

Turin, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020

*My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When shall I come and behold the face of God? (Ps. 42:2)*

Dearest Sisters,

On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020, around midnight, our dearest Sr. Annacarmela, of the Community of Rome-Stella Maris, returned to the Father's House. The words of the Psalm express very well the sentiments of our dear Sister, who lived her relationship with God in the quest to quench her thirst at the sources of His grace. Like one truly *in love*, she sought Him all her life, moved by the vital desire to belong to Him.

**Sister Annacarmela** (Miceli Lucia) was born in San Giovanni Gemini (Agrigento) on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1930.

On 7<sup>th</sup> January 1952 she entered our Congregation, in Turin – Mother House, where she celebrated the stages of her formative journey:

on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1952 she made her Vestition

on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1954 she made her First Profession

on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1960 she consecrated herself forever to the Lord through the Perpetual Profession.

Born into a religious and practicing family, Sr. Annacarmela immediately experienced sorrow when, still at a tender age, she was orphaned of her father. This event made her mother decide to put little Lucia in the Boarding of the Sisters of St. Ann at San Giovanni Gemini. This experience was very painful for her. She often narrated that while she was with the Sisters she used to see her mother pass by, with her little sister in her arms, and this gave her a great sense of being abandoned. She consoled herself with the very beautiful memories of walking through the streets of the town, carried on her father's shoulders.

When she came of age she returned home, and after a few years, decided to follow the call of the Lord in the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Ann.

After the years of formation, in September 1954 Sr. Annacarmela was sent to Viù - Versino (Turin), as assistant teacher of the little ones who, like her, were going through the painful experience of being separated from their families and needed care and love. She stayed here only for one year, in fact in 1955 she was transferred to Vettignè, a small town in the municipality of Santhià (Vercelli), also in Piedmont, to carry out various services which she did with a great sense of responsibility. In the Community she offered to do the most strenuous jobs, such as doing the washing by hand despite the cold winter, preparing meals with a particular touch that made one get the "taste of home".

On obtaining her diploma, in 1956 she was sent to the Community of Monticelli d'Ongina (Piacenza), where she remained for 15 years as a Nursery School teacher. Here Sr. Annacarmela left a beautiful testimony of herself. During the summer months she used to go as assistant to the camp at Marina di Massa and one day, while accompanying the children to the beach, on Via Aurelia, she suffered a strong trauma on seeing a car speeding by, putting the life of a child in danger.

A Sister who lived with her for several years thus says: "*In this Community of Monticelli I had the opportunity to come to know Sr. Annacarmela, of whom I have a good remembrance. There were never disagreements between us... She was silent and respectful towards others. It cost her very much to get up in the morning, because she suffered from sleepless nights, however she was always present for morning prayer, which in those days was really very early*". The painful events that accompanied Sr. Annacarmela's life greatly influenced her state of health and her sensitivity. She was a loving and considerate Sister, always respectful and attentive in her way of relating to others. If she asked for a favour, for advice, a permission, she did so as if on tiptoe, without demands, never intrusive, never impolite.

In 1971 she was transferred to Castronovo as a teacher. Here too, although she stayed for only one year, she left a good remembrance, especially in the children to whom she was very sweet and caring. In 1972, she stopped teaching to undergo medical treatment in the Community of Rome-Viale Marconi. The following year, in 1973, she carried out various services in the Communities of Ravi and Pieve Fosciana. In 1974 she gave up teaching again for health reasons and for some years was part of the Communities of Monterotondo and Rome-Viale Marconi.

In 1978 she was sent to Rotondo where she remained until 1994, resuming teaching and carrying out the service of Superior for four terms.

In 1995 she was sent to San Giovanni Gemini, again as a kindergarten teacher. As a consecrated woman and teacher, Sr. Annacarmela was a person who lived her earthly journey with great human and Christian responsibility, putting her talents at the service of those who, by and by, came into contact with her.

In 1996 she was transferred to Castelfidardo where she carried out various services. A Sister with whom she had already lived in Monticelli says: *"I discovered in her an innate aptitude: a passion for music. She had learned to play the piano and accompanied the simple liturgical rites with music. She achieved this on her own, so if she had had the chance to study music, she would have probably realized this gift of hers to the best. I remember her and I will remember her with great affection and I will say a prayer for her, as a true sister"*.

In 2002 she joined the Community of Rome-Stella Maris. She spent the last 18 years of her life in this Community, initially putting herself at the service of the Sisters who were suffering the most, helping them during meals and being always available to carry out any service requested of her. She was often seen with the rosary in her hand, the only prayer that her health permitted her to pray. She prayed in particular for her mother and for her nieces and nephews to whom she was very attached. Her great trust in Jesus of Nazareth, much venerated in San Giovanni Gemini, and in Our Lady of Fatima was a consolation, especially during those periods when her poor health did not permit her to carry out any service.

Thus, month after month, day after day, until Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August when, surrounded by the affection of the Sisters who were praying for her, Sr. Annacarmela returned to the Father's House.

The funeral Mass was celebrated in the Chapel of Stella Maris. During the homily, the priest, referring to the Gospel passage of the ten virgins (Mt 25: 1-13), underlined: *"If we are certain that the death of Sr. Annacarmela will find its ultimate outcome in the mystery of the Risen Christ, a further certainty guides us while acknowledging in Sr. Annacarmela a woman, a baptized and consecrated person who lived her life with evangelical vigilance... But Sr. Annacarmela lived the experience of evangelical vigilance especially in her choice to be a nun and to be so in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann"*.

Mother Francesca too, at the end of the Eucharistic celebration thus recalled our dear Sister:

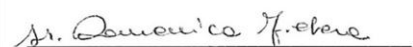
*"In addition to her great sensitivity and all the seeds of good that she had sown by teaching the children of the Nursery School, through taking care of the Shrine of Our Lady of Cerro at Rotondo-Sassoferrato where her devotion to Mary continued to grow, or by doing many other activities, we also remember the moments of darkness and interior suffering that accompanied the life of Sr. Annacarmela for many years. These are incomprehensible but precious moments in which the fruitfulness of her consecration was also fulfilled, living to the full her union with Jesus carrying the cross (whose little statue was always present in her room and is now on her coffin). In one of her brief writings dating back to 1968, when she experienced the beginnings of her illness, we read: "I hope, with the help of God and my good will, to become a saint at any cost". She experienced this "at any cost" day after day. God knows how many and which "costs" she offered... And we do not know how many and which graces she gained for our Religious Family, for her natural family and for the Church, by living these sufferings that are incomprehensible to human eyes. And her life will be fruitful with other abundant graces. We express our gratitude to Sr. Annacarmela who lived with us and for us, and we entrust her to Mary, Our Lady of Snows, on whose feast her funeral is taking place. And let us entrust to her prayer the gift of fidelity and new and holy vocations for our Congregation"*.

At her funeral, celebrated in the Chapel of the Community of Rome-Stella Maris were present Mother Francesca, the General Council, some Sisters of the Generalate and the Sisters of the Communities of V.le Marconi, while her relatives participated by connecting via Facebook. After Holy Mass her body was taken to the Cemetery of Prima Porta where she now rests beside our other Sisters.

Dear Sr. Annacarmela, your generosity, your simplicity, your life offered to the Lord will be your distinguishing sign before the Divine mercy.

Dearest Sisters, let us thank the Lord for the precious gift of Sr. Annacarmela, who in her simplicity and amiability has left a trail of tenderness and humanity in our life, and let us ask for her, eternal happiness in the arms of our Good Daddy.

I greet you all with affection,



Sr. Domenica Fichera, Superiora Provinciale