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The Provincial Superior

Turin, 15 February 2010

**"I am the resurrection and the life;
he who believes in me will live forever".**

Jesus

Dearest Sisters,

February 09, 2010 was the *dies natalis* of our dearest Sr. Liliana. She expired at 8:00 p.m., in our Community of "Stella Maris", Rome, where she was lovingly assisted, also by her sister Sr. Teresina who kept vigil over her with fraternal dedication. For a long time she had been suffering from many health problems accentuated by her age: in September she would have completed 100 years.

SISTER LILIANA (GENTILE Anna) was born on 27 September 1910 at Gragnano (NA), to a family deeply united even down the generations.

She was led by her spiritual director to the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann in order to realize her call to the consecrated life. She entered the Novitiate of "Stella Maris" in Rome on 10 April 1934 and in the Chapel of this Community celebrated the different stages of her vocational response: Vestition (2 October 1934), First Profession (15 September 1938), Perpetual Vows (15 September 1944).

Soon after her First Profession, she was sent to Augusta (CT) as a teacher in the Elementary School, where she remained until she was transferred to the Mother House (in 1940) with the same responsibility, to which was added that of assisting the girls of the Boarding. She carried out her apostolate with depth and passion which she had acquired through the Catholic Action Group.

In 1944, and precisely on 22 November, she entered into the new Community of Vasciano (TR), where she remained until 1970 and after her stay in Monticelli (1970) and in Grosseto (1971-1980), she was back again in this house from 1980 to 1983.

In this land, the heart of fertile Umbria, rich in history, the formation of the young generations was entrusted to the Sisters who taught in the Nursery and Elementary School and were engaged in Parish Catechesis: they had the town "in their hands" and, above all, in their heart. The esteem and love for the Sisters were so great that in spite of their absence for many years because of the closure of the Community, they were still invited to celebrate a day of solemn thanksgiving.

Sr. Liliana was teaching full time in many classes; the children followed with attention their good teacher who was able to make them love all that she explained. A sense of responsibility, serenity in her duty and a strong spirit of sacrifice characterised her along with a profound sense of peace which she radiated.

Aside from the tabernacle of the Parish Church, she was strongly drawn to the Speco, where she went whenever possible, climbing up the mountain until she reached this "sacred" place. In fact, St. Francis lived there in 1212 and many things spoke of him: the chestnut tree, the "little chapel" where he went to pray, the convent where the "Franciscans" have lived since then. Sr. Liliana knew how to collaborate with them and in

particular, with Father Placido, she carried out an evangelizing mission which spread all round.

The passionate love of Sr. Francis for Jesus and Lady Poverty strengthened in her the charismatic values: the search for "God alone" and dignified sobriety.

Sr. Liliana prayed and the people were aware of it. Her sister Sr. Teresina relates an episode: *«In Terni an encounter was organized with Carlo Carretto, a famous personality who was the active National President of the Catholic Action and then a "contemplative" in the desert and in the city. After the exchange of greetings, looking at Sr. Liliana he exclaimed: "Her eyes reveal a woman of prayer!"».*

She felt the importance of silence and of encountering the Lord so, when personalized retreats were organized at the Provincial level, she worked in order to welcome the Sisters and to favour the atmosphere of recollection.

Generous as well was her service when during the summer time, her Community welcomed groups of young people for summer camps. She made persons "feel at home" and with simplicity and according to the time she had at her disposal, she participated in their prayer and in moments of joy.

Sr. Liliana was also the Superior at Vasciano for many terms. Those periods of time for her marked an intense commitment to service. She did not allow exceptions to the "Rule", she submitted to the strict law of labour as a concrete expression of the vow of poverty.

She reached "retirement" age, established by the State law for schools, in reality, Sr. Liliana never concretely "retired", even if she was not directly engaged in teaching in the Communities where she was transferred: Narni (1983), Acireale (1989), Augusta (1992), Narni Stazione (1995), Roma-Viale Marconi (1998), Roma "Stella Maris" (1999).

A woman very practical and capable of doing many things, she put at the service of others all her abilities as long as her strength permitted it.

When they were failing, "Sr. Liliana the teacher" learned from life the lesson of "inactivity", difficult in the beginning for one who was dynamic, active, competent, untiring. Then, even with difficulty, she was able to offer from her bed to which she was confined for various health problems, a meaningful lesson.

Sr. Teresina confirms: *«I was able to see the great change from her past life spent in laborious activity, to the present, docile as a little lamb: Not a single complaint! Never a desire for relief!.... From time to time she repeated: "You know it, Lord,!.... As you want it!". Her ultimate desire was to hold the Crucifix. She kissed it tenderly and passionately like a mother kissing her child and wanted it placed around her neck».*

This act of love for Jesus abandoned on the cross, marked the "completion" of Sr. Liliana's life on this earth, ready to enter the house of the King.

With the certainty of faith in the Life that doesn't end, we celebrated her Funeral Mass on February 11, in which the Sisters of the nearby Communities and her relatives participated. The priest commented that we had gathered closely around Sr. Liliana, almost as if to escort her in meeting her Spouse and participate with Him in the wedding banquet, where divine mercy is celebrated forever.

The mortal remains of Sr. Liliana were interred at the Prima Porta Cemetery in Rome, where she awaits the final resurrection. Let us pray for her as a gesture of fraternity and with her let us ask through the maternal intercession of Mary, abundant graces upon our Religious Family and in particular for our dearest Sr. Teresina. Sr. Liliana will make her and their relatives experience that her love never fails.

Faternally.

Mother Franceschina Milanese