

SUORE DI SANT'ANNA
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Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38)

Dearest Sisters,

The pain caused by dearest Sr. Annunziatina's death which came at 3:30 p.m. on 13 January 2010 in our Community at "Stella Maris", Rome, urges us to revive our faith in the Risen Lord and our certainty that in the Trinitarian Love we will continue to be with all the persons with whom our lives have been intertwined. Many of us have known Sr. Annunziatina, directly or through her sisters Sr. Michelina and Sr. Assuntina, also for the work she carried out at the Congregational level.

SUOR ANNUNZIATINA (CAVALLO Maria) was born at Rosolini (SR) on 9 February 1922 in a family of profound Christian roots.

On 18 August 1945 she entered as a Postulant in the Novitiate of Rome, "Stella Maris" and the following year, 8 September 1946, was vested with the "holy habit" of a Sister of St. Ann and took the name of the One who had welcomed with humility and received with joy the angelic proclamation of the Divine Plan. She made her First Profession in Rome on 15 September 1948 and her Perpetual Vows on 10 August 1954 in the Chapel of the Mother House in Turin.

Sister Annunziatina: this "new name" was for her a program of life because she would always be ready to accomplish what the Lord would ask her through the different Superiors, notwithstanding the diversity of their characters or of the places where she was sent or of the duties which were entrusted by and by to her, even if they were not always to her liking.

I will cherish in my heart the testimony of a Sister Annunziatina, respectful and obedient to Superiors younger than her, or even to those who had been her novices or to the one whose Superior she had been previously. Her respect towards those who exercised the service of authority flowed from an upright heart and from a vision of true faith. It moved me when she used to ask little permissions with humility or when she confided some worries, telling me that, because I was the Superior General, I had to know it.

Her love for the Sisters called to guide and animate the Community, was an expression of deep love for our Religious family, which she wanted to see growing in charismatic and missionary maturity.

Her acceptance of "obedience" was anchored in that initial "yes", pronounced with full awareness. She felt "free" to obey and "free" to serve with much availability.

It is also true that she was gifted with many abilities in different fields both human as well as spiritual, but this did not diminish the sacrifice needed in forgetting herself in order to be at the service of others.

The places in which she was a "sister" and an educator were:

Narni (1953) as teacher in the Middle School; Turin-Mother House (1961) as teacher in the Training and Technical School; Turin-Mother House (1962) as the Novice Mistress; Moncalieri (1965) as teacher in the Middle School; Acireale (1966) as Directress of the Boarders and Teacher; Narni (1967) as Superior; Acireale (1970) as Superior; Torino-Via Massena (1973) as teacher; Acireale (1975-1994), the Community in which she was Superior from 1985 to 1994; Roma-Via Giusti (1994); Augusta "S. Lucia" (1995) as Superior of the Community; Augusta (1998); Roma-Casa Generalizia (2000) and Roma-Viale Marconi (2001).

Her preferred apostolate was that of being a woman of peace, to bring peace wherever she was. She drew this great gift from prayer, to which she was very faithful whether personal or in common. And the God of peace allowed her to share this gift not only with the community, but also with the scholastic world.

Sister Annunziata had studied seriously in order to assume the role of a teacher and she meticulously prepared every lesson, feeling the delicate responsibility before the students who were going through the turbulent period of adolescence and youth.

She had facility in language so she knew how to present with clarity and depth the contents of the subjects she taught. She was well-liked by her colleagues and by the parents for her sense of duty and her readiness to collaborate.

Besides the scholastic schedule, whenever she was requested, she approached the girls of the Boarding and those of the Catechism classes. Even for this service she prepared herself adequately and did everything with a deep sense of responsibility.

She wanted to communicate the "good news" even at the cost of sacrifice, as attested by the following: *After having completed her term as the Superior of Acireale, there was need to substitute a Religion Teacher in Rome. Sister Annunziata, in spite of being more than 70 years of age, took the Metro everyday to go all the way from Via Giusti to Viale Marconi and there, met the students on time. From her lips there was not a single complaint of tiredness, of the difficulty with the students ... Tirelessly and with joy she continued to educate.*

She received with a spirit of obedience the task of Superior and carried it out according to the spirit of our Constitutions: she was the first in communitarian duties and the last to think of herself. She was exigent with herself, open with the Sisters, foreseeing and providing for their needs without any discrimination of any sort.

In the Community she was approached easily by others who had recourse to her in order to ask for a favour, taking advantage of the fact that she was capable in everything and besides, she was always available.

She tried to be useful even when, because of her age and health, she should have been resting. In December 2008, precisely because of worsening health, she was transferred to the Community of "Stella Maris", where she was followed up professionally and fraternally by the Sister-Nurses, to whom I owe my heartfelt and affectionate gratitude.

On 15 January, in the Chapel of the Community, the Eucharistic celebration was held, in which dearest Sr. Michelina and Sr. Assuntina participated.

Our thanksgiving to God for the gift of Sr. Annunziata was also offered in the name of many former students who are still grateful to their teacher, of life and of faith. They have become "lived faith", which gives serenity and true and deep peace to each one of them.

Prayer for the eternal repose of our dearest Sister accompanied her mortal remains which were buried in the Cemetery of Prima Porta in Rome.

Let us renew our fraternal closeness to dearest Sr. Michelina and Sr. Assuntina and their relatives, thanking them for having given to the Congregation a very strong "pillar".

I entrust the canonical visit of our dearest Mother Ernestine to the Central Province of India, to Sr. Annunziata's intercession and to all our prayers, so that her untiring work may bear abundant fruit in the Spirit.

In fraternal union.

Madre Franceschina Milanese