

Missionary of the **HOLY FACE** BLESSED MARIA PIERINA DE MICHELI

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 BLESSED MARIA PIERINA DE MICHELI

summary

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The Feast of the Holy Face of Jesus is an important occasion for accepting the invitation that was extended by the Virgin Mary to Blessed Maria Pierina De Micheli, to honour him and praise him. It is an important opportunity to more deeply understand the meaning of the devotion to the Face of Christ, disfigured and suffering due to our sins. To look at him, contemplate him, love him and console him was the Blessed's mission, and therefore it is also the mission of those of us who follow her charism. This year the occasion falls on 28 February, the day before Ash Wednesday, when the whole Church begins the journey of conversion and penance in preparation for Easter. As baptized people we are called, therefore, to change our direction and to return to God the Father, who is always ready to welcome us with his love and mercy.

In the recent Holy Year we learned to

know and live mercy in our daily lives. The rediscovery of this virtue invites us to carry out the corporal and spiritual works of charity towards our brothers and sisters. This is why the feast of the Holy Face marks the beginning of an intense time in which we must commit ourselves to giving even more of ourselves to others, seeking to eliminate selfishness, which is the cause of many sins.

We can do this by asking for help from the Virgin Mary, the perfect disciple of Christ, who is always ready to welcome us and guide us to an encounter with her Son. It is she who opens the doors of divine mercy to us, indicating Jesus on the Cross to us, who gave all of himself for us, to the point of giving up his life. May the contemplation of Christ's Passion and of his Face help us on our journey of faith and bring us to the joy of the resurrection.

The editorial



SAINTHOOD AND ITS LABORIOUS ECCLESIAL PROCESS

We are publishing the lecture by Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, on the occasion of the opening of the academic year of the Studium of the dicastery, which was held at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome on Monday, January 9, 2017.

1. Ten canonizations and fourteen beatifications were celebrated in 2016. In particular, on June 5 in Rome, in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis canonized Blessed Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary (born Jan Papczyński), Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary († 1701) and Blessed Maria Elizabeth Hesselblad, Foundress of the Bridgettine Order of the Most Holy Savior of St. Bridget († 1957).

On September 4 Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (born Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu) was canonized, Foundress of the Congregations of the Missionaries of Charity, Nobel Peace Prize winner and charismatic figure of the last century († 1997).

On October 16 the following canonizations took place:

the young José Sánchez del Río, who was martyred when he was not yet fifteen

in 1928, during the Mexican religious persecution;

the Argentine priest José Gabriel del Rosario Brochero, an icon of the tireless dedication of a priest towards the needy († 1914);

the French Salomone Leclercq (born Guillaume-Nicolas-Louis), Professed Member of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, martyred in 1792 during the French Revolution;

the Spaniard Manuel González García, Bishop of Palencia and Founder of the Eucharistic Reparation Union and of the Congregation of the Eucharistic Missionary of Nazareth († 1940);

the Italian priest Lodovico Pavoni, Founder of the Congregation of the Sons of Mary Immaculate († 1849);

the Italian priest Alfonso Maria Fusco, Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. John the Baptist († 1910);



the French nun Elizabeth of the Holy Trinity (born *Élisabeth Catez*) of the Order of Discalced Carmelites († 1906).

2. In addition to these canonizations, fourteen beatifications were celebrated in 2016.

April 23, in Burgos (Spain), the beatification of the martyrs *Valentín Palencia Marquina*, a diocesan priest, and four young lay people, who were killed during religious persecution of 1936;

May 21, in Cosenza (Italy), the beatification of the diocesan priest *Francesco Maria Greco*, Founder of the Congregation of the Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts († 1931);

June 11 in Vercelli (Italy), the beatification of the diocesan priest *Giacomo Abbondo* († 1788);

June 12 in Monreale (Italy), the beatification of *Maria of Jesus Santocanale* (born *Carolina*), Foundress of the Congregation of the Capuchin Sisters of the Immaculata of Lourdes († 1923);

June 18 in Foggia (Italy), the beatification of Sister

Maria Celeste Crostarosa, Foundress of the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer († 1755);

August 27 in Santiago del Estero (Argentina), the beatification of *Maria Antonia of St. Joseph* (born *Maria Antonia de Paz y Figueroa*), Foundress of the Beaterio of the Spiritual Exercises of Buenos Aires († 1799);

September 11 in Karaganda (Kazakhstan), the beatification of *Władysław Bukowiński*, a diocesan priest who lived in the time of communist persecution († 1974);

September 17 in Codrongianos (Italy), the beatification of *Elisabetta Sanna*, a lay widow, and professed member of the Third Order of St. Francis and of the Union of Catholic Apostolate founded by *St. Vincent Pallotti* († 1857)

September 24 in Würzburg (Germany), the beatification of the martyr *Engelmar Unzeitig*, a priest and professed member of the Congregation of the Missionary Order of *Mariannahill*, who died in Dachau in 1945;

October 8 in Oviedo (Spain), the beatification of diocesan priest *Jenaro Fueyo Castañón* and three lay parishioners, who were killed during the Spanish persecution of 1936;

October 29, 2016, in Madrid (Spain), the beatification of the benedictine *José Antón Gómez* and three lay brothers, who were also killed during the Spanish persecution of 1936;



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November 5 in Shkoder (Albania), the beatification of 38 martyrs who were killed during the communist dictatorship in Albania. The group of martyrs is made up of two bishops, 21 diocesan priests, seven Friars Minor, three Jesuits, one seminarian and four lay people, including an Aspirant to the consecrated life;

November 19 in Avignon (France), the beatification of Marie-Eugène de l'Enfant-Jésus (born Henri Grialou), priest of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, Founder of the Secular Institute of *Notre Dame de Vie* († 1967) ;

December 11, 2016, in Vientiane (Laos), the beatification of Mario Borzaga, professed priest of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and Paul Thoj Xyooj, a lay catechist, who were killed out of hatred of the Faith in 1960; and also the martyrs Joseph Thōo Tiñ, a diocesan priest, and ten companions, professed priests of the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris and of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, as well as four lay Laotian catechists, killed between 1954 and 1970.

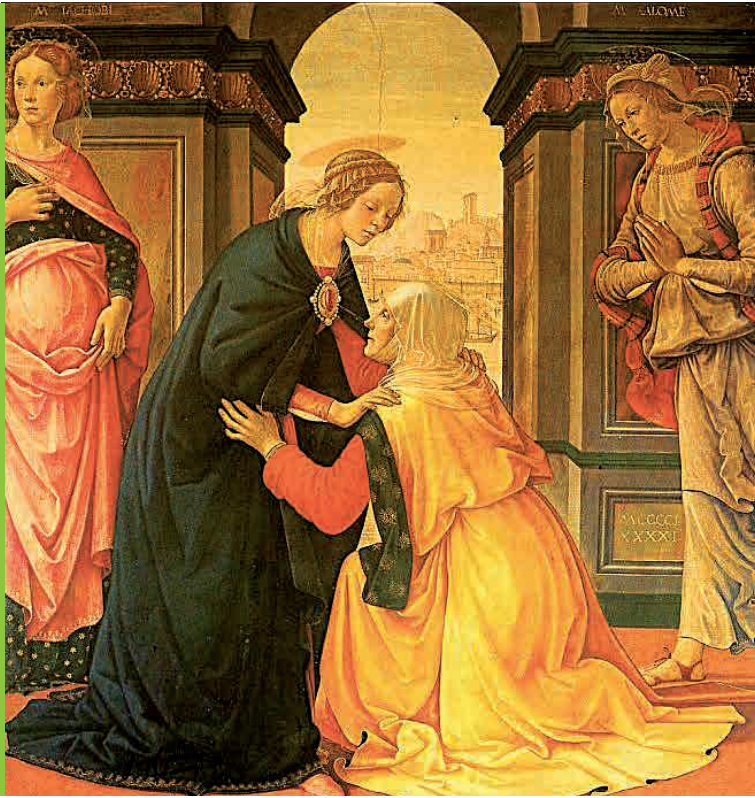
3. The ten canonized Saints come from eight different countries: Albania, Argentina, France (two), Italy (two), Poland, Mexico, Spain and Sweden. Among them is one Bishop (Manuel González García) and four priests (Gabriel

Brochero, Jan Papczyński, Lodovico Pavoni, Alfonso Maria Fusco), of whom three are founders of congregations: Jan Papczyński, Lodovico Pavoni, Alfonso Maria Fusco. There are also the French martyr Salomone Leclercq and three Sisters: Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Elisabeth Hesselblad - both foundresses of congregations - and the carmelite Elizabeth of the Holy Trinity. Lastly, there is a layman, the young Mexican martyr José Sánchez del Río.

There have been 14 beatification ceremonies held in seven different countries: Albania, Argentina, France, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan and Laos. The number of martyrs beatified were 69, including priests, consecrated and lay people. While there were seven confessors, four women and three men.

4. The canonizations and beatifications are the result of the long and hard work of postulators who were in close collaboration with the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Canonizations are the ultimate goal of the causes. Beatifications, however, constitute an intermediate step. Both have their foundations in the *Positiones*, namely in the dossier related to the virtues, the martyrdom and the miracles. In the decade between 2006-2016 there were 351 *Positiones* delivered in Congregations, from every part of the Church.





The details are the following:

Algeria 1; Argentina 1; Austria 2;
 Bolivia 1; Bosnia Erzegovina 2; Brazil 13;
 Canada 3; Chile 3; Colombia 7; Korea 2; Croatia 2;
 Cuba 1;
 Ecuador 1; El Salvador 1; the Philippines 4;
 France 10; Germany 7; Japan 1; Guatemala 2;
 India 8; England and Wales 3; Italy 139;
 Lebanon 2; Lithuania 1; Madagascar 1; Mexico 7;
 Myanmar 2;
 New Zealand 1; Peru 3; Poland 22; Portugal 6; Puerto
 Rico 3;
 Czech Republic 1; Romania 3; Singapore 1; Slovakia
 2; Somalia 1;
 Spain 60; the United States of America 7; South Africa 1;
 Uganda 2; Hungary 7; Uruguay 1.

Of these 351 *Positiones*, 293 contain the dossier on virtues and 58 on martyrs.

In recent years 6 *Positiones* have also been developed concerning the equivalent canonizations of

St. Hildegard of Bingen (2012), St. Angela of Foligno (2013), St. Pierre Favre (2013), St. Marie of the Incarnation (born Marie Guyart: 2014), St. José de Anchieta (2014) and St. François de Laval (2014).

Lastly there have been 3 *Positiones* related to the proclamation of three Doctors of the Church: St. John of Ávila (2010); St. Hildegard of Bingen (2012) and St. Gregory of Narek (2014).

5. From these arid statistics flows the lifeblood of holiness, impetuous and abundant, like fresh water in a desert oasis, which bursts into the world to fertilize it for good. Indeed, in every part of the world, the baptized, who are living the Beatitudes, become mirrors of the goodness and mercy of God the Trinity, promoting “a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society”.¹ Holiness, therefore, becomes human development, as is demonstrated in the apostolate of missionaries in the most disadvantaged areas of the world for example.

The Church teaches that not only priests and consecrated, but all baptized people are called to sanctity.²

This universal vocation to sanctity is founded on three elements received as a gift in baptism: “The first element is the affirmation that, in Baptism, all of the faithful have been raised

¹ COSTITUZIONE DOGMATICA, *Lumen gentium*, n. 40.

² *Ib.* n. 39-42.

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to a participation in the divine life as adopted children of God, and therefore made holy, and they have been called by the Father to grow in this holiness"; "The second element is the affirmation that the call of all to holiness is, inseparably, a call to apostolate, which takes place exercising the common priesthood received in Baptism"; "The third element is the recognition that we can fully respond to the universal call to holiness and to the apostolate in the exercise of temporal, civil and secular activities [...] and that many members of the Church – the lay faithful – are specifically called by God to this".³

In this way, with his usual openness and simplicity, Pope Francis invites everyone to sanctity, "the most beautiful face of the Church":

"many times we are tempted to think that sainthood is reserved only to those who have the opportunity to break away from daily affairs in order to dedicate themselves exclusively to prayer. But it is not so! Some think that sanctity is to close your eyes and to look like a holy icon. No! This is not sanctity! Sanctity is something greater, deeper, which God gives us. Indeed, it is precisely in living with love and offering one's own Christian witness in everyday affairs that we are called to become saints. And each in the conditions and the state of life in which he or she finds

him- or herself. But you are consecrated. Are you consecrated? — Be a saint by living out your donation and your ministry with joy. Are you married? — Be a saint by loving and taking care of your husband or your wife, as Christ did for the Church. Are you an unmarried baptized person? — Be a saint by carrying out your work with honesty and competence and by offering time in the service of your brothers and sisters. "But, father, I work in a factory; I work as an accountant, only with numbers; you can't be a saint there..." — "Yes, yes you can! There, where you work, you can become a saint. God gives you the grace to become holy. God communicates himself to you". Always, in every place, one can be-

³ JAVIER LÓPEZ DÍAZ, *Chiamata universale alla santità nella Chiesa*, in JESÚS MANUEL GARCÍA GUTIÉRREZ – ROSSANO ZAS FRIZ DE COL (edd.), *Teologia Spirituale e Concilio Vaticano II*, LAS, Roma 2016, p. 95-96.





come a saint, that is, one can open oneself up to this grace, which works inside us and leads us to holiness. Are you a parent or a grandparent? — Be a saint by passionately teaching your children or grandchildren to know and to follow Jesus. And it takes so much patience to do this: to be a good parent, a good grandfather, a good mother, a good grandmother; it takes so much patience and with this patience comes holiness: by exercising patience. Are you a catechist, an educator or a volunteer? Be a saint by becoming a visible sign of God's love and of his presence alongside us. This is it: every state of life leads to holiness, always!»⁴

6. The Church is this wide field in which baptism abundantly spreads the seeds of grace, which while growing bear fruits of goodness, brotherhood, forgiveness, solidarity, joy and peace.

Canonizations and beatifications are the beautiful windows in which the Church sets, for the contemplation and the imitation of the whole world, some of her children, who lived their existence as a donation to the aid of the needy, like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, or who gave their lives, like the fifteen year old martyr José Sánchez del Río, in order to remain faithful to their baptism.

For this reason, beatifications and canonizations are events of high Christian spirituality and of indisputable evangelization.

What is a beatification? Technically, beatification is reached either following the recognition of the martyr-

⁴ POPE FRANCIS, General Audience Address 19 November 2014, n. 2.

dom of a Servant of God or after the recognition of a miracle, meaning a scientifically inexplicable event. Beatification is the intermediate step towards a canonization. Concretely, with a beatification, the Supreme Pontiff declares the Servant of God "Blessed", allowing public and ecclesiastical devotion, limited to certain places, such as the diocese or eparchy; to particular religious groups, such as congregations or institutions founded by Blesseds or to which they belonged; or, lastly, to a particular country, due to the apostolate carried out by the new Blessed. Sometimes, as in the case of John Paul II, devotion can be extended to the dioceses that make a request. In any case, devotion of the Blesseds is of the permissive type, and not preceptive.

A beatification ceremony takes place during the Holy Mass. Immediately following the Penitential Act, the Pope's representative, who is usually the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, reads the Apostolic Letter, signed by the Holy Father, in which, after having traced a synthetic spiritual identikit of the Servant of God, the Pope solemnly declares that the Venerable Servant of God can be called "Blessed". The date of their feast day is then indicated - usually their *dies natalis* - which can be celebrated every year in the places and manners established by law.

Let us add that, since Pope Benedict XVI established that the celebration of beatifications will no longer take place in Rome, but in the diocese of origin of the Blessed, this function has in fact assumed a special meaning. Indeed, it is preceded by an appropriate period of preparation *in loco* of the faithful, who, with extensive programming in parishes and religious institutes, are aware of the life, virtues and the effectiveness of the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God.

This work of knowledge is designed to promote not only admiration of the heroism of the virtues or martyrdom of the Servant of God, but also the imitation of their fidelity to *sequela Christi*, reviving in everyone a desire and concrete commitment for their personal sanctification.

7. What is a canonization? If, after the beatification of a martyr or a confessor, a miracle is recognized, you come to the canonization, which is the act by which the Supreme Pontiff declares in a definitive and solemn form, that a faithful Catholic is currently in the eternal glory of paradise, that he intercedes for us with the Father and can be publicly venerated by the whole Church.⁵

Perhaps the nature of this pronouncement

should be indicated, in order to also give the right meaning and theological value to the arduous canonical procedure concerning the beatification and canonization processes.

In a Commentary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, from 29 June 1998, it is stated that the canonization of Saints belongs to the second paragraph or degree of the *Professio fidei*, that is, to those “truths about the doctrine concerning faith or customs proposed by Church in a definitive way.”⁶ It is those “teachings belonging to the dogmatic or moral area, which are necessary for faithfully keeping and expounding the deposit of faith, even if they have not been proposed by the Magisterium of the Church as formally revealed”.⁷

The *Commentary* continues offering concrete examples of doctrines belonging to the second degree of the *Professio fidei*, such as “the legitimacy of the election of the Supreme Pontiff or of the celebration of an ecumenical council, the canonizations of saints (*dogmatic facts*), the declaration of Pope Leo XIII in the Apostolic Letter *Apostolicae Curae* on the invalidity of Anglican ordinations”.⁸

As can be seen, the canonization holds the importance of a magisterial pronouncement of high theological quality. From this point of view, therefore, the meticulous, accurate, historical, canonical and theological process is understandable in order to reach the desired goal.

One might ask, in conclusion, what kind of assent is required for this kind of magisterial pronouncement, belonging to the second paragraph of the *Professio fidei*. We respond with what is declared in the aforementioned *Commentary* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: “With regard to the nature of assent: [...] in the case of the truths of the second paragraph, the assent is based on faith in the Holy Spirit’s assistance to the Magisterium and on the Catholic doctrine of the infallibility of the Magisterium (*doctrines de fide tenenda*).”⁹

8. The theological significance of the pronouncement of a canonization therefore warrants the careful and laborious efforts of postulators in putting together the various dossier on the virtues, martyrdom and miracles. In fact, all of this requires professionalism, interdisciplinary skills of a biblical-theological, historical and legal nature, and especially time and labour.

As a saint cannot be improvised, neither can a *Positio* be improvised.

Therefore, not Saint immediately, but rather a sure Saint.

6 CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Doutrinal Commentary on the Concluding Formula of the “Professio Fidei”* (29 June 1998), n. 1,2.

7 *Ib.*

8 *Ib.*, n. 2,2. The emphasis of the canonization is ours.

9 *Ib.*, n. 1,2.

5 Cf. ANGELO AMATO, *Santi e Beati. Come procede la Chiesa, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 2016*, p. 39-42.

IN ROME CARDINAL PIACENZA PRESIDES OVER THE FEAST DAY OF THE BLESSED REDISCOVERING DIVINE MERCY

The following is the homily of Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, Major Penitentiary, which he gave in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit Institute in Rome, on Sunday, September 11, 2016, on the occasion of Blessed Maria Pierina De Micheli's feast day.

This Sunday, the liturgy offers us a beautiful meditation on God's mercy, with three readings that develop this theme that is especially suited to the Jubilee in which we are living and to the memory of our dear Blessed Maria Pierina.

The first reading presents us with Moses, who asks the Lord to show mercy, and

the Lord consents. In the second reading, Paul recalls the mercy that he himself has received from the Lord, and he explains that this is an example that should inspire courage in everyone. The Gospel is a long chapter of Luke, which speaks of God's mercy with three parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, or



rather, the merciful father.

So let us take an insistent teaching on God's mercy. Our God is not an inflexible God, he is not a ruthless judge; he is rather a merciful Father, full of goodness and indulgence, who desires the salvation of all his children.

The first reading shows us the situation of the Jewish people after the sin of idolatry. This sin merits a very severe punishment, and God expresses his indignation to Moses in the face of this serious infidelity. God proposes to Moses that the people be destroyed and a new great nation be created as his descendants. But Moses pleads with vigor and insistence to the Lord. At this point the Lord abandons his plan. He, in fact, desired that Moses would intercede for the people, and Moses corresponded to his desire. In this way the mercy of God has been expressed in an absolutely extraordinary measure. How often even today, idols are built that take the place of God and we become slaves to the passions of power, money, pride, sex, slaves to a regression called progress, slaves to an undignified subordination called freedom, slaves to that ontological failure called success, yes, the mediatic success that, in most cases, renders those who reach it sterile and disappointing. Therefore we need people who, like Moses, through prayer, fasting, penance to the oblation of self and

vicarious substitution, implore forgiveness and mercy for us sinners. At this point we cannot but go with mind and heart to Mother Maria Pierina!

In the second reading Paul acknowledges that he did not deserve to become an apostle, because he was a blasphemer, a persecutor and a violent man. We come to know this also through his other Letters, in which he states that he fanatically persecuted the Church. Luke also speaks about this in the Acts of the Apostles. However, Paul says, *"I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."* He then adds: *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."* The mercy of God was shown in sending his only begotten Son, who took upon himself the sins of all men, obtaining for them forgiveness and an abundance of divine grace. Paul is a beneficiary in a very particular way of this mercy. But his experience should serve as an example. He says: *"But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life."*

Today too, at times, we must note with amazement, people who were always considered to be far away from the faith and the Church, who were conquered by the charm of the Truth that is Christ, and become apostles of the faith, in the face of people who are numerically within the Church but who betray the truth with shameless audacity. We therefore need "victim souls", who, like Mother Maria Pierina, implore the purification of the men and women of the Church. May they be converted and saved!

In today's Gospel passage it is Jesus himself who speaks to us of divine mercy, proposing three parables. The first concerns the shepherd and the lost sheep, and concludes: *"Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."*

Similarly, in the second parable, a woman has ten silver coins and loses one of them: she looks for it and when it is found she calls her friends to rejoice with them. In this case as well Jesus concludes: *"Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

The well-known parable of the merciful father shows all the depth and generosity of divine mercy. The situation of the younger son who went away from his father makes us understand the destruction that sin leads man to: it makes him lose any dignity and the very real reason to live. In this situation the young man falls within himself and decides to return and confess his own sin. And when the son makes his confession, the father restores to the repentant son all his dignity. He thinks only of his salvation, and says: *"for this my son was dead, and is alive*

again; he was lost, and is found.”

Even today this moving scenario is renewed when, truly repentant and firm in the resolve to never again desire falling into sin, we move in faith to make a good sacramental confession. However, due to the great confusion of ideas that surround us we need spiritual mothers like Mother Maria Pierina, who invoke the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds in order to avoid falling into the relativism and subjectivism that prevent us from seeing our sins and our omissions.

There is another consideration which seems only right to make: these three parables are not intended to merely show us God’s mercy, but also to change our hearts and make them participate in the same mercy of God. In fact, Jesus spoke them as a response to the Pharisees and scribes, who were murmuring against him for the mercy shown towards the publicans and sinners, and they said: *“This man welcomes sinners and eats with them”*. They thought that this behavior was to blame; Jesus instead invites them to share in the joy of divine mercy that is given. In the three parables the verb “rejoice” is repeated, like a refrain. In this way Jesus wants to open our hearts to God’s mercy not only in a passive way, namely making us more ready to accept it, but also in an active way, that is by us also practicing, in union with God, the same mercy towards our neighbour.

At this point, however, I think is fair to clarify that mercy should never be confused with the approval of evil nor with something incompatible with justice and the holy fear of God. In order to understand what sin is and what God’s mercy is it is enough just look with careful contemplation at the Crucifix with Our Lady of Sorrows at his feet and to stand before the Holy Face.

The mercy of God is a tireless act of love for all men, despite the indignity of their conduct, but it is not connivance with some of their mistakes. Sins committed are never an obstacle to the Father’s mercy, not even the most serious; but the will to continue to commit them is the insurmountable obstacle, to remain in a sinful state, to not change one’s life.

Il nostro Dio, davanti alle aberrazioni umane, non è uno che “lascia correre”, perché il lasciar correre non significa per nulla salvare. Lasciar correre lungi dall’essere espressione di amore; significa essere estranei e disinteressati. Il nostro è un Dio che si dà da fare, fino ad arrivare al dramma del Calvario, perché le aberrazioni finiscano e gli sbandati ritornino sulla giusta strada. L’abbiamo imparato anche dalla bella parabola del Padre misericordioso.

Our God, in the face of human aberrations, is not one to “let it go”, because letting go does not mean to save. Letting go is far from an expression of love; it means to be strangers and uninterested. Ours is a God

who works hard, up to the drama of Calvary, so that the aberrations end and the drifters come back to the right track. We have also learned this from the beautiful parable of the merciful Father. The abandoned Father never resigns and always waits, but he embraces the wayward son only when he, being repentant, returns home; He did not go to say “good job” when the son lived in vice. Let us be careful: the reception of the Gospel also includes its true, ethical and behavioral demands. The living sense of divine mercy does not whatsoever legitimate ambiguity or compromises. St. Paul, announcing that *“the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men”*, immediately adds that this postulates a strong desire to *“renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, 13 awaiting our blessed hope”* (cf. Titus 2:11-13).

We see in this light the small, expressive museum of Blessed Maria Pierina, we watch the episodes of her life, and so we begin to understand something more of the story in which we are immersed, we feel not only the necessity but also the urgent need to pray, to adore, to give primacy to truth, to not waste precious time, to show solidarity with all of the members of the Mystical Body, and thus to enter into the bowels of the mercy of our God.

THE LOSS OF SISTER LEOPOLDA BLASI (1929-2017) A VOCATION CONFIRMED BY MARIA PIERINA

Sister Leopolda Blasi was a great woman who put God in first place from her youth and loved Him immensely. She ardently wanted to become religious and to enter the Daughters of the Immaculate Conception of Buenos Aires.

She knew Blessed Mother Pierina personally, and when she was still a young girl she attended the Roman school "Holy Spirit Institute". The school is situated right on the Aventine, where her family lived at that time.

Sister Leopolda was always fascinated by the Blessed and often said: "Beside her I felt well, at peace."

With this contact, which was so enriching, the desire to consecrate herself to God slowly grew within her. She faced obstacles within her family, people who did not accept her choice. It was certainly not easy to give up the comfort and security that her family offered her.

Twice she escaped from home to go to Milan and Centonara d'Artò on Lake Orta.

Brought back to her home by relatives, she succeeded, thanks to her

firm decision and her immense love for Jesus, in fulfilling her dream and October 15, 1948, when she joined the Congregation of the Daughters of the Immaculate Conception of Buenos Aires in Milan.

After years of formation in North Italy, she returned to Rome where she became a teacher in the very school she had attended as a child and young woman.

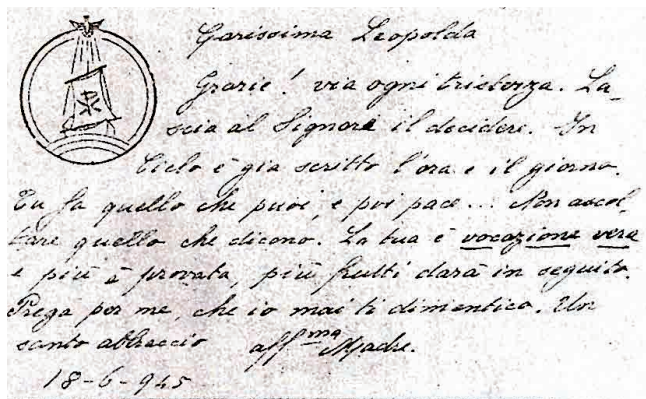
Soon she was entrusted with the task of forming young Sisters and for three years she was also Superior of the community.

Due to the natural qualities that made her jovial, playful and lively, she always knew how to see the positive side in people and to enhance them. Surely, many of you have experienced her proverbial joy and her playful spirit that could lighten even the most complicated situations.

The cross knocked many times at her door, striking her through the family's sufferings, but thanks to her treasure in "Jesus forsaken" she was able to accept and peacefully do the will of God beside Mary Desolate, the Immaculate.

A woman of deep culture, rich in moral and spiritual qualities and with a great love for the Congregation, she was entrusted with positions of trust, such as councilor and secretary general.

From 1983 to 1995 she led the Congregation as



Mother General and she spent herself in a thousand ways to make the charism of the Daughters of the Immaculate shine, which God gave to Mother Eufrastra Iaconis, and which distinguishes them: "Being Mary



in the different realities of today."

She deeply loved not only her own Congregation, but also those with which she came in contact through the Focolare movement. Chiara Lubich's Charism of Unity fascinated her and she felt that it helped her to live her own charism more deeply.

Before the physical pain hit her in different ways, she was Teaching Coordinator of the Holy Spirit Institute in Rome.

In 2005 the families donated to Sister Leopolda a parchment with the Papal Blessing of Pope Benedict XVI, on which they wrote: "..... together with the blessing of our Holy Father, so that through his prayers and ours she will always remain the "sweetest and kindest Director of all the schools in the whole world! With all of our affection."

Gradually she withdrew from activities in order to remain wholly with Jesus and Mary Immaculate.

Over the last few years she was here in Grottaferrata, where she offered everything to God: for the Church, for her congregation, for all the consecrated who she knew and loved and for her family and friends.

Let us remember her in prayer, never forgetting her smile that surely will accompany us in our lives.

Sister Natalina Fenaroli

THE DEATH OF SISTER ORSOLA CADEI (1929-2016) APOSTLE OF THE HOLY FACE

With surprise, unexpectedly, Sister Orsola Cadei has returned to the Father's House. After a brief hospitalization, on October 6 at 12:45 am (Italian time), she left this earth to contemplate the Face of Jesus, a devotion which she spread and loved so greatly.

Sister Maria Orsola (Giovannina Maria Cadei) was born in Vigolo, Bergamo, on May 27, 1929. She entered the Congregation on December 13, 1947. She made her temporary vows on September 24, 1949, and her perpetual vows on September 25, 1954.

She was part of various communities, devoting herself primarily to the apostolate of education in Rome, Milan, Cavagnano and Deiva Marina.

I transcribe a few paragraphs of her portrait as described by Sister Natalina Fenaroli:

- Sister Orsola was a woman who at a young age wanted to become a missionary to make Jesus the Redeemer and his Mother Mary Immaculate known. She was never able to carry out her desire to go into the world to announce the



Gospel, but God called her to another type of mission. She would be a missionary beside a nun who would one day be declared a Blessed by the Church: Mother Maria Pierina De Micheli. As the Blessed was a missionary of the Holy Face of Jesus, spending herself to bring many people to God and to make known the merciful light of his presence among us, so too Sister Orsola became his faithful disciple and in turn became a herald of Christ's Face.

- She always showed a strong spirit of hospitality. No one passed by her without feeling welcomed, understood, and loved as if by a mother. The poor also had a special place in her heart and she worked hard to raise funds in a thousand ways to provide food for the needy.

- She was not only an active woman, but also one of prayer. She knew how to attract the young and the old to God, she organized prayer meetings for adults, always under the gaze of Mary Immaculate and the Holy Face.

- Indeed, God gave her the gift of listening: a great deal of people turned to her to confide their sorrows and worries! Sister Orsola took everything and offered it to God, asking for light and comfort.

- A few years ago she managed to organize

and create a group of Co-workers: the lay branch of our Congregation. They now live the charism of the Daughters of the Immaculate Conception with commitment in the Church.

I conclude with a summary of her vocation story, which Sister Orsola herself told to the 100 year-old magazine of the College of Milan:

- I was 13 years old and racing across the green meadows at the foot of my mountains in Bergamo. The beautiful landscape of Lake Iseo, the blue sky, the clear air, were my heaven on earth, but something in my heart told me that I would have a different path, and that these beautiful places would be left as nice memories forever.

- In my life, time for prayer and listening to the Word of God was never lacking. I remember that my sister Rosina and I were up together at dawn and walked about two kilometers in order to attend Mass in the village church. Rosina passed on her great love for the Virgin Mary to me. With simplicity I also began to love Our Lady deeply, but my love was meant to be total: me for her. But how could all of this become reality?

- In 1943 I came to Milan to work for a noble woman as her companion. During the day I sewed and I had time also to devote to prayer and reading. I was very passionate about reading the lives of missionaries who, in those far away countries, were giving their lives for people who had nothing. At the age of 18 I realized that I had this desire in my heart: I would become a missionary nun.

- Counseled by my spiritual director, we decided together not to follow the path of missions, but rather that of consecration to Christ through the hands of the Immaculate, among her Daughters who had a house and a school in Milan on Via Elba. The love for the Virgin Mary, which I had thanks to my sister, was becoming the light of a new life.

- December 13, 1947: the day I entered the Institute of the Daughters of the Immaculate Conception of Buenos Aires. At last I could give my life to the Lord.

- I confess that despite its age and fatigue, as my strength is no longer that of a young lady, my heart remains alive and active with the enthusiasm of those early years, always ready to give that joy and that love that sparked the vocation in my heart.

- The Immaculate took me in among her Daughters. Here I found a great mission that made me grow and mature. She held me close to her family, of which she is the patron saint and protector. She immersed me completely in this wonderful charism.

Sister Nora Antonelli



On the feast of the Holy Face of Jesus, tuesday February 28, cardinal Mauro Piacenza, major penitentiary, will preside over the mass in the chapel of the Holy Spirit Institute in Rome. We invite you to unite yourselves to us in prayer, honoring the Face of Christ.

Happy birthday!



*One hundred candles for sister
Marcella Sisi
a witness to the virtue of
Mother Maria Pierina*





On the 26th of every month join us as we participate in the holy mass celebrated in the Chapel of our Institute in memory of blessed Maria Pierina De Micheli, on the anniversary of her death.

For those who have particular intentions, you may send them by mail to the following address:

Istituto Spirito Santo
Via Asinio Pollione, 5
00153 Roma

or by email: madrepierina@gmail.com
We will pray for you all and we will place your intentions on the tomb of the blessed.

Prayer

O God, One in three Persons,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
You were pleased to let the gifts of
Your grace shine in the humble soul
of Mother Pierina De Micheli,
and called her to Your service
in a hidden life of obedience
to be consoler of the Crucified Jesus
and missionary of His Holy Face.
Grant us that we, too, may dedicate
ourselves to the glory of
Your name
and to the service
of our neighbours.
Through the merits and intercession
of Blessed
Maria Pierina De Micheli,
grant us also the graces that we
confidently ask of You, so that her
heroic virtues be shown forth for our
example and encouragement.

Amen.

**From the Diary of
Blessed Maria Pierina de Micheli
(2 February 1942)**

The Feast of the Purification - I felt a great desire for humility and purity in meditation this morning, and in asking Jesus to give me a pure heart to offer to Him, He said to me: "Do not worry, I have kept your heart pure myself, not by your doing, to make it the object of my satisfactions, and I will keep it always pure" - I was engulfed in His love... then the densest darkness came, but my soul felt so much strength for new sufferings!

Triduum to the Holy Face of Jesus

To implore any grace

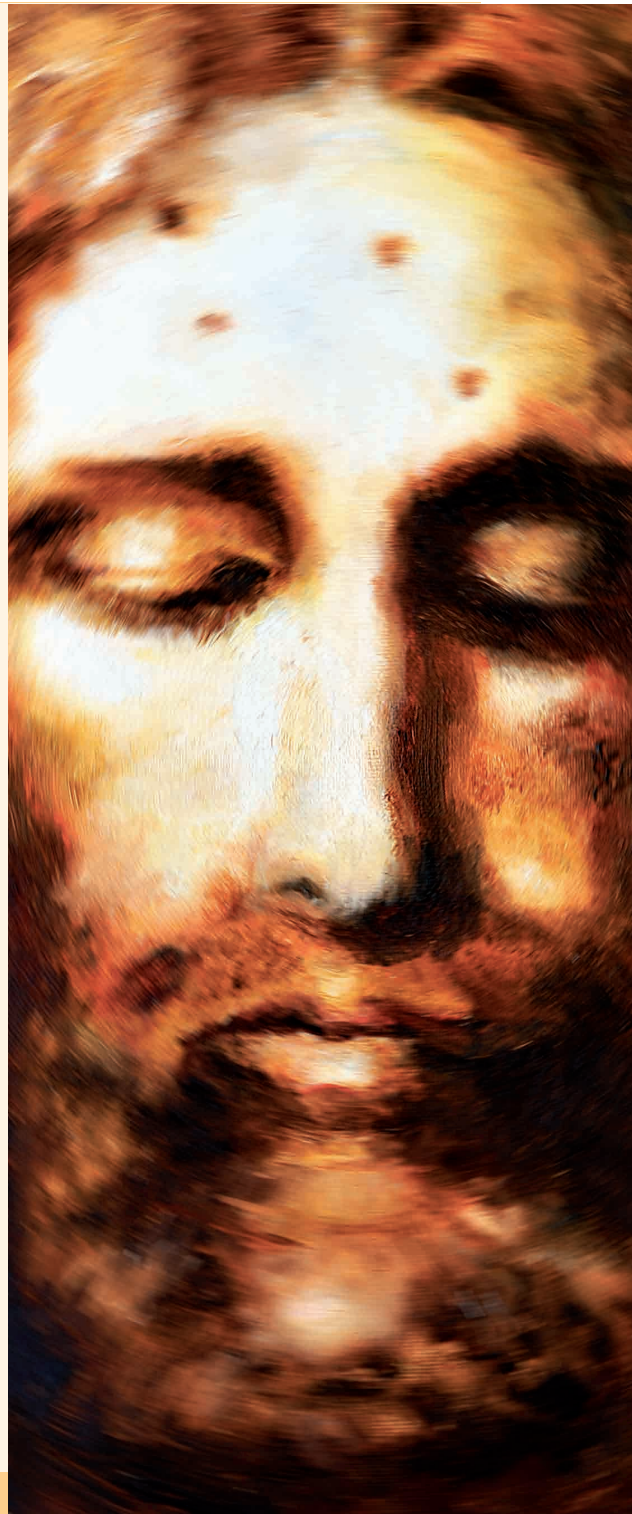
1) O Holy Face of Jesus, my only good, to You I turn with trust and implore this grace.... Through your holy tears console me, O Jesus, and hear me through the intercession of Mary Most Holy and Saint Joseph. Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory Be.

2) O Holy Face of Jesus, my love and my everything, to You I turn with living faith, I will not be forsaken. The gentleness of Your divine eyes draws me and makes me fall in love with You, see me, O Jesus and grant me this grace.... Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory Be.

3) O Holy Face of Jesus, my joy and my treasure, to You I turn filled with trust in Your infinite mercies. It is true I am unworthy to be heard, yet by Your goodness, Jesus, I hope for this grace that I humbly ask of You.... Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory Be. Lord, show us Your Face and we shall be saved!

Prayer: Divine Saviour who deemed to impress upon Veronica's veil the contours of Your Adorable Face, grant us, we beseech You, contrition for our sins and those of others, especially for blasphemy, and render us Your fervent Apostles and Your pious Veronicas, Amen.

Eternal Father, we offer You the Adorable Face of Jesus and You grant us this grace.



We wish our readers
a Holy Easter
in the Light of the Risen Christ

