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*The Provincial Superior*

Turin, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018

*"In you, Lord, is the source of life.  
In your light we see the light." (Ps 35:10)*

Dearest Sisters,

The earthly journey of our dear Sr. Assumpta ended at 00.40 hrs. on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018. Now we are happy to think that at last she is "at home", as she encounters Christ whom she sought and served throughout the whole journey of her life. God's Love, which Sr. Assumpta proclaimed through word and witness, introduces her now into the wedding feast of His Kingdom.

**Sr. Assumpta** (Alda Castelli) was born at Castelnuovo Garfagnana (Lucca) on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1930.

On 20<sup>th</sup> January 1951 she entered our Congregation, in Turin – Mother House, where she celebrated the stages of her formative journey:

on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1951 she made her Vestition

on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1953 she made her First Profession

on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1959 she consecrated herself forever to the Lord through the Perpetual Profession.

Sr. Assumpta, the eldest of three children, as a young girl had to look for a job so as to support her family financially, helping her sick mother and disabled brother.

When the Lord awakened in her the call to follow Him in the consecrated life, Sr. Assumpta, after a certain resistance from her mother, supported by the help of an uncle priest and thanks to the availability of her sister Giuliana to take care of her mother and brother, could finally fulfill her desire to respond to the divine call in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann.

After her First Profession, in October 1953 Sr. Assumpta was transferred to Ravi as assistant cook and in 1955 to the Community of Bagnoregio-Orfanotrofio where she continued to render her service as assistant cook.

Sr. Assumpta was a simple, serene and hard-working Sister. In the Communities where obedience sent her, she carried out her service in the kitchen with full dedication and great willingness to serve the Sisters.

In 1962 obedience called her to Rosolini where she took on the responsibility of the kitchen and the following year in Turin - Mother House where she remained for only two years. In 1965 she was transferred to Pianezza, the Community which she felt deeply as "her home" and in which she spent the most beautiful and fruitful years of her religious life, first carrying out many services then, with the decline of her health, experiencing illness herself. And when in 2010 the Sisters had to leave Pianezza and form part of Casa Betania in Turin, Sr. Assumpta could not but live this separation with deep pain, like someone who knew that she was leaving her home forever.

So many times in the stories that Sr. Assumpta narrated, the memories of Pianezza surfaced, the vicissitudes of the years in which she had seen the old structure being built and demolished so as to make room for the new construction. But those sacrifices were part of that passion that Sr. Assumpta nurtured for her service, for the mission she carried out with dedication and deep love.

The kitchen, the vegetable garden, the hard and heavy jobs, nothing "was too much" for her, for that life of service to the sick Sisters. Those tasks carried out with such passion and in collaboration with Sr.

Evangelina, were the sign of great serenity and simplicity which she knew how to translate into the concreteness of life.

Unfortunately, little by little, Sr. Assumpta's health went on declining due to Parkinson's disease, together with various other complications down the years, so that, little by little she was confined, first to the wheelchair, and then during the last few years, to her bed in total immobility.

Her room, which for many years she had shared with Sr. Evangelina who took care of her with invaluable dedication, during the day was often a meeting place for the Sisters who went to visit her, for those who wanted to exchange a word with her, and for those who entrusted to her their worries, pains and problems which only prayer could melt away. The rosary that Sr Assumpta always wore around her neck was the certainty that whoever went to her, found the promise of a prayer, the offering of a sacrifice.

In absolute immobility, the life of Sr. Assumpta was a continuous dialogue with Jesus and with Our Lady, a conversation so concrete that, sometimes, she herself said: *"I quarrel with them, I speak just like that, as I would speak to anyone, but then I tell myself that perhaps I am exaggerating...!"*. And yet, it was precisely this that made one realize the strength of her prayer, of her request for the needs of those who used to approach her. And she herself, during the last months, as her sickness progressed, feeling tired, asked the Lord to be able to meet Him soon, often enumerating "the list" of things that she would ask Him to explain to her, concluding with a smile: *"but then, when I'm there, maybe I will not be interested anymore to ask all this"*. Yes, it was just like a dialogue of a daughter with the Father, of a bride with her Spouse.

Lately, struck by high fever, the Sister was hospitalized in the hope that her health conditions would improve. Here too, although she could no longer express herself, the nurses grasped what shone through her, so much so that they exclaimed: *"we see that she is a person who has a lot of patience, good and serene"*. Our collaborators also had something to learn, as one of them testified: *"one thing I learned from Sr. Assumpta and it is patience."*

Unfortunately, after a few days of hospitalization and an apparent improvement, the doctors found that her body no longer responded to treatment; therefore she was discharged, granting her desire to return to her Community. Here for several days she was assisted day and night by the Sisters who took turns at her bedside, until the moment she breathed her last.

The funeral Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the Mother House in the presence of the Sisters of the Communities of the Mother House and of some Sisters of the neighbouring Communities.

*Thank you dear Sr. Assumpta, the Superior, Sr. Marieta said, now from heaven you practice even more strongly your holy patience, intercede for us, for your brother Italo and for your cousin Domenica who at this moment are spiritually present. Pray for all of us. To you, now, we entrust the prayer for the flowering of new and holy vocations. A warm embrace from all of us. Goodbye. We love you.*

After the funeral, her body was accompanied and buried in the family tomb where she now rests, next to her loved ones.

Dearest Sisters, as we thank the Father for the gift of Sr. Assumpta, we believe that now her life has reached fullness: Let us offer suffrages with fraternal prayer and follow the testimony of our Sister who, in silent abandonment to the divine Will, was able to adhere, not without moments of difficulty, to the Plan of God, who wanted her to share in the salvific suffering of her Son.

I greet all with affection,

  
Sr. Gabriella Profita, Provincial Superior