

Sisters of St. Ann
Province of "Carlo Tancredi and Giulia di Barolo"
Via della Consolata, 20
10122 TORINO

Turin, 24 July 2010

"I shall see God, and my eyes shall behold, and not another"

(Job 19:27)

Dearest Sisters,

I would like to offer the life witness of our dearest Sr. Luigia Massa in the light of Job's steadfast faith, which expresses the joy of one who in the midst of life's lights and shadows, always searches for the Lord and finally arrives at the Truth which is complete "familiarity" and "communion". Sr. Luigia who belonged to the Community of Pianezza, died at 6.00 a.m. on the 17th of July 2010 in the Hospital of Venaria (Turin), where she had been admitted as an emergency case.

The above verse of the Word of God was commented upon by the Parish Priest of Pianezza, Fr. Giuseppe Bagna, during the funeral Mass celebrated on 19 July 2010, in the Community Chapel, with the participation of the Sisters of the same Community and those of the other nearby Communities, besides her nephew and other relatives.

The same Word had been deepened by Sr. Luigia during a Biblical Course on the theme "*The Book of Job*". She had meditated, thus, on the meaning of life and had acquired that "wisdom" for which Jesus has blessed the Father because He has revealed it to the "little ones" (Cfr. Mt 11:25-27). The celebrant also thanked the Lord for the "littleness" of the teacher Sr. Luigia, asking Him that through her prayer, it may be granted to us, pilgrims on earth.

SISTER LUIGIA MASSA was born at Frassinello (Alessandria) on the 25th of December 1919 and was baptized on the 29th in the Parish Church of "The Virgin Mary of the Assumption". The awareness that through Baptism her "consecration" had taken place and that she was known and was called by name by the Father, was expressed also in this way: when, "baptismal consecration" was deepened by the Second Vatican Council, she welcomed the possibility of changing the name given during her Vestition, taking up again the name she had been given at her Baptism.

She grew in Christian values within her family and in the Parish. In his letter recommending the young girl for Postulancy, the Parish Priest, Fr. Caprioglio Paolo, affirmed: "*Young Massa Luigia is known in the town for her excellent conduct. She frequented the Church and the Sacraments, was a member of the Religious Associations and of the Catholic Action group in the Parish, manifesting herself as a model of zeal and activity in everything*".

She attended the Sunday School of the Sisters of St. Ann and fascinated by their example, like her other peers, she decided to dedicate her life for the good of the youth. Deeply motivated, she lived with seriousness the phases of Religious life:

- Entrance into the Novitiate (Turin, 20 January 1937)
- Vestition (Turin, 10 August 1937)
- First Profession (Turin, 10 August 1939)
- Perpetual Vows (Turin, 10 agosto 1945).

In the same year, she was sent to Bra-Cuneo, after two brief transfers to Monticelli d'Ongina-PC (1943-1944) and to Turin-Via Massena (1944-1945).

Her life was spent mainly in these two Communities: in Bra "Mendicità" (1945-1974), where she remained for 29 years and in Turin-Via Massena, the Community in which she was a member for 26 years, after which, she was transferred to Pianezza in the year 2000.

In these two Communities she was given the task of teaching in the Elementary School and in Via Massena, also as the Principal, both of which she carried out with educative passion towards the children and their families.

The physiognomy of the “teacher - Sister” Luigia had the following particular characteristics:

She was a person who loved the Lord and tried to make Him loved, convinced that God is the answer to the quest for meaning and for happiness we all bear in our heart. For this reason, she was always aware of being an “educator of the faith”. As a result, she committed herself to grow in the journey of faith through personal and communal prayer, through her participation in Courses and meetings in which the Word of God was studied in a profound and organized way.

She felt “sent” to the children by the Congregation in which she lived deeply her belongingness. She readily welcomed the initiatives organized either by the General Council in Rome or by the Province, in order to deepen the study of the Constitutions or to deal with other formative topics inherent to our Charism.

All tasks are important, but the priority of time was given to the Lord and to her Community, the rhythm of which she respected. Sister Luigia was always present. Her presence, which was very discreet due to her reserved character, became more alive during the common time dedicated to Lectio Divina, where she shared with simplicity her thoughts and how she lived.

The Lord and the Community were the resources which drove her to offer herself fully to the educative mission.

She was attentive to every child and a co-Sister who was her colleague in the school, affirmed that she was so, above all with regard to those who found more difficulty. She approached everyone with the heart, but she also had the wisdom to understand that “times change” and that there were new educative issues which needed to be dealt with accordingly. For her, the phrase; “It has always been done this way!” which blocks persons and initiatives, did not exist. Thus, she felt the need for continuous updating on different topics: the conciliar documents, pastoral work with the family, new scholastic programs, new educative experiences, amateur dramatics...

Culture was not an end in itself, but it allowed her to communicate better and to give herself more. She was a teacher who was serious and serene in her service. She never raised her voice, but calmly and patiently helped each child give his or her best. The results were seen and even the parents confirmed it: *“...at the end of the school year, we would like to express our gratitude for the serene and productive atmosphere in which our child spent this period of time. As parents and as teachers we have had a way of appreciating much the method of the teacher Sr. Luigia, also in view of the preparation that is required today in a school which intends to respond to the exigencies of the person and of the society”*.

Sister Luigia expressed these “characteristics” of hers, even though manifested in a different way, in the Community of Pianezza, as underlined by the Superior in her parting words:

“In this Community you were a model of prayer, of forbearance, of love for the Eucharist, for Our Lady and for the Word of God. We will not forget your appropriate and profound interventions every Monday during Lectio Divina. They came from the heart and were expressions of your life. You were reserved, but attentive and thoughtful towards others. The delicateness, respect, spread of peace which you have shown throughout your life with regard to children, you have fully shared here among us.

Thank you, dearest Sister Luigia; we will pray for you, but you pray for us, too!”

With prayer, we accompanied the mortal remains of Sr. Luigia to the Cemetery of Pianezza, where she now rests beside many of our Sisters who, with their lives, had made it so that our Congregational Charism might reach us. To their intercession, especially in this month dedicated to our Patroness St. Ann, we confidently entrust the plea that every member of our Religious Family be given *“the true spirit of our Holy Institute”*.

Faternally,

Mother Franceschina Milanese

Provincial Superior.