

Sisters of St. Ann

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The Provincial Superior

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*"Happy are those who saw you, and were adorned with your love!
For we also shall surely live" (Sir 48:11)*

Dearest Sisters,

The words of the liturgy illumine this moment of sadness for us and for the Sisters of the Community of Casa Betania who, in a span of one week, have experienced first the death of Sr. Alfonsina and on 16th June that of Sr. Giuseppina. The prayer which we have lifted up and continue to ask the Lord for her is that she may see the face of God, He who can be known fully only by following Him there where He dwells. It is with this confidence that we can conquer the fear of death which agitates, paralyzes and closes up, and feel the outstretched hand of the Groom who gives us the certainty of a renewed Life through His resurrection.

Sister Giuseppina (Brillada Giovanna) was born in Leinì (Turin) on 12th January 1919.

On 21st October 1940, she entered our Congregation, at Turin – Mother House, where she celebrated the various events of her formative journey:

on 10th August 1941 she made her Vestition

on 10th August 1943 she made her First Vows in Carmagnola

on 10th August 1949 she consecrated herself forever to the Lord through the Perpetual

Profession.

Sr. Giuseppina grew up in the boarding school of Carmagnola, having lost her parents as a child. She herself related that her father died a few days after the death of her mother. She remembered the attention and love which he nurtured for her, the youngest of the family.

Thus, she lived in the boarding school of Carmagnola, where she discovered her vocation and at the age of 21 she entered the Institute of the Sisters of St. Ann. She had a lively character, was thoughtful and hard working, so much so that, even at a very advanced age, she could make very beautiful doilies to give as gifts during feasts, above all to the Superiors.

The first years of her apostolate were carried out in Piacentino: in 1943, she was sent to Caorso as Needlework Teacher, after some years, in 1945, she was transferred to the town of Portacomaro and in 1951 to San Pedretto.

In 1957 she was sent to Carmagnola Immacolata, again as Needlework Teacher, where she remained for ten years and in 1967 she was welcomed in the Community of Bra Mendicità.

Everywhere, Sr. Giuseppina diffused her gifts of mind and heart for the benefit of the school girls entrusted to her.

At the age of 65, the smooth and peaceful life of Sr. Giuseppina abruptly changed due to the onset of serious health problems which forced her to be admitted into hospital for a time. Although the doctors doubted her recovery, her will power and attention in carefully following the doctor's instructions, permitted her to return to her usual activities.

Thus, in 1971 she was sent to Carmagnola - Borgo San Michele as Superior; she remained there until 1977, the year in which she was transferred again to Piacentino, to San Nazzaro d'Ongina, as Superior and cook.

In this land, Sr. Giuseppina remained for more than 20 years: she considered it her mission field in the Parish among the people of the place.

In 1999, after the closure of the Community of San Nazzaro and because of her declining health, she became part of Community of Pianezza, where she carried out the service of sacristan, surrounded by the love of the Sisters and her nieces and nephews who never abandoned her: they visited her and were interested to know about her health, manifesting their love and esteem for her.

In 2010 when the Community was transferred to the Mother House, Sr. Giuseppina remained there until the end of her life, adapting herself patiently to the rhythm of community life and to the inevitable changes, even those of her health, which little by little was getting worse.

In 2014, other complications were added to the precarious situation which required further hospitalization, following which she no longer recovered properly. Sr. Giuseppina felt that life was fading slowly, and therefore, she intensified her prayer and offering. Very often she found herself recalling with some Sisters, the painful events of her childhood manifesting her gratitude for the gift of her vocation as an experience of salvation and of deep love, to which she felt the need to respond precisely through her gratuitous and unconditional self offering.

The last few months were marked by this slow decline, then exacerbated by the difficulty to communicate in a clear way, so much so that during the last days, her suffering was evident, caused by the impossibility to relate with the Sisters who approached her bed to greet her and raise her up. Thus, in this slow decline, on 16th June at 9.45 a.m. she passed away peacefully, precisely while the Sisters were praying the *Hail Mary* at her bedside.

Sr. Shiney recalls: *"I met Sr. Giuseppina in Pianezza, where she used to carry out the service as sacristan with great care, so as to manifest her love for Jesus. The altar cloth and the sacred vestments showed her perfection and her extraordinary ability in carrying out her service. Her will power and courage had always struck me, even when her strength began to decline. She was always thoughtful and grateful to those around her"*.

The funeral Mass, celebrated by Fr. Antonio Amore, a priest from the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolata, was held on Saturday, 18th June in the Chapel of the Mother House in the presence of the Sisters of the two Communities, those from the nearby Communities, and her relatives.

At the start of the celebration, Sr. Franca Rita, on behalf of the Community, addressed the final farewell to our Sister: *"Dearest Sr. Giuseppina, I bid you goodbye on behalf of all of us... We followed you up with much care and love, trying to give you a little relief and comfort during this last period, when illness brought you to be in need of everything. I had met you in Pianezza when you were in full form despite your precarious health. You worked in the sacristy with much precision and care and everything was in order, fruit of your natural commitment and spirit of sacrifice. I never saw you idle. Laziness was not your cup of tea! Even when we arrived in Casa Betania you worked without a pause. Thank you for this example of hard work and precision. You never neglected prayer and community life. You were the friend of all and everyone could ask you for anything. What a wonderful example you have given us! We thank you for everything and we ask you to pray for us so that when our last hour comes, the Lord may find us like you with our lamps burning and filled with oil."*

After the celebration, her mortal remains were buried in the Monumental Cemetery of Turin.

Dearest Sisters, let us thank the Lord for the precious gift of Sr. Giuseppina to our Congregation and for all the good He has done in her life, above all among the youth of the boarding school whom she followed up with love, even in their religious formation. Let us ask her to pray for our Institute and its mission. Let us remember her with gratitude while we continue to offer our prayers of suffrage for her.

I greet everyone with affection,


Sr. Gabriella Profita, Provincial Superior