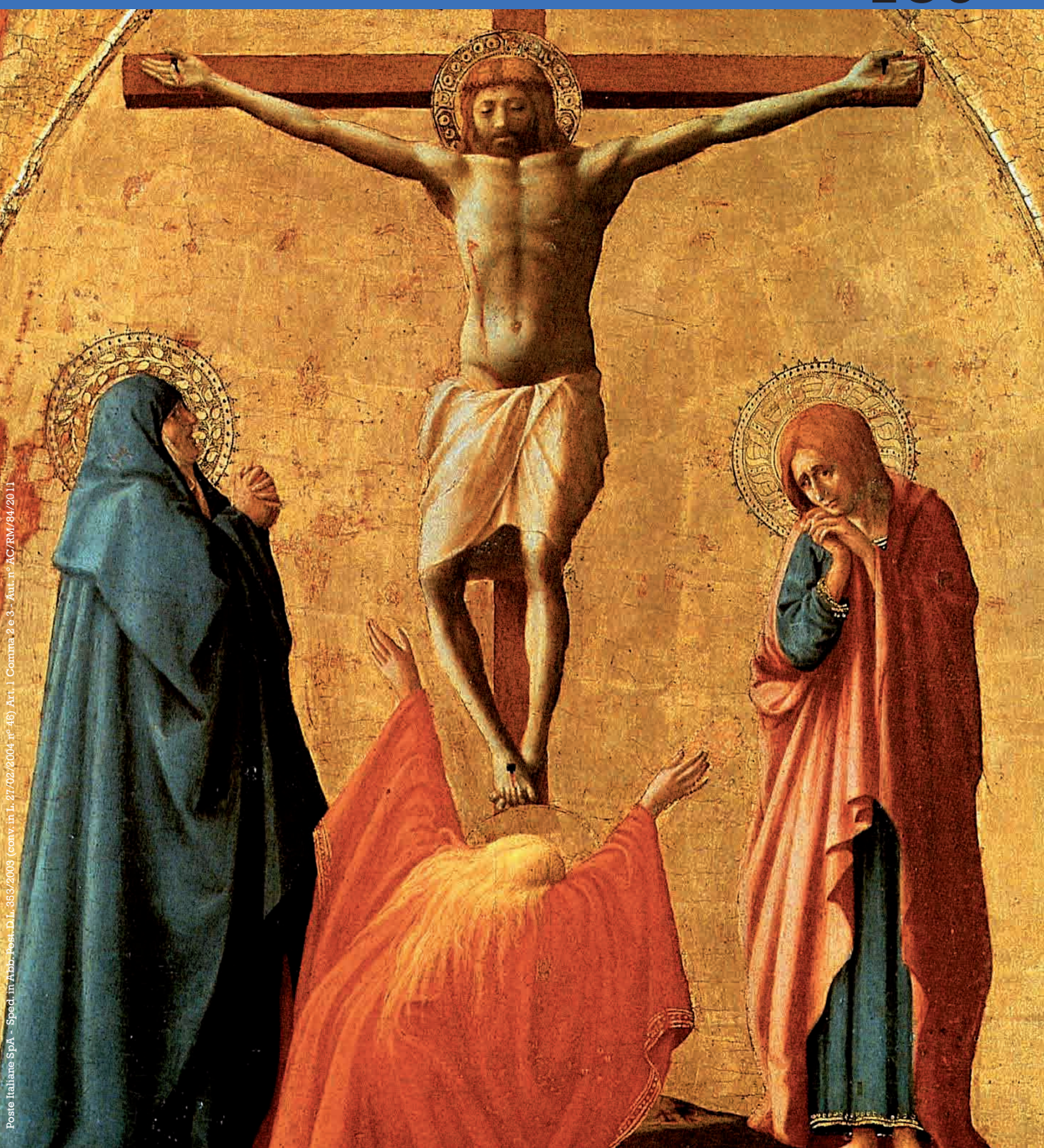


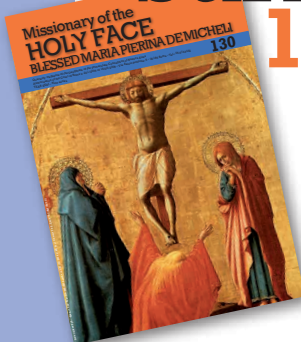
Missionary of the **HOLY FACE** BLESSED MARIA PIERINA DE MICHELI

July-September 2017

Quarterly magazine of the Daughters of the Immaculate Conception of Buenos Aires
Authorization of the Court of Rome n. 201/2009 of 18/06/2009 - Via Asinio Pollione, 5 - 00185 Roma - Tel.: 06.5743432
YEAR XXIII - New series

130





3 SAINT TERESA MARGARET
OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS
Fr Antonio Maria Sicari OCD

9 SAINT GAETANO CATANOSO
MISSIONARY OF THE HOLY FACE
Paolo Rizzo

12 THE DEVOTION TO THE HOLY FACE
IN THE VENERABLE
LEON PAPIN DUPONT

3 FROM THE LETTERS OF THE BLESSED
to the monsignor Spirit of Maria Chiappetta 14

PRAYER TO THE HOLY FACE 16
PRAYER OF SAINT PIUS X TO THE HOLY FACE
FROM THE DIARY OF THE BLESSED 11 - 19 - 22 SEPT. 1940

17 FROM THE CROSS
THE GIFT OF LIFE
Fr Luca Di Girolamo

As the month of September arrives, we draw nearer to the feast day of Mother Maria Pierina. The anniversary of her birth on this earth falls on the eleventh of the month and each year her liturgical memorial is celebrated in all the houses of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Immaculate Conception of Buenos Aires, with different customs and times according to local traditions.

The recurrence of this celebration provides us with the opportunity to reflect upon the life and works of the Blessed and her mission to make the devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus known throughout the world. The month of September particularly draws attention towards the Face of Christ because the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross occurs on the fourteenth. Through this feast day the Church celebrates the triumph of the Cross, the sign and instrument of salvation. The celebration dates back to the reign of emperor Constantine, when he had two basilicas constructed in Jerusalem: one on Mount Golgotha and the other on the site of the Sepulchre of Christ. The dedication of the two basilicas took place on the thirteenth of September in the year 335. The next day, what remained of the Cross of the Lord was shown to the faithful, and the significance of redemption through the suffering of the Saviour was explained to them. It was from this event that the celebration of the fourteenth of September originated, wherein the liturgical custom that positions the Cross over the altar during the celebration of the Mass, intends to recall the biblical figure of the bronze serpent that Moses

raised in the desert. As it is narrated in the book of Numbers, when the Hebrews were being bitten by snakes, they only had to look at that symbol and they were healed.

On the fifteenth of September, the day after the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, the Church remembers the memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows, in order to summon the faithful to meditate on the crucial moment in the history of salvation and to venerate the Mother connected to the Passion of the Son, who was close to Him, raised on the Cross. This feast has a devotional origin, instituted by Pope Pius VII in 1814 in remembrance of the suffering inflicted on the Church by Napoleon.

Saint Bernard, in his Discourse, described the sorrows of Mary as such: "Truly, O blessed Mother, a sword has pierced your heart. For only by passing through your heart could the sword enter the flesh of your Son. Indeed, after your Jesus - who belongs to everyone, but is especially yours - gave up his life, the cruel spear, which was not withheld from his lifeless body, tore open his side. Clearly it did not touch his soul and could not harm him, but it did pierce your heart. For surely his soul was no longer there, but yours could not be torn away. Thus, the violence of sorrow has cut through your heart, and we rightly call you more than martyr, since the effect of compassion in you has gone beyond the endurance of physical suffering."

All we can do now is celebrate these liturgical memorials with our gaze turned towards Mary in order to reach more easily an encounter with her Son.

The editorial staff

With the approval of the Vicariate of Rome
Director: Aldo Morandini
To request about her life, and images of Blessed Maria Pierina, as well as to report graces and favours received through her intercession, please contact:
The Daughters of the Immaculate Conception of Buenos Aires - Via Asinurio Pollione, 5 - 00153 Roma
Email: madrepiarina@gmail.com
Postal account 82790007 - Bank account: IBAN IT 34 F 02008 05012 000004059417
at UNICREDIT BANCA
Graphics and impagination: Lello Gitto - Foggia
Ostiene Publishing - Rome - Via P. Matteucci, 106/c
Final printing in the month of September 2017

SAINT TERESA MARGARET OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

**THE CENTURY OF ANNA MARIA REDI (1747 - 1770)
LITURGICAL MEMORIAL 1 SEPTEMBER**

Infancy

Anna Maria Redi was born in 1747 to a noble Arezzian family. Her father, Ignazio, was “Bali” (the Great Master) of the Holy Military Order of St. Stephen Pope and Martyr. Her mother, Camilla Ballati, was a noblewoman from Siena: the young Anna Maria felt estranged from her mother, especially when she saw her inclination towards a carefree and frivolous life, despite being a sickly woman. Anna Maria, rather, had a true passion for her father, a young man of twenty-seven years, with whom she had a profound and spiritual affinity; not only because he condescended to playing her games and taking care of her education, but above all because he always responded to her innumerable questions about God and the domain of the angels. It was her father who taught her to pray, explained sacred doctrine to her, enabled her to taste the sacraments and nurtured a love of nature and the messages that emanate from it.

There is more however. The house of Ignazio Redi was open for devotion to

the Sacred Heart, proclaimed some decades earlier by the visionary nun St Margaret Mary of Alacocque who said to have received a private revelation. However, the Church had not yet declared on the matter (her beatification did not come about until the following century): the feast that is celebrated today with much affection was disseminated throughout the whole world only in 1856. As a child, Anna Maria’s heart was so full of love for her father, who in turn told her that the Heart of God was even more paternal and affectionate than his, and he helped her to experience this. “Jesus knows very well”, Anna Maria said later to her confessor, “that since early childhood, I wanted nothing more than to please Him and become holy”.



Father as spiritual director

At nine years of age - according to the custom at the time - she was entrusted to a Benedictine monastery in order to receive instruction according to her social class. Between the ages of ten and fourteen, the young girl chose her father as a spiritual director, with whom she "secured a spiritual alliance", maintaining frequent correspondence with him. Ignazio later described the wonder he felt at seeing "how deeply the Spirit of God communicated itself to a soul at such a tender age".

When giving witness at the canonical investigations for the beatification of his beloved daughter, who died at only twenty-two years of age, he said: "I blush, that I, a sinner, ventured to instruct a true saint". Indeed, her biographer commented: "it is perhaps the only case of Christian hagiography in which a young person has taken her own father as a spiritual director". Such a unique relationship had as a consequence a double advantage for Anna Maria: on one hand her father became "doubly father", and on the other, the young lady had no difficulty in recognising priests as her true fathers, to whom, in consequence she entrusted herself both in the Sacraments and in the direction of her soul. Ignazio too, had the envious experience as a father, of having not only a daughter by blood, but also, as he so splendidly put it, "a daughter of the soul".

The call of Carmel

When Anna Maria turned sixteen, she experienced the only event of her life that comprised something out of the ordinary. A young lady of Arezzo, she presented herself in the parlour of the Benedictine monastery where she was educated as a child, in order to say farewell to the sisters and other pupils, for she had decided to enter the Carmelite Monastery of Florence. For a short while in the parlour, everyone spoke of Carmel, and Anna Maria felt a clear voice within her saying: "I am Teresa of Jesus and I want you among my daughters". Moved, she fled and threw herself before the tabernacle, where the interior voice repeated itself with even more force: "I am Teresa of Jesus and I want you among my daughters". Anna Maria later recounted that she felt "as if her heart was grasped in an embrace, with a great fire" and that "it seemed to her that she had gone mad with joy".

Returning to her family, Anna Maria waited in devoted obedience to turn seventeen years of age. Her father had told her that before this age he did not want to discuss with her the matter of vocational projects. She used the remaining months to pray, reflect and let herself be guided by God, already silently seeking to live as a Carmelite. She knew with certainty that she should offer all, and therefore introduced into her daily life and habits, signs of her belonging to a Crucified Groom: she took opportunities to make little and great sacrifices in the normal flow of events,

willingly seeking out some suffering, and having constant dominion over her own instinctiveness.

Indeed, in the 1700s, for women, "the problem of the century" was to adorn oneself with elaborate and precious hairstyles. However, the hairdresser that came to style the women at the Redi residence, observed in amazement that this young girl - at the end of his long work - refused the mirror that he offered to her. "Thank you, it does not matter", responded the young Anna.

Finally, Anna Maria was able to decide her path in life, but her father insisted first that the girl be examined by three learned and holy members of the clergy, among whom was the Father Provincial of the Carmelites. A particularly severe man, the Provincial described the rigours of the Carmelite life to her with such a strong colouring that it would have discouraged anyone. However, it appeared that Anna Maria persisted upon this radical dedication. Never having ever encountered a girl like her, the Provincial referred her to the nuns, as it seemed that Saint Teresa of Avila had prepared her by her own hands. In the letter that she wrote to Carmel, pleading for admission, she employed an expression that seemed to anticipate everything that was to happen to her afterward: she announced that she wanted "to compete with those good sisters in loving God".

At the monastery of Saint Teresa, in Florence

The monastery to which the girl requested entry was inhabited by an elderly community, since no other young novitiates had entered for more than twenty years. When Anna Maria presented herself at the monastery's door, the Prioress and her four advisors were all more than seventy-two years of age. Ten sisters were very old and very ill, and of the four younger sisters (in their thirties), one was about to fall sick in an even more serious and destructive way than the others. Another four were novitiates of the same age as our Saint.

She wanted to call herself Teresa Margaret of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: Teresa, after the contemplative of Avila; Margaret after the visionary sister that had pleaded with Christians to return "love for love" to the pierced heart of the Son of God. She said immediately, with absolute sincerity, that "she would not have changed her state with the happiest in the world, because she found herself in Paradise", adding that "it was a grace for her to be a servant to those angels". She sought primarily to hide herself in humility so that she might be guided only by her Divine Spouse, while she shook with joy at the caution of Saint Paul who said to the first Christians: "Your life is hidden with Christ, in God". Indeed, in one of the rarest texts that she left us, the

following prayer can be read: "My God... now and forever I intend to enclose myself in your most lovable heart, as in a desert, to lead with You, for You, in You, a hidden life of love and of sacrifice".

In the monastery of Florence, the Novice Mistress was seventy-eight years old: she was a truly exceptional educator, but as well as elderly she was also very ill. Teresa Margaret was chosen by the Prioress to assist her as her nurse. It happened thus that the Novice Mistress, in order to demonstrate an infinite tenderness towards her generous novice-nurse, did not spare her anything: not a single error, nor distraction, nor inadvertence. She intentionally sought pretexts in which to correct her. Teresa Margaret multiplied her care and her attendance, keeping in her heart and on her lips an adoring exclamation that she had learned from the ancient traditions of the Carmelite Order. She consistently repeated "Hic est Christus meus": "Here is my Christ" to talk to me, to correct me, to encourage me, to be demanding with my love. At times, some of the sisters would say to the Novice Mistress that her severity was rather excessive, but the old educator responded: "I would not do it, if I were not sure of her".

Such it was that Teresa Margaret lived out her novitiate: on one hand she absorbed the normal rhythm of monastic life, and on the other she learned to be-

come intimately acquainted with God, His love, His will, and the spiritual doctrines, in the sublime encounter between two great souls (her own and that of the Mother Mistress), sparing each other nothing. Within God's design, such a particular situation certainly prepared the young nun towards a specific vocation.

In the service of the suffering members of Christ

In the Carmelite tradition, Teresa Margaret was to remain as "the holy nurse", an original title for an Order dedicated exclusively to the contemplative life. On the one hand she was to offer the Church



the example of how to combine the fullest contemplative experience with the most draining of active dedications to those suffering members of Christ; on the other hand she was to immerse herself in a mystic drama, whose unprecedented profundity we shall see shortly.

First of all, it should be said that Teresa Margaret was a voluntary nurse: she entered Carmel to seek God alone, and God decided to show Himself to her in those older sisters who fell ill one after the other, and to whom she spontaneously asked to care for.

A Carmelite monastery, in which there were only about twenty sisters, was a little world in which the responsibilities and offices were accurately distributed in such a way that everything proceeded in a harmonious and efficient manner. If one were to fall ill, the others assumed not only the burden of attendance to the sick, but also the duties that the afflicted sister was unable to perform. Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine what happened in the monastery of Teresa Margaret, the year that ten sisters fell gravely ill at the same time: she assumed the burden of attending to all of the sick with such a naturalness that the others came to consider it as a given. In fact, it meant for her, giving up every single moment of free time.

Entrusting each one into the hands of God

There was one sister, by then eighty years old, who was irritable and nervous after her illness. Teresa Margaret tended to her with such dedication that the old sister was completely satisfied, saying that she had never found another nurse like her. Indeed, the community noted that the patient had become so cheerful that the Novice Mistress asked the girl how she had managed to achieve such a result: Teresa replied with simplicity that, knowing the patient to be demanding, "she placed her in the hands of God and entrusted her whole care to Mary Most Holy".

On another occasion in the deserted refectory, she saw a nun in great distress with severe toothache, pushing her food about on her plate without managing to chew it. Having served at table and the only sister remaining, Teresa Margaret drew nearer to her and looked upon her with compassion. Thereupon, seeming to forget the Carmel's rule of silence, she said, "Little poor one, you are unable to take food because you have spasms". Then sliding towards her, she kissed her on her afflicted cheek. The sister felt a sharp pain that immediately disappeared, never to return, and she went on to live a long life, free from such affliction. The event caused such a sensation that it was talked about outside of the monastery. However, Teresa Margaret was confused, having twice broken the Rule: talking during the time of silence and indulging in an unusual display of affection in the cloister, and for this reason she asked for forgiveness from the Prioress.

Another elderly patient, who, possessing a very faint

voice, was notoriously deaf and could not make herself understood, even with her confessor. She too wanted no other assistance than that of Sister Teresa Margaret. Indeed, without even using an ear trumpet, the nurse was able to converse easily with her, even at a distance assisting other patients. Although the elderly nun called with the feeblest of voices, Teresa Margaret would hear from far away and respond without shouting, and the deaf patient would hear her and be quietened. When eventually it was her turn to be tended to, she let herself be cared for in all her needs, asking the Saint: "and now talk to me of Jesus!". On one occasion, and unbeknown to them both, the priest arrived to give communion to the patient. He was asked to wait next door so in order to listen to Teresa Margaret. She was suggesting acts of faith to the patient, and abandonment in God, she encouraged her to offer to Him each suffering, and above all she made her repeat acts of love and hope. "I had to make an effort not to cry" the priest later recounted, adding that many priests ought to have learned from her example how to care for the sick and the dying.

Returning love for love

In the little time that was left over to her she quickly had a bite to eat (when it was possible) and dedicated herself to prayer and her personal relationship

with God. However, all of this hid a mystic drama, the profundity of which will always escape us. It involved the following: Teresa Margaret had drawn from her devotion to the Sacred Heart a norm of Christian behaviour that she expressed impetuously thus: "we must return love for love". Seeing that Jesus has loved us in suffering for us, we should want to suffer for Him. This does not mean inventing anything; the illnesses in the community actualised for her, the twofold movement of love and the cross; for her, the illnesses were the image of Christ the sufferer, and she, in order to love Him, had to assume the incredibly heavy weight of this service with joy. She said: "He is on the Cross for me, and I am on the cross for Him". This was the ideal to which she consecrated herself forever. Teresa Margaret's confessor watched her grow in this divine love as if an interior fire wholly consumed her, until she seemed to touch the intimate substance of that fire. The girl was then only twenty years old.

One particular Sunday during the Liturgy, the choir sang the latin words: "Deus Charitas est, et qui manet in charitate in Deo manet et Deus in eo" ("God is Love and whosoever remains in love remains in God, and God in him"). Undoubtedly, Teresa Margaret often listened to these words, but on this occasion, she remained as if possessed in a dreamlike state. For

days afterwards, the community saw her lips moving and they realised that these words were being repeated as if to savour them afresh. Her confessor called her to him, fearing it to be a hysterical crisis. After listening to her at length, in the seal of confession, he limited himself to telling the sisters: "I would like it if everyone had Sister Teresa Margherita's sickness". When Teresa Margaret was finally able to explain herself, she recounted that the very thought of "living in the life of God", while "God lived in her", and that at the same time "there was only one life, only one love, only one God!" had filled her with such an inexpressible joy, that there was space for nothing else.

The dark night

It is from this moment that the 'drama' commenced: the point at which she appeared to draw closer to the heart of the Divinity itself. God detached her from every "sensation of love". Indeed, she experienced a boundless desire to love God, but as something of which she was utterly devoid, as infinitely far from that which is love, infinitely unworthy. She did not love God, she had never loved God; it was an irrepressible cry, as if all of her life was shaken in anguish at being devoid of God. The experts in mystic experience understand what she encountered. In permitting this terrible experience, God determined two objectives (of the highest love). On one hand, He took from the creature every shadow of egoism. Saint Francis of Sales explains: "Many, rather than loving God in order to please Him, love Him for the comforts they experience in His Holy Love.... Rather than being "lovers of God", they become lovers of the love that He brings them...". The mystic way leads to the centre of the darkest night, because only there is it possible to see the Sun rise in all its splendid gratuitousness.

The second objective that God establishes for Himself is to explain to the souls that most love him (and He most loves) one of His deepest mysteries: that He 'gives away' His chosen - as He did with His Son - so that they may reach the lost and the hopeless, sharing their troubles: they are made similar to them in everything except for sin. And so they may love infinitely those who most seem to be without love; in the place of those who are truly without love as well.

How did this twenty-year-old girl face such a test? Teresa Margaret decided to throw herself headlong into the only love that remained possible to her: knowing through faith that God had bound together the two greatest commandments: love towards Him and love towards the Other. She decided to love her other, that is, the sick that remained there in front of her, asking to be loved and in doing so, to love Him divinely.

She was granted a last crucifying experience, when one of the younger sisters fell ill with early dementia, enduring regular outbursts of violence. Teresa Margaret

offered herself willingly, helping in the most difficult moments, until slowly this heavy load also fell onto her shoulders. Thus, before entering the sick room, she knelt briefly before the image of the Holy Virgin, and drawing near to her, she would offer herself up, asking for courage. Through such submission she was ready to accept all, from mistreatment to furious insults, from needing to rush here and there, without even a moment to draw breath, to seeing the patient contented as much as she could and all the while, never displaying a single sign of tiredness or annoyance.

It happened once that she was forced to escape in a hurry because the patient had tried to beat her. Taking refuge in the room of one of her fellow sisters and vented: "I cannot do it anymore!". That same evening she asked forgiveness from the community for the scandal given, as if she had committed a serious sin. "She avoided any occasion to be pitied by us", said one of the sisters, yet everyone knew that her character was "lively and vibrant". During the beginning of her monastic life she was often seen to blush violently, in the effort to control herself in the face of some aversion.

However now she burned within, with the love that she wished to show at any cost to her God who seemed to hide Himself and who was also present in the extreme suffering of a sister who was deprived of the greatest good.

Consumed with the love of God

She was only twenty-two years old. Although she led a life of fatigue and sacrifice, it seemed that her health was not unsettled by it, on the contrary it appeared that her strength grew daily. Nevertheless, one night while she was making her usual rounds among the sick, she suffered a violent attack of abdominal pain that made her fall to the floor. The sisters rushed to help her lie down on her mattress. While the doctor attended her, Teresa Margaret requested the community to recite with her five Glory Be's in honour of the Sacred Heart. The doctor did not take her fall too seriously, but in point of fact peritonitis had set in and the gangrene had taken hold. She held a crucifix between her hands and kissed it for a long time with an indescribable tenderness. No one realised that she was dying. That afternoon she fainted unexpectedly and although she was given the last rites, it was at the very last second when she was perhaps already dead.

Her funeral was held the following day and in accordance with the custom of the time, her body was taken that evening into the crypt of the monastery for a quick burial. Yet here, contrary to all expectation, her body had become beautiful and youthful once more, as if she were still alive. The burial was halted, in order to await the Archbishop's decision to proceed. In the meantime, an extraordinary perfume continually exuded from the crypt, to which all

attested. Accompanied by four doctors, the Archbishop arrived sixteen days later and found "the body completely flexible, the eyes humid, her colouring was that of a perfectly healthy person, the soles of her feet were red, as if she had just been walking. In conclusion, she just appeared to be sleeping...".

It was "as if she had just been walking..."; in fact, she was a contemplative who continuously walked the long corridors of the monastery in order to assist her sick ones. It was precisely the grace "to die a nurse" that Teresa Margaret had asked of God. Her body remains incorrupt to this day, and the sisters, since her first funeral liturgy, almost without realising it, did not sing the "Mass for the deceased" but rather that "of the Holy Virgin". At the Redi residence, in remembrance, her father received the crucifix that his daughter had held in her dying hands. The same intense perfume exuded from the crucifix, and Redi smelled this perfume for the first time, since for his whole life he had been deprived of the sense of smell. It was a little miracle, a small gift that Anna gave to the man who had educated her in the faith.

She was beatified by Pope Pius IX on 19 March 1934.

*Father Antonio Maria
Sicari ocd*

*(from Riflessi di Dio -
I Santi del Carmelo,
Edizioni Ocd, Roma 2009).*

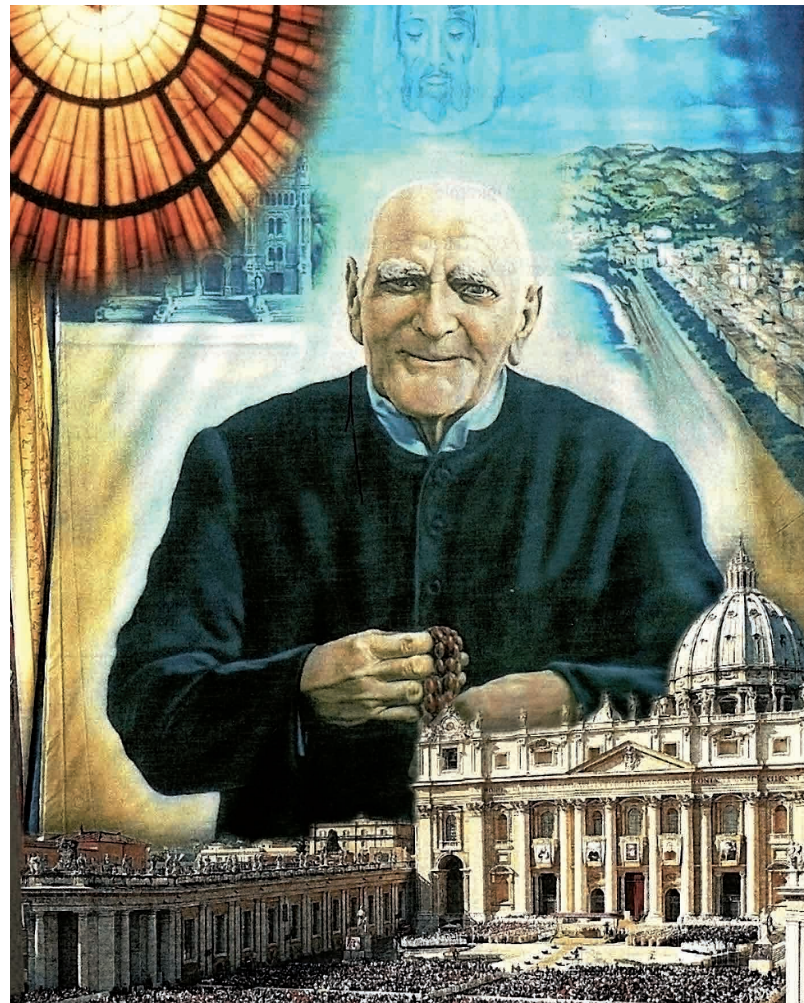
SAINT GAETANO CATANOSO (1879-1963) MISSIONARY OF THE HOLY FACE

In 1889 the road from Chorio to Reggio Calabria was long and uneven. Anthony, father to Gaetano, his young son of ten, left home early to accompany him into seminary, but at a certain point, the little boy could go no further. The father put him in a pack basket and loaded him onto his donkey and towards the evening they finally arrived at their destination, where Gaetano announced: "I have come to be a priest". It was only through Jesus that the pair were able to live such adventures: he was fragile in health, but ardent in heart for his ideal, taken in complete seriousness, to grow in the love of God and of the other. He occasionally returned to his family, in order to regain his health, but it was impossible to discourage him.

At sixteen years of age, already dressed in the priest's clerics, he gave his first homily to the people of his home region, astounding everyone by the fervour with which he talked about both the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and of the Madonna. "It was a beautiful event," he recounted later, "a foretaste of my future priestly mission".

He was born Gaetano Catanoso in Chorio of San

Lorenzo (in Reggio Calabria), on 14 February 1879. His parents were landowners who had sought out settlers to work on their land. The boy grew up in a family that was rich in both faith and children. In seminary however, his superiors, concerned about his health, feared that he would never arrive at the altar, but he astonished everyone, growing



splendidly, such that he later said of himself: "the little donkey made it". He was ordained a priest in Reggio Calabria on 20 September 1902 and was so content that day that he exclaimed: "Oh relatives and friends, called to take part in my feast, pray to the Heart of Jesus that He makes me a saint". He then promised not to commit another deliberate sin, neither mortal nor venial, and to remain in the presence of God every instance of his life. In 1904, at only twenty-five years of age, he became parish priest in Pentadattilo, a little hamlet in Aspromonte, where he stayed until 1921. He was in love with God and spent most of his time in church, adoring Jesus in the Eucharist after celebrating Holy Mass each morning, which was the centre of his day and of his life, like an angel. Gaetano held confessions at length every day, becoming in turn a great spiritual director. It was not only parishioners coming to his confessional, but also many from the surrounding areas and beyond, as well as many of his fellow priests.

Gaetano dedicated himself to his people with a father's love, children, youths, the old and the sick, the poorest of the poor. He instructed the youth with a free evening school, calling fervently and consciously to the faithful to take part in Holy Mass. He was sent out to preach on missions, hear confessions in other parishes of the diocese and beyond. He became the spiritual guide of many

priests, religious and consecrated souls.

It was in the silence of the church that Fr Gaetano matured a great mission and in 1915, having already gained fame for his holiness, to the exclusion of none, he compiled a journal for his fellow ordained: "The Priestly Eucharistic Hour". In 1918, he found a new and inflamed apostolic zeal, after meeting Fr Luigi Orione, who had been set apart by his charitable work during the 1908 Messina earthquake in Reggio Calabria.

His "hour" drew closer. In August 1843 Pope Gregory XVI instituted the Confraternity of the Holy Face of Jesus from Rome, in furtherance of reparation for offenses committed against Him, particularly blasphemy. Meanwhile, at the Carmel of Tours, France, Jesus revealed himself to the humble doorwoman, Sister Mary of Saint Peter, declaring "My Heart is blasphemed everywhere. The children themselves blaspheme. Through blasphemy the sinner curses me to my face, he attacks me publicly and pronounces his own judgement and condemnation. I seek the Veronicas to wipe my Divine Face, since it has few adorers". Thus, on 27 October 1845, in Tours, the movement of Reparation to the Holy Face of Jesus was born. News of the movement reached Fr Gaetano and in 1918 he joined the brotherhood of the Missionaries of the Holy Face at Tours. The following year he established the Confraternity of the Holy

Face in his parish, stating: "Let us unite in devotion to the Holy Face, in reparation for our sins, firstly for blasphemy and the profanation of the Sabbath day, and for the conversion of sinners. We want to become restoring souls, contributing to the triumph of the Church, participating in the divine rewards promised by Our Lord".

In 1921, he became parish priest of Holy Mary of the Purification in Reggio Calabria, forming a radiating centre of Eucharistic life, serving the poorest of the poor. Through every means possible he spread a love of the Holy Face of Jesus, His real presence and sacrifice to the Father, adored in the Blessed Sacrament. He carried this teaching all over the diocese and throughout Calabria itself.

A vast fellowship of souls grew around him. He became chaplain to the prisons, at the Reggio hospital, spiritual director to the diocesan seminary and later canon penitentiary at the cathedral. In his homilies at Aspromonte, he encountered many young people unable to live out their priestly vocation due to lack of means. Thus, in 1921 Fr Gaetano established the vocational charity for poor clerics, guiding several of them towards the priesthood. In the meanwhile, he planned another prodigious project.

Although failing in health, he remained indomitable in his love for God and his zeal for the salvation of souls. Accordingly, in 1934

Missionary of the
HOLY FACE
 BLESSED MARIA PIERINA DE MICHELI

130

he founded a religious family consecrated to the prayer of reparation, evangelisation and the support of infants, youth and elderly. Their reach encompassed remote mountain regions lacking in roads and abandoned in every respect. From this mission, the Sisters of Veronica of the Holy Face were formed: "Just as Veronica wiped the wounded Face of Jesus, on the way to Calvary, these adore Him and love Him desperately in the Eucharist and they wipe His tears and His wounds in the poorest and most isolated."

By this time everyone called him Father, and he was truly a father of souls, priests, consecrated and sinners. His bulletin, "The Holy Face" was read with great attention, thus disseminating his spirituality and his lifestyle. The people listened to his simple and ardent homilies, drawing great consolation and courage from his affection for the Madonna, whom he loved and particularly followed through her message revealed at La Salette in 1846, where she urgently appealed for the conversion from sin, atonement for the sins of humanity and the continual return to God.

Notably, his Archbishops, from the one who ordained him, to Monsignor Giovanni Ferro who joined the diocese in 1950, regarded him with adoration and veneration, not only as a spiritual guide, but also a most distinguished and loveable Father. Moreover, it was Monsignor Ferro who approved the Sisters of Ve-

ronica on 25 March 1958 and it was he who welcomed the final project of Fr Gaetano, namely, the construction of the Sanctuary of the Holy Face. This was to become, in his words, "the centre of perpetual adoration and of reparation against blasphemy and the profanation of the Sabbath Day".

His preaching and writings were a sea of light and love; one much more splendid than the sea that encompasses the earth. "If we want to adore the Holy Face of Jesus and not just its image, then we find this Face in the Divine Eucharist, where with the Body and Blood of Jesus, beneath the white veil of the Holy Host, the Face of Our Lord is hidden". "Do not let a day pass without having spoken to the Holy Face. Make yourselves understand the need to make reparation and let your word be as the yeast that ferments the flour."

"Love Jesus the Blessed Sacrament. Never forget. Do not just leave Him in the tabernacle, go and visit Him. It is just not an image of Our Lord, like the image of a saint, but it is reality: Jesus the Blessed Sacrament alive in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Go and talk with Jesus, live in Jesus, console Jesus, do everything with Jesus, and then you will bring Jesus to souls."

"Pray to the Madonna. When the Madonna wanted to show herself as afflicted and saddened, she always appeared with the Rosary in her hand. Do not forget Lourdes, La Salettes, Fátima. The Madonna also talks of

great chastisement and calls for prayer and penitence. We console the Mother's Heart. Love the Madonna and in your life you will be happy".

His long life was not without its difficulties and humiliations, but he sustained a heroic faith in the Lord Jesus, who he loved and lived more each day, until his reuniting with Him.

"Do not be discouraged, the Lord loves you very much, sufferings pass, the reward of Heaven remains. Take courage and move forward in the Lord".

Father Gaetano Catanoso went with God on 4 April 1963, on the Holy Thursday of the Passion of the Lord. Those who knew him described him as a light that shined, goodness personified, a living tabernacle of God, a beating temple of God. "I always found him with the Rosary in his hand", Archbishop Mons. Ferro said.

His fame for sanctity spread rapidly when a sister made an extraordinary recovery from a terrible illness on the day itself of his death. On 4 May 1997 Pope John Paul II beatified him and he was later canonised by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005. The little boy that set off on a donkey to become a priest, arrived at the glory of the altars and at an extraordinary radiation of truth and light in our time: even today, more than ever, we are parched after God and we search for the Holy Face of Jesus, His Son, our Saviour.

Paolo Rizzo

THE DEVOTION TO THE HOLY FACE IN THE VENERABLE LEON PAPIN DUPONT

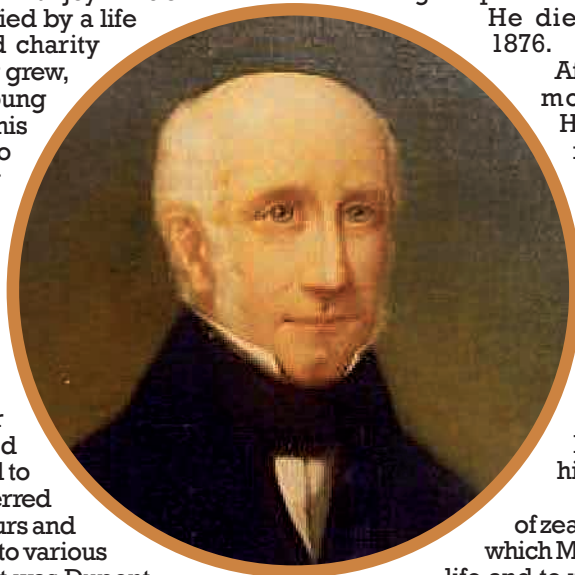
Monsignor Léon Papin Dupont was born in 1797, to a family originally from Brittany of the aristocracy of Martinique.

In making his first holy communion he had a true experience of God: "A cascade of tears poured out and my heart was flooded with joy". His experience was ratified by a life of faith, hope and charity which perpetually grew, even when, as a young husband, he lost his wife Caroline, who died suddenly eight months after the birth of their daughter Henriette.

He gave himself completely to God, dividing his life between caring for his daughter and service to God and to the poor. He transferred permanently to Tours and dedicated himself to various areas of ministry. It was Dupont that recovered the tomb of Saint Martin and fought for the construction of a basilica over the place where he was buried. After receiving the image of the Holy Face, he made it an object of his prayers for the world, for France and for sinners, and this movement spread quickly throughout the world. After the death of his fifteen-year-old daughter, he consecrated his life to this work and to prayer, while interior and exterior healings multiplied and the room of Mr Dupont became a place of constant pilgrimage, miracles and conversions. At the same time, he publicised Eucharistic Adoration day and night in his house and throughout France. He himself was fervent

in adoration, which he attended every day (a rarity in those days), supporting the foundation of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Tours. Stricken with gout, he retreated and prepared himself for the final battle in a great abandonment, radiating as always, a great peace and serenity.

He died on 18 March 1876.



After his death, the movement of the Holy Face continued to grow. His living room was transformed into an oratory and the healings and conversions continued. The Church recognised his heroic virtue in 1983, declaring him venerable.

Among the works of zeal and charity with which Mr Dupont filled his life and to which his thought was continually oriented, both in Eucharistic prayer and night adoration, was the prodigious project of reconstructing the celebrated Saint Martin's Basilica, which the revolution had destroyed. When Dupont moved to Tours in 1834, the Saint Martin movement had essentially fallen into disuse. A internal attraction drew him every day to the corner of rue Descartes and rue Saint Martin, where he paused to pray. Few people in Tours shared his devotion towards the patron of the city, and even less thought to reconstructing the church that was dedicated to him. Across the way, the road passed over the place of Saint Martin's tomb, but it was

considerably difficult to do anything about it. However, in 1848, thanks to Dupont they began to celebrate the patron in the Cathedral on 11 November.

In 1856 Mr Dupont and the members of the commission of the vestry of Saint Martin addressed the Archbishop and asked him to write to Pope Pius IX in order to obtain his blessing regarding the project to reconstruct the basilica dedicated to the saint. To everyone's delight, Pius IX gave his blessing for the project to go ahead.



The Holy Face of "our Lord Jesus Christ" depicted on Veronica's veil. (Saint Peter's Basilica - Rome)

The houses that stood over the saint's tomb were purchased and excavations initiated to discover the exact location of the burial. On 14 December 1860, the workers discovered a hole wherein the remains of Saint Martin were gathered. Mr Dupont announced to the faithful that the tomb had been found and in response the Magnificat was sung.

After seventy years of oblivion the mortal remains of the saint were recovered, thanks to the zeal of the Venerable Dupont.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF MR DUPONT

January 24, 1797	Birth of Léon Papin Dupont
March 6, 1797	Baptism
1809	First Communion
1820	First conversion
May 9, 1828	Marriage to Caroline d'Audiffredy
December 4, 1832	Birth of Henriette
August 1, 1833	Death of his wife
1834	Relocation to Tours
1837	Second conversion
July 1, 1839	Member of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
1844	Began his connection with the Little Sisters of the Poor
December 15, 1847	Death of Henriette
2 February 1849	Beginning of night adoration in Tours
Holy Wednesday 1851	The Holy Face placed in the bedroom of Mr Dupont
1855	Beginning of the devotion and movement of the Holy Face
December 14, 1860	Discovery of Saint Martin's tomb
March 18, 1876	Death
June 29, 1876	Blessing of the Oratory
March 1, 1983	Recognised as Venerable

FROM THE LETTERS OF THE BLESSED TO THE MONSIGNOR SPIRIT OF MARIA CHIAPETTA



Centonara 27-9-1935

Rev. Monsignor

Today is the anniversary of our venerated Reverend Mother Estanislada, it has been six years since she flew up to heaven! So many memories! We hope that she remembers us from above, for indeed we need it! Here the weather continues to be magnificent!

Yesterday at Madonna of the Buds and also at the Sanctuary of Orta, we prayed earnestly for V.R. At four we took the boat back and by six we were home. Today we rose for Mass. Our poor prayer will continue with greater and more longing intensity in order to obtain many graces for you from Jesus.

Sr. M.P.

Centonara 1-10-1935

Esteemed Monsignor

Praise Jesus and his Holy Will! Always, in everything!... with love! See how distracted I am... I wanted to start my sheet of paper over again out of respect, but then I preferred that my distraction were visible. I have just received your letter with your wishes for a good trip. On Saturday I had all the news from Sister Leonia who departed yesterday evening for Milan, having obligations there on Monday morning. I came to know of Sister M. Teresa's unease, and I am anxious to know what the doctor has said. Let His Divine Will be done! Pray that I be generously resigned!

I am well, very well. I am quite the traveller and I understand the joke. I am scrupulous at taking so much holiday. Let us hope that the Lord uses me mercifully.

This morning we had Mass at Centonara. Now we cannot complain, because the parish priest is quite punctual. I recommend that you rest in the evening and nourish yourself. Stay joyful in the Lord.

V.M.I. 9-12-1935

Esteemed Monsignor

Praise Jesus!

Thank you for your words. I was truly suffering without knowing anything. Yesterday was our feast day, everything went well, and we prayed much for V.R. This morning Monsignor Cavazzali celebrated mass with all his pomp. We are really feeling the cold but it is beautiful. We are all well in health. I am better than the others.

Do not doubt that we will continue our prayers with greater ardour, that everything will work itself out for the better. We are in a wretched valley of tears!... We look towards Heaven, in order to have the courage to walk! Everything will pass there... what joy! Only suffering generously accepted is considered



130

with great merit for Eternity! What a comfort, is it not so? Pray, because I do not know how to put into action what I know how to say... and I would have it a reality in me.

Take it to mind and let us trust! Tomorrow in Padova, I will pray to the saint for you, and you remember us to Jesus.

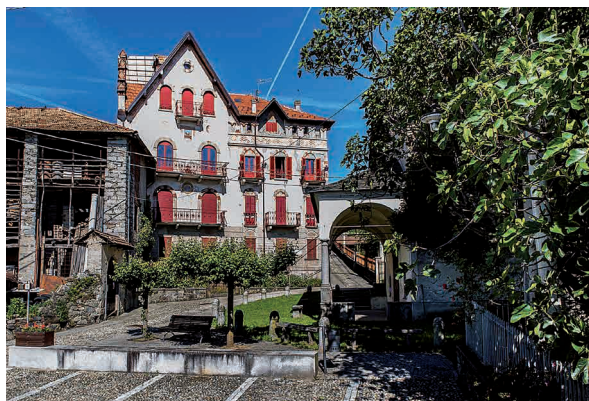
All the sisters revere you and wish for a special blessing.

Obbl. Sr. M. Pierina
Excuse the scrawl.

1936

Esteemed Monsignor
Praise Jesus!

I have now received your letter, and I do not understand what you mean with regards to the Construction. I told you to obtain all the necessary permissions and then, when you were to tell me, truly, really, that we could rely on the construction taking place, with the new contracts drawn up, then I would have the approval. I never told you that we do not want to begin. I would like certainty that we are able to begin, so as to avoid irrelevant conversation, which we have already done excessively. Also, a letter from Maria extremely irritated me, because it gives the impression that we do not want to start construction? But if anything, it seems that



even at the present there is no permission, is it not so? At least for myself I do not take stock in it. With regards to coming to Milan, I will come freely. I have not written because I have no news and I promised the Lord not to write anything without real need, because I would not like to be accountable for it in death. I am already accountable for much! I am very well in health. Sister Leonia has returned.

*For the rest, we shall speak in person.
May He bless us
Dev.ma Sr. M. Pierina*



Invocations to the Holy Face

Adorable Face, Admirable Face,
Loveable Face, *have mercy on us.*
Benevolent Face, Assisting Face,
Beautiful Face, *have mercy on us.*
Clement Face, Consoling Face,
Dearest Face, *have mercy on us.*
Divine Face, Beloved Face,
Sweet Face, *have mercy on us.*
Chosen Face, Eucharistic Face,
Eloquent Face, *have mercy on us.*
Faithful Face, Shining Face,
Radiant Face, *have mercy on us.*
Gracious Face, Generous Face,
Glorious Face, *have mercy on us.*

Inspiring Face, Unperturbed Face,
Pure Face, *have mercy on us.*
Graceful Face, Appeasing Face
Virtuous Face, *have mercy on us.*
Modest Face, Majestic Face,
Admirable Face, *have mercy on us.*
Insulted Face, Honoured Face,
Reverent Face, *have mercy on us.*
Compassionate Face, Peaceable
Face,
Precious Face, *have mercy on us.*
Terrific Face, Miraculous Face,
Tender Face, *have mercy on us.*
Lord,
Show us you Face and we shall be
saved.

Prayer of Saint Pius X to the Holy Face (1903-1914)



O Jesus, who in the cruel passion didst become the "Reproach of men and the Man of Sorrows," I worship thy Divine Face. Once it shone with the beauty and sweetness of the Divinity: now for my sake it is become a the face of a "leper." Yet in that disfigured countenance I recognise Thy infinite love, and I am consumed with the desire of loving Thee and of making Thee loved by all mankind. The tears that streamed in such abundance from Thine eyes are to me as precious pearls which I delight to gath-

er, that with their infinite worth I may ransom the souls of poor sinners.

O Jesus, who Face is the sole beauty that ravishes my heart, I may not behold here upon earth the sweetness of Thy glance, nor feel the ineffable tenderness of Thy kiss. Thereto I consent, but I pray Thee to imprint in me Thy Divine Likeness, and I implore Thee to so inflame me with Thy love, that it may quickly consume me, and soon I may reach the vision of Thy glorious Face in Heaven!

Amen.

From the Diary of the Blessed Maria Pierina De Micheli (11 - 19 - 22 September 1940)

- 11 *The Evil one has thrown the image of the Holy Face to the floor many times.*
- 19 *He pressed me against the wall and he wanted me to promise that I would not communicate with the Reverend Father... he tormented me a lot in the chapel. Jesus everything you wish!...*
- 22 *He went as far as the coin medal of the Holy Face, he threw it about everywhere and influenced me so much that I thought to have lost all reason.*

FROM THE CROSS THE GIFT OF LIFE

We are publishing the homily of the Mass celebrated by Father Luca Di Girolamo of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Thursday 26 April 2017, in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit Institute in Rome.

The Resurrection of the Lord - that we celebrate during these fifty days until Pentecost - is always under the sign of love, of joy and of life. The days of serious and sober reflection during Lent are finished, and we live the most beautiful time of the liturgical year, characterised by the light.

This should dwell in our hearts so that we are ready to welcome the Lord, which brings us to rediscover ourselves with all our obscurities.

From these obscurities, we ask for forgiveness from Him who came not to condemn but to save.

During Easter time, there are essentially two texts from the New Testament that occupy the major part of the liturgies of the Word in the Holy Masses: the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of John. They are two texts that in their whole, come to form the mosaic that reveals the effects of the Resurrection.

Indeed, Acts illuminates for us the beginnings of the ancient Church, which was established by the stupendous event of Jesus passing from death into life, while the Gospel of John, firstly through the use of imagery and secondly with narrative describing the Holy Spirit, demonstrates the same coherent depiction of the divinity of Jesus and his capacity to diffuse his gifts.

Looking at the New Testament it does not tell us how redemption has taken place, that is, in what way Jesus moved from the state of cadaver to the transformed human form, but (above all in Acts) illustrates the effects that this event produced.

The apostles, who were initially incarcerated, are freed by an angel, that is, a messenger of the divine power that dissolved their chains and enabled these men to continue to spread the message of salvation.

If with his appearance, Jesus created unrest because he is a person who imposes by his sober presence (which is almost hidden but highly efficient), the same disorientation endures and we see it now in the perplexities of the authorities before the fact. But besides such disorientation we also find another element not to be underestimated: listening. The apostles are led without violence through their fear of being stoned. Therefore, the people of Israel listened to the message.

It is not an element to be underestimated since we have at the root a reciprocal welcoming: the people welcome the message that the act of salvation has been accomplished by a man of flesh and bone.

This leads us to the text of the Gospel: it is the chapter

of the night time meeting with Nicodemus in which Jesus explains his true identity: man's belief escapes condemnation, which does not derive from the Son, but condemnation is realised when man remains firm in his obstinacy and in his deafness to the Word.

The discussion then is specified with the theme of light: it enables the discovery of darkness and obscurities, and in a wider sense, evil. It is a theme already present in the Prologue when John recalls that the light has come into the world but the darkness did



not overcome it.

These two aspects, namely, light-darkness, are not only of a theological nature, outlining the two moments of the paschal mystery (Cross and Resurrection), but they touch our concrete lives through two levels.

The first level consists precisely in the embracing of such light, which is possible because we are already initially welcomed by God when he created us: whoever believes in God will not be judged because he has already been accepted by God.

On the second level, evil is always a bearer of darkness, ambiguity and blindness. Not seeing is synonymous with a lacking: the disciples themselves demonstrated this at times, in not immediately perceiving the lessons of the Teacher. However, it was precisely the Teacher, Light of the peoples, to emphasise their narrow-mindedness, always however, aimed at the restoration of the person rather than towards their destruction. It is God who is the lover of life, always capable of giving it, and all those who turn to this God gain the capacity to work for the good and to show that this good is the point of encounter between the will of God, his grace and the commitment of the person.

This is possible to obtain only with a continual union with the Lord, and such a union is guaranteed by the construction of a personal and communal sanctity which was understood by Mother Mary Pierina, who was con-

sistent and faithful to the duties of her consecrated life.

If her life consisted in her continual care of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Immaculate, it was owing entirely to her faithfulness to the Lord, of her fixing herself on the Holy Face, not only on its expression, but on its entire existence, so that she might receive from it that light which is a guide for every Christian.

In relation to this Holy Face that everyone welcomes, Mother Pierina, in echoing the Gospel, formulated this thought: "Vocation is like the mustard seed, which is the littlest of seeds, but once planted, fertilised and defended, it becomes a seedling and then a tree, giving shelter to the birds and shade to the animals" (Consolare Gesù, p.55). Thus, for Mother Maria Pierina of the Cross, vocation is synonymous with the tree from which we have received the gift of life.

This leads us to unity with Christ, a unity which has immersed its roots in Baptism, which stands as a constant indication of renewal: those who take the path towards God, truly head towards the light that overcomes the brutalities of sin and temptation with which the Evil One attempts to distract us, and it was precisely on this terrain that Mother Pierina was confronted. She remains therefore an example for us, inserted in the rays of light left for us by the Lord.



Preghiera autografa di Papa Francesco

" Il tuo volto, Signore, io cerco "

Fà, o Signore, che io possa vederti oggi nei volti
sfigurati,
nei corpi sofferenti di ogni tempo,
nelle persone scartate, emarginate e
schiacciate dal peso delle loro croci.

Donami, o Signore, di contemplare il Tuo Volto
presente e nascosto
nei volti dei miei fratelli e delle mie sorelle.

Fà, o Signore, che io sia una Tua icona,
la Tua Sindone,
per testimoniare agli uomini del nostro tempo
l'abbraccio del tuo ineffabile amore !

Francesco

Original Prayer of Pope Francis

I seek Your Face Lord.

Lord, let me see you today, in disfigured faces, in the suffering bodies of all times, in people who are discarded, marginalized and crushed by the weight of their crosses.

Help me, O Lord, to contemplate Your Face, present and hidden, in the faces of my brothers and sisters. O Lord, let me be Your icon, Your shroud, to witness to the men of our time the embrace of your ineffable love!

Francis

