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The Provincial Superior

Turin, 26th January 2018

*"Give her the fruit of her hands
and her own works praise her at the gates of the city"
(Proverbs 31: 31)*

Dearest Sisters,

Our abilities, our talents, our life, are a gift from the Lord, but also a responsibility and a task about which one day we will have to "give an account" to God if we have lived our lives fully to the end. Remembering our dear Sr. Gesuina, it is beautiful to think of that woman in the Book of Proverbs, a simple and concrete picture of a faithful woman, generous, industrious, attentive to persons.

Sr. Gesuina (Santa Quattropani) was born in Palazzolo Acreide (Siracusa) on 18th December 1934.

On 26th September 1952 she entered our Congregation, at Turin – Mother House, where she celebrated the stages of her formative journey:

on 10th August, 1953, she made her Vestition

on 10th August, 1955 she made her First Profession

on 10th August, 1961 she consecrated herself to the Lord through the Perpetual Profession.

After her First Profession in September 1955, she was transferred to Grazzano Badoglio where she helped in the Nursery School, while she prepared herself to attain her Teacher's Diploma. She remained there for twelve years and in 1967 she was sent to the Kindergarten of Bra - S. Antonino as a teacher while in 1970 she returned, once again as a teacher, to Grazzano.

Grazzano and Bra were the Communities that witnessed her youthful and enthusiastic self-giving, her intense love for God, which led her to welcome with joyful availability whatever service was requested of her.

In 1971 Sr. Gesuina was transferred to the Nursery School at Ribolla for only two years; in fact, in November 1973 obedience called her to be a missionary in Australia for the new foundation in Melbourne, where she remained until January 1980, when the House of West Brunswick (Australia) was closed. Following this, Sr. Gesuina returned to Italy where for a few months she was welcomed in the Generalate - Rome. But she did not stay there long; in fact, in November of the same year she allowed herself to be led by the will of God as a missionary to Brazil. Here she was a member of many Communities and was available to many calls of obedience: Presidente Prudente, Londrina, Tamarana and finally, in 1984, Barretos where, towards the end of the same year, she was appointed Local Superior for two terms and Postulant Mistress. In Brazil, she was a missionary among the people and for the people until 1991, when having "fulfilled" her mission, she was asked by her Superiors to go in obedience to another part of the world, perhaps

geographically close by, but certainly very “distant” for her heart: Mexico. *“If the seed that falls on the ground does not die it does not bear fruit, if it dies it bears much fruit”* (Jn 12).

Not by chance, Sr. Gesuina’s detachment from her Brazil gave rise to the blossoming of a long and fruitful period: during the 23 long years in the Mexican land, Sr. Gesuina had all the time to insert herself and feel, little by little, a Mexican in all aspects, as anyone who worked with her experienced: *We will always have present and remember Sr. Gesuina as a deeply religious woman and at the same time always very joyful... who burned herself like a candle at the service of the Lord in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann. She did not get rooted nor did she attach herself to the services that were asked of her but, with simplicity and cheerfulness, at times covering up physical illness, she served joyfully wherever obedience sent her... At the moment of her final separation from Mexico to return to Italy, without expressing it, we knew that she would be happy to remain here till the end of her life, but once again she said: “Here I am” and she embraced us, recommending that we continue to support her Mexican Sisters. We are grateful for having known her, we nurture a deep affection for her and we are sure that she will joyfully intercede for all of us from Heaven. (Doctors Rafael and Lucero Magaña -Aguascalientes).*

Here too, she travelled a long way, how many transfers from place to place, from one Community to another. Here in Mexico, as in Brazil, she was several times Local Superior (in 1992 in Tijuana and in 1998 in Aguascalientes, again in 2000 in Nogales and in 2006 in the Community of the Postulancy) and in 1995 Councillor of the Delegation for three three-year terms. She did not lack responsibilities nor calls of obedience which those same responsibilities demanded of her: all for the glory of God, all for love of that mission considered as her life; and for love one is willing to spend all oneself, at any cost, to witness to a greater love that gives meaning to one’s whole life. This is why even the younger Sisters of those times acknowledge the beauty of it: *I thank the Lord because I have discovered in you what is tenderness, compassion, correction, mercy and forgiveness of a mother who loves according to the manner of Mary Most Holy. Thank you for your witness of beginning each day contemplating the Bridegroom and nourishing yourself on the Word of God, always seeking the best time to be with Him. I always saw you with the Rosary in your hand while carrying out so many activities but with lips that were repeating the Hail Mary... And how many times you were able to help people who were in despair... I remember the last conversation we had on the phone, you told me: You know? We pray too little to St. Ann! Place every Sister and Formee under her protection, taking every day the name of each one and entrusting them to her, asking for each one the grace of fidelity to the Lord’s call. I recommend this to you, Eh!”* (Sr. Guadalupe Neri -Delegate Mexico).

When she was transferred to the Community of the Novitiate in Aguascalientes in 2012 as collaborator of the Mistress, she was no longer young and her health conditions were quite precarious. For this reason, in June 2014, the Superiors asked her for her last obedience, the most difficult one: to return to Italy. And Sr. Gesuina left. On returning to Italy, thinking she would spend the last years of her life with a little more of rest, Sr. Gesuina, with amazement but with the availability as always, accepted once again another “obedience”: that of going to the Community of Castelfidardo in Marche, to give a hand in the little yet valuable services in the house.

Here, little by little, even because of problems of health which was no longer strong and robust, Sr. Gesuina let herself be conquered by the beauty of nature, of the town, of the people, of the children and parents, to whom she always addressed a greeting and a smile. So, almost timidly, on tiptoe, Sr. Gesuina became for everyone a “castellana”: one of them, like them, one who could be entrusted with small or big problems, to whom you could ask for a prayer, a service, in short, a member of the family. Because the Sisters of St. Ann are considered by the people as part of the great family of Castelfidardo. But, little by little, her health began to decline, with the return of her old heart problems, forcing her to undergo frequent medical visits, hospitalization, with the onset of complications of various kinds. On 23rd December, after an attack of what seemed to be flu with very high fever, at the suggestion of the doctors she was admitted into the Hospital of Osimo, where

her health conditions continued to worsen, even as a result of respiratory and cerebral complications. After several days of observation and treatment, Sr. Gesuina slowly passed into a state of unconsciousness, interrupted by very high fever that left her exhausted. This state lasted for a few weeks until, on 20th January, Sr. Gesuina quietly passed away at 8.15 p.m. with Sr. Noemi beside her, who, from the time she was admitted, did her best to sustain and take care of her. From that moment, until the day of the funeral, the Community experienced the closeness, the affection, the support of the people of Castelfidardo who showed great affection for the Sisters of St. Ann and great acknowledgement and gratitude for having had the possibility to encounter and know Sr. Gesuina.

On 23rd January, in the Collegiate Church of Castelfidardo the funeral liturgy was celebrated, attended by the nieces and nephews of Sr. Gesuina, parents, students, teachers and many friends of the Community, as well as some Sisters from the neighbouring Communities; even our dear Mother sent a message from the Province of India where she is at present. The Sisters of the Delegations of Mexico and Brazil, as well as some families of our laity who heard of the death of Sr. Gesuina made their presence felt with various messages.

During the funeral Mass, the Parish Priest, Don Bruno, who during these three years had the opportunity to know our Sister, highlighted her brightness, her openness towards anyone, her smile. A simple, humble, hardworking woman, she has been associated with the little ones of the gospel, because what makes us great is to accomplish what the Lord has wanted from us on this earth.

After the Mass, her body was taken to the cemetery of Castelfidardo, in the ancient tomb of our Sisters, where it now rests next to the people of the place whom she loved and who loved her so much.

Dearest Sisters, as we continue to offer our prayer of suffrage for Sr. Gesuina, we thank her for her example of dedication and love for the Church and the Congregation. With her let us ask the Lord: *“Teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.”*

I greet you all with affection,


Sr. Gabriella Profita, Provincial Superior