which He has granted me in this day, as well as I bless my sisters from the Maigaro and Niem communities, the sisters from the Apostolic Region of Cameroon, who came specially for me.

The presence of the General Mother, Sr. Emmapia, who received my religious vows, and of the Counselor, Sr. Gracy, was of great comfort, both moral and spiritual. The Lord has wanted us to glorify Him during the season of His suffering and passion, according to our charisma, which consists in the “contemplation of the pierced Heart of the crucified Christ”. I give thanks to the Lord for my religious Family and for every sister of the Congregation that has received me in the person of the General Mother.

In faith I abandon myself on the hand of He who has loved me and who has made with me an alliance forever.

In praise of the Lord,

Sr. Elodie of the Immaculate Conception



...by your staff guides...



...and reassures me”

...the grace of the origins



Province

“St. Louis IX”

Lord has done great things for us...

The intense ecclesial life in Lithuania (Kretinga)



Our community lived an intense moment of ecclesial life in January, and more precisely in the second week of the month.

It all started with the celebration of the provincial chapter of the Friars Minor, during which the friars decided to dedicate a day to sharing with the representatives of the whole Franciscan family present in Lithuania. We took part too and it was a moment of intense Franciscan fraternal life.

However, what made us rejoice even more was the visit of the Papal Nuncio in Lithuania, Msgr Luigi Bonazzi. Indeed, in the afternoon of January 12, he met two of the religious families present in Kretinga and then he celebrated the

Holy Mass in the parish church. All the capitular friars and a big crowd attended, heedless of the intense cold -minus 19 °C- since they wanted to express the joy of ecclesial communion by rallying around the Holy Father’s representative.

Later, the Nuncio met the representatives of the Meg and Gifra movements in the territory of our community. The young people’s joy and amazement was indescribable. For the first time, they could meet and talk friendly

with the Holy Father’s representative!!! There really was reason to rejoice!!! During the meeting, His Excellency also encouraged the young people to follow Christ with courage and resoluteness,



...the grace of the origins



well aware that by doing so they would often have to swim against the stream.

Then, in the evening, before celebrating Compline, he stopped in our community to have a very fraternal chat with us and spent the night in our home, in the rooms reserved for the guests. A still bigger gift was the Eucharistic celebration in our small chapel on the following morning. Truly the Lord overwhelmed us with big gifts and made us feel once more His benevolence and His love.

Only in Lithuania can you experience the wonder of a country completely whitened by snow and where life goes on normally at minus 20 degrees Celsius during daytime. And you should see how wonderful is the whitened landscape, which looks even whiter when it is enlightened by a splendid sun or how amazing and original is the partly frozen sea. These are postcard landscapes, but we can enjoy their beauty -live.

This too is what it means to be Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Kretinga.





For 150 years following the steps of Providence

Province "Mary Immaculate"

50th anniversary of Borgo San Michele

15 November 2009



There is really a lot of bustle at Borgo for this anniversary. Everyone has rallied there. The memories go back to the images of love, creativity and courage of the sisters who arrived in Borgo San Michele back in 1959.

On November 7 of that year, Sr Rita Bolzon, Sr Marilena Visentin, Sr Lilia Cavallin and Sr Antonella Antoniou arrived in Borgo filled with joy, accompanied by Mr Giovanni Libralato (our Sr Giannateresa's brother and Sr Adriana's father), the only one who had welcomed them in Latina. Nobody had been warned, there was no parish back then and, at first,



the four pioneers had felt a bit perplexed.

The town council, with which the superiors had dealt, had alleged some administrative questions, but the people from the village wanted them at all costs. Mr Libralato had given all his energies, he had collected signatures in the whole borough and he finally saw a common dream come true: our children would be taught by nuns at the nursery school!

Common people immediately expressed their welcome through generous help for their subsistence. Poverty was widespread in the Agro Pontino area in those years, but the sisters could always count on the population's affection and sup-

port.

After the solemn presentation made by His Excellency the Bishop during the Sunday Holy Mass on November 8, our pioneers took matters into their own hands. Since

there was no parish priest, they set up the parish themselves and became a point of reference for all: catechesis groups, Catholic Action, altar boys, nursery school, vocational school, Sunday school, visits to the sick, plays, trips, etc... it was a succession of initiatives and in just a few weeks the sisters' house became the house of the borough, especially that of children and young people.

The photographs shown during the celebration displayed the vitality of a mission that was characterized by simplicity, availability and fraternal welcome, and lived among the people and with the people: unpublished images of the fruitful and zealous apostolate by the FMSH.

On his arrival, the parish priest, Fr Odoardo Felici, was able to count on a community that was already organized and on the sisters' active cooperation for all activities and initiatives of evangelization.

It is difficult to sum up in a few words the fervour of the beginning and the serene joy of a gratuitous service for the Kingdom of God that has been going on for 50 years!

Today's celebrations bring us back to a history that it is right to honour, by reliving it with emotion and



gratefulness. The accounts that were gathered during the convivial meal bore witness to the many sisters who trod this land and expressed the Love of the Pierced Heart of Jesus Christ with their own life.

Therefore, the attending authorities (Latina's mayor, Mr Vincenzo Zaccheo, and the town councillors) had good reason to give a public homage to the Congregation, which was represented by Sr Ermenegilda

Cavasin, the Provincial Superior, her Council and many sisters who had been invited for

the occasion, among which one of the founders, Sr Marilena. The

work that has been carried out with so much joy and abnegation was recognized.

In the homily of the solemn Eucharistic Celebration, His Excellency Msgr Petrocchi explained the meaning of the religious consecration:

a gift from God to us: gratuitous and free election,

our self-giving to God: full and exclusive belonging,

our self-giving to others: a generous self-giving in the service.

This was really the case in Borgo San Michele and the people have seen, behind the gestures, the meaning of a presence that, regardless of the achievements, makes the love of God alive.

During an amiable conversation with Sr Ermenegilda, His Excellency expressed his wish that the mission would go on with the same zeal and stressed the preciousness of our presence in that local Church.



“Welcome of the associated laywomen in Borgo Carso”

Telling the history of the “LFMSH” group of Borgo Castro is not an easy task. Like all meaningful things, it has grown like the small seed from the evangelical parable.

Saint Francis liked to call Clare simply “*the Christian*”. We can do the same with those women who are really committed to live the Gospel, really “*Christian*”. After having performed various services of animation and assiduously taken part in the meditation on the Word for two years, they have now accepted the invitation to live witnessing their faith in the Lord. They do it simply. Their commitment thoughtfully encompasses prayer, personal Christian formation, Church cleaning, testimony of the Gospel, cooperation to the missionary service and Christian animation in the families of Borgo, first of all in their own one.

Gradually the desire to take an increasingly active part in the action of evangelization has grown in their mind, so much so that the proposal to formally adhere to the Laypeople associated to the sisters present in Borgo has found a fertile ground and, with the cooperation of the parish priest, Fr Libardo Rocha Camargo, and under the guide of Sr Oliviera, helped by Sr Stefania and Sr Cristina, it came true in the foundation of the first group of LFMSH (Lay Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart) of “Mary Immaculate” religious province, Rome.

The Association has its own Statute and is organized in local fraternities supervised by a presiding council. The commitment of belonging, expressed by a request for admission, is accepted by the Provincial Superior of the sisters and is communicated by the handing of a TAU bearing the acronym LFMSH.

On Sunday November 29, 2009, the first 16 candidates were welcomed in the Roman province of the Association. The solemn Liturgy, painstakingly prepared and animated by the sisters, was really moving. With his natural enthusiasm, the parish priest took part in the common joy by remarking with pastoral precision, in his homily, the meaning of the act, which reflects in itself the three basic “yes”:

- “yes” from God to man
- “yes” from man to God
- Mary’s “yes”.



His words captured with gratitude the truth of a mutual service, carried out in simple gratuitousness and witnessed through the consistency of one's life.

After the celebration, it was nice to rejoice like one true family: sisters and newly associated laywomen, together with husbands and friends, and start feeling interested in one another through the invisible bonds of a fraternity created by the Spirit of the Lord.

32

We address an invitation to all those who wish to associate with us: women, men and young people, to walk together this path which is life, guided by the charism of the FMSH, a missionary charism that commits us to bring the love of Christ Crucified and spread the Word of the Gospel everywhere.

In this time of Advent, the lay fraternity has undertaken to bring the light of Christmas and the Gospel to all the families of the village: a nice testimony of courage and faith in the Lord who comes.





Province

“St Anthony”

For 150 years following the steps of Providence

CHILE: The earthquake in Chile ... and its consequences

27 febrero 2010 - Chile



33

The news reported by the medias about the terrible earthquake that devastated Chile in the last few days have made us aware of and share in the tragedy of the population that was hit by such a serious disaster. It is with anxiousness and worry that we have been waiting to get some information from our sisters who live in Santiago and in Rancagua. The letter from Sr Ines Pavan, the Provincial Superior of St Anthony Latin American Province, presents us now an outlook of the real situation of our sisters and their homes so that, even if we are far away, we can express our sisterly solidarity and share their suffering.

The 8.8 strong earthquake and the following tsunami, one of the biggest in the world, took place on February 27, at 3.34 am. It was a seism whose strength was never before experienced in Chile, which is a land where earthquakes are frequent, but this time it concerned a large swath of territory, from the main port of Valparaiso, in the 5th Region, to Temuco, in the 8th Region, where 80% of the Chilean population lives, with terrible consequences. The death toll has reached 800, and only 270 of them have been identified by relatives and acquaintances, certainly because entire families died under



...the grace of the origins

the rubbles or taken away by the sea. This earthquake has struck a 2,400 kilometer-long stretch of Chilean territory.

Over 500,000 houses have been destroyed, and on top of that we must add fear, sadness and desperation from the families who have lost everything, including their relatives.

Thanks God, all the missionary sisters of our Congregation who work in Chile are fine, and they are sharing with the people these moments of pain and anguish.

However, we had a loss in Rancagua, where a professional technical school was being started for the poor girls who some years ago were the guests of Hogar Santa Rosa (family home), since the government had required that these girls be accommodated in an Open Center.

The building is no longer accessible because the walls are tumbledown and the roof and windows have collapsed. The most affected classrooms are the computer and geriatrics ones: the roof of the classrooms



has completely collapsed and all the computers have been destroyed. To this must be added the structural damages suffered by the sisters' house, which require urgent repair.

We must also say that almost all of our students are living in tents with their families, because their houses are tumbledown.

We are certain that God will not abandon us amidst so much pain; we have experienced the sympathy and worry of many people, starting by you, as well as teachers, parents and friends who, after many difficulties, managed to get in touch with us in order to hear some news. We thank them for their interest, especially for their



prayers, which accompany us, not only us sisters, but all our brothers and sisters who are suffering.

The other side of the coin is the commitment and solidarity of volunteer men and women, who got out of their homes to help other people, offering their time, professional skills or material resources. They were not only Chileans, but many have come to help us from other countries as well.

We are confident that soon basic needs will be restored, such as food, water, light, communications, roads and transports, so that aid can reach everyone.

We enclose some photographs of the Rancagua community out of solidarity for our sisters, through prayer and deeds, in the sad aftermath of the terrible earthquake.

May Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the patroness of Chile, bring new lights of hope and serenity in the hearts of all Chileans.





For 150 years following the steps of Providence

... To the other side



SR SANDRA SPACCIALBELLI
THE IMMACULATE
HEART OF MARY
Emilia Spaccialbelli
Born in Corinaldo (AN)
on 05-03-1921
Died in Gemona
on 20-12-2008

In this time of Advent, the echo of the supplication of the Church-bride is increasingly pressing: Maranatha... Come, o Lord Jesus!... It is the whisper that our sister San-

dra repeatedly murmured when she felt that her time was drawing near: Come, o Lord Jesus!

And Jesus, faithful to her expectations, assured her: I shall come soon and I shall take you with me!

Indeed He came on 20 December, in the middle of the night, and he found His bride awake, ready to say "Here I am!"... And so He took her with Him and led her to the eternal wedding feast.

Sr Sandra, nee Emilia Spaccialbelli, was born in 1921 in Corinaldo, in the Italian province of Ancona, from a family of farmers, a good soil to develop human and Christian values and virtues and form the fertile humus, the nourishment for the small vocational seed that Emilia felt was growing in her heart. To give her life to God and the brothers: that was her deep desire, which came true when she was 21 and asked to enter the

FMSH Congregation, followed, some years later, by one of her siblings, Sr Arduina.

After her profession in 1954, she stayed for some time in the Mother House and in 1956 she was sent by obedience in the rest home in Paluzza for about nine years: there, she trained for what would become the main mission of her life at the service of old people.

In 1966 she was transferred to the rest home of Buia, where she offered her best energies at the side of old people, as we can read in the Parish bulletin:

"Sr Sandra, in many years of service in Buia, your work has always been huge, your timetable never had a beginning nor an end. You kept offering your help and your mission with tireless commitment and always with the unfailing smile and kindness that have characterized you in relationships with all others."

The “freedom of the city of Buia” that was conferred on her in 1999, well expresses the people’s gratitude for Sr Sandra’s fruitful mission, which lasted for over thirty years, with her old people, who needed everything, but especially her active and discreet presence, sweet and lovable like a mother. We can define Sr Sandra as “the angel of old people”, as pointed out by the following witness:

“Sr Sandra wiped so many tears, gave hope and courage to so many broken and disheartened spirits, filled with her presence so many solitudes of old and sick people, with the patience and common sense of an humble servant of Jesus Christ. We wish that her lamp is always full of oil that feeds the flame for the wedding day in the house of the Father”.

This wish came true when, in 2001, she was retired in the Mother House for health reasons: there she could bring to completion the offer of herself in another, even deeper dimension: through the trial of physical pain, in sacrifice and prayer... The oil in the lamp grew day by day, fed by the love that she offered quietly and always with a smile.

Supported by the lovingly guide of Mary, of whom she was a strong devotee, she kept loving and when she could not give anything else to those who helped her, she rewarded them like this: “I will pray a Salve Regina for you”... and she was sure that Mary would make up for her poverty. Sr Sandra, now that you are in heaven,

keep invoking your Queen and Mother for us, for all your dears ones, for those that you loved and served when you were down here.

Ask for the gift of holy vocations that can take your place among the old people who still need a presence like yours, full of goodness and charity.



**SR ANDREINA GENOVESE
OF THE HOLY CROSS**

Dorina Genovese
Born in Paese (TV)
on 17-12-1937
Died in Gemona
on 15-12-2009

In this period of Advent, Liturgy makes us repeat frequently, with joy and insistence: “*Come, Lord Jesus!*”, and today, December 15, while some sisters were praying next to her bed, Sr Andreina Genovese went towards Jesus.

In the Church, the community started the morning prayers by repeating, as if they meant to speak for the dying sister: “*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word*”.

And the Lord’s will was done: Jesus welcomed his faithful bride in Heaven.

Sr. Andreina, née Dorina Genovese, was born in Paese in 1937. At 18, she became a religious, as she belonged to a large family, where she had learned to live in faith and devotion.

Daddy Giobatta and mommy Maria welcomed 11 children from the Lord and, apart from Sr Andreina, another daughter had decided to serve directly the Lord, among the daughters of Our Lady Help of Christians.

Our sister was entrusted a number of tasks in various communities: wardrobe-keeper, student, teacher, superior...: her zeal made her keen on the youngest and committed to teach catechism to elementary school children and young people.

In the last few years, the Lord had asked her to offer him her suffering. In this trial, and especially recently, she showed an extraordinary ability to bear and a serenity that surprised all of us.

On the eve of her death, she confided to her sisters: “*I am climbing Calvary!*”, an expression that revealed her availability and serene and faithful abandonment to God’s will. Despite the great strain she had to endure, Sr Andreina worked until the last few days of her life, eager to fully accomplish the mission that the Lord had entrusted her.





**SR MARTINIANA OLIVIER
OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL
HELP**

Flora Olivier
Born in Volpago (TV)
on 10-12-1920
Died in Roma
on 24-12-2009

December 24, 2009, Christmas Eve: Sr Martiniana, ne Flora Olivier, passed away. A long illness made it impossible for her even to communicate; she only gazed amazed and almost estranged a reality that she could no longer grasp. Who was Sr Martiniana? On this Christmas Eve, we think she has earned a place among the shepherds and housewives going to the Grotto of the Nativity. Over there, she could well be the shepherd, with her sleeves tucked up, carrying the laundry basket, half busy and half grumpy: it is really her, engrossed in her tasks and being quite aware that there is a lot of work to be done! True, because domestic chores were always entrusted to her in her 64 years of religious life, before her illness brought her to the infirmary in Saffi Avenue in the year 2000. Who knows if she will mount guard also in front of the holy grotto so that no one walks there just when she has finished cleaning? We still picture her like this, and we smile at the anguish that translated her desire to carry out the tasks she had been assigned in a proper way. She entered the Monastery of

Gemona at 22, she professed the simple Vows in 1945 and, five years later, she reached the goal of Perpetual Profession. She spent the first 16 years of her religious life between the Italian Regions of Friuli and Veneto, mostly in rest homes. From 1962 onwards, she served in the Roman Province and was destined to St Elizabeth community in Pitagora Square, Rome, with two short intervals in Ripe (province of Ancona) and Saffi Avenue, Rome.

The file is quite monotonous when it comes to describe her duties within the community: “various tasks”, but we know what it means to spend all one’s life performing humble but precious works! In matters involving housework, she had a pre-emption right and you had to leave it to her, convinced as she was that she knew her business! Quite simple in her words, she alternated between an Italian of her own and colorful Venetian expressions, thus giving a nice ring to the grammatical mistakes that she ignored. She, Sr Martiniana, could certainly be excused! We must acknowledge the hard work that she always took upon herself, and even though she sometimes grumbled about other sisters’ heedlessness, she had a real spirit of sacrifice and sense of belonging. Sr Martiniana had always felt comfortable in Pitagora Square, it was her home; there, she could express herself completely freely, without

having to conceal her mood, be it serene or less so... that’s the way we have known her. We wish her a well deserved rest, though we are sure that she will certainly manage to find some work in Heaven’s crib!



**SR MARIA MOLARO
OF THE ANGEL**
Born in Coderno (UD)
on 29-09-1919
Died in Le Mans (FRANCIA)
on 04-02-2010

Sr Maria Molaro was born on September 29, 1919 in Coderno, a small village in North-Eastern Italy, in a very pious and practising family. It was on the knees of her dad, Antonio, and of her mom, Santa, that she learned to pray and love God. When she was 19 she heard the Lord’s call and followed Him into consecrated life. She had heard that in a small town, Gemona, not far away from home, there were Franciscan missionary sisters of the Sacred Heart and so she decided to join them and entered Novitiate in 1938. After her religious profession she was sent into rest homes as a nurse, at the service of the sick. In 1947, when she was 28, aware that she was part of a missionary congregation, she accepted joyfully the obedience to go to France, and precisely to Le Mans. She was one of the first four sisters who founded the first community in Le Mans diocese and she served



old and sick priests in St Aldric's house. There she gave her best energies, by comforting, curing and accompanying many priests to their last encounter with the Lord. Her mission was always at the side of ministers of Christ. Indeed, she was transferred to Sées diocese, in the higher seminary, where many seminarians benefited from her spirit of prayer, sacrifice, availability and, above all, from her testimony of consecrated life. For some years she served old and sick priests in Chapelle, near Sées, where she was also the responsible for the community.

After she had lived many years in those missions, she was transferred to Beauvais diocese, in Tracy le Mont, in "Bernard" rest home, where she was named as the community responsible and devoted herself with compassion and professionalism to the care for the sick. Not far from there, in Attichy, she continued her service of charity and assistance to the sick. Wherever she passed, she was always liked both by the staff and by the assisted, owing to her kindness and generosity.

Obedience sent Sr Maria to another country, Switzerland, where she continued her mission of charity. As she possessed a big missionary spirit, she lived these partings with a spirit of faith and for the sake of the Lord.

In 1966 she got sick and her health did not allow her to continue her mission. Therefore, she went to Le Mans provincial house, where she lived her best mission: that of prayer and quiet presence at the side of the sisters. She spent hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament, she prayed the whole rosary for the intentions of the Church, especially for the fidelity of the priests, the congregation and the poorest. As she liked community life very much, she took part in all communal times of prayer and recess.

Her health conditions deteriorated on February 2, the day of consecrated life. She offered herself and her suffering to the Lord so

that He may bless and keep calling young people to his service for priestly and religious life. She was very conscious and had a clear mind when she received the sacrament of Extreme Unction. Now she keeps interceding with the Father for us.

Thanks, Sr Maria, for your presence among us, for your testimony and the promise you made us on the last day of your life: that you will keep praying the Father for us and watch over our Province that you loved so much.



**SR MAURILIA FILIPPETTO
OF THE CROSS**

Erminia Filippetto

Born in Istrana (TV)

on 20-03-1913

Died in GEMONA

on 12-02-2010

"Jesus summoned the disciples and said, "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat... He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" "Seven," they replied. He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then, taking the seven loaves he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute, and they distributed them to the crowd. They also had a few fish. He said the blessing over them and ordered them distributed also. They ate and were satisfied". (Mark 8:1-8)

The evangelical Word of today's Liturgy is the Icon, from which our Sr Maurilia drew her inspiration to carry out faithfully the mission the Lord had entrusted her since the first few years of her religious life.

Erminia Filippetto (Sr Maurilia) was born back in 1913 in Pezzan d'Istrana (Italian North-Eastern province of Treviso) from a family

that was rich in values. Her parents, daddy Antonio and mommy Giovanna, strived to bring up their children in a Christian way, and this helped foster special vocations in the family. Indeed, very soon the daughter Maria asked to be welcomed among the Sisters of the Providence and the son Luigi entered Treviso Seminary to become a priest. Erminia too, when she was 25, answered courageously and joyfully the call of the Lord by joining the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Gemona.

Soon after her Profession, Sr Maurilia was sent by obedience to Treviso, in the Cronici House, to give her generous help in the kitchen to the benefit of so many poor people. She stayed there for 14 years and then she went back to Gemona to serve at the Stigmatine Fathers'... But it was in the Christ Parish in Udine that Sr Maurilia could give her best energies and reveal her talents. Her long stay in that community (24 years) enabled her to know all the parishioners, follow them while they grew and achieved maturity and share with them their joys and pains, their toils and hopes. Sr Maurilia had a word of comfort for everyone, she was very understanding towards all those who got near her and with her witty remarks she was able to play down even the most difficult situations. The many sacrifices that she made serving as a cook were really praiseworthy. Jesus' words: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25: 40) accompanied her daily so that she was always free and serene towards everyone.

She gave all her energies until her strength abandoned her. She then seized, through the words of her superiors, Jesus' invitation: "Come away by yourselves and rest a while"(Mark 6:31) and so, in 1989, she went back to the Mother House to continue her precious mission by offering her prayers and suffering. On Friday 12 February, at dawn, in communion with Jesus, Sr Maurilia committed her life to the Father.



**SR AUSILIA ZAMBONI
OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

Ida Zamboni

Born in Sesto al Regheno (PN)
on 06-01-1922
Died in GEMONA
on 14-03-2010

Today, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, called “Laetare: Rejoice”, the Sunday of the merciful Father, Sr Ausilia of the Holy Spirit was called to the eternal reward. It is the faithful bride who returns to her God, however not like the repented prodigal son, but as the

one who served the Lord as a FMSH with fidelity, joy and sacrifice.

Ida Zamboni, this was her name, lived as a religious for over 68 years.

She was born in Bagnarola di Sesto al Reghena, in the Italian North-Eastern province of Pordenone, on January 6, 1922, from mom Matilde and dad Aurelio. Her family was numerous and rich in faith, and from them she learned to love the Lord and make Him loved.

Once she became a member of our Congregation, Sr Ausilia carried out her mission as an educator among the children of the nursery school. She was highly esteemed for her ability and skills both as a teacher and a human being, by mothers as well as by many other people, since she was able to listen and give appropriate advice.

Only the Lord knows the good that she has sown during the many years in which she has accompanied and helped children grow according to God’s will, and listened benevolently to many people.

Even recently, although she was retired in the Mother House, she managed to stay in touch with many people who had been benefiting from her spiritual wealth. A special mention is deserved by her devotion to Our lady, whom she has always prayed with faith and taught other people to love. When her health conditions no longer allowed her to teach, she serenely accepted to be welcomed in the Mother House, where she continued to devote herself to prayer and to small needle works.

When the other sisters enquired about her health, her answer was always: “I thank the Lord!”.

*“If you have eyes to the heavenly Jerusalem,
you would find these tribulations very
petty compared the happiness
thet awaits you” (Laura Leroux)*