

SUORE DI SANT'ANNA

Provincia "Carlo Tancredi e Giulia di Barolo"

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The Provincial Superior

Turin, 8 March 2012

Anniversary of the Pontifical Approval of our Institute and of our Constitutions

"We are in his hands.

Wisdom is a reflection of eternal light ... an image of his goodness.

She can do all things; she passes into holy souls

and makes them friends of God, and prophets" (Wis 7: 16. 26-27).

Dearest Sisters,

It is with deep sorrow and great emotion that I communicate to you the death of our dearest Sr. Marina, which took place on 3rd March around 2:00 p.m., at the Cottolengo Hospital in Turin, where our Sister had been admitted so many times before. I was given the grace to assist her the night before her death, and together with her brother, many of our Sisters who were taking turns at her bedside, the Nurses and the head-Nurse at Cottolengo, I was also with her when she breathed her last.

Those who have known Sr. Marina or who have simply heard about her, can imagine what a great trial her death was for all of us. In faith we accept the Father's Will, knowing that from Heaven Sr. Marina, transformed by the light of Christ who makes everything more beautiful and more powerful, will continue to smile at us and intercede for us.

I came to know Sr. Marina when we were both teen-agers and while giving you the profile of her life, I cannot help but look back at our journey lived in profound spiritual unity.

Sr. Marina (**LUZZETTI Domenica**) was born on the 14th of September 1943, in Canepina, Viterbo. In 1955, at the age of 12, upon the invitation of her Aunt, Sr. Bonaventura Marini, a Sister of St. Ann, she went to the Apostolic School of Via Massena in Turin, where she grew in her vocation, which she had already felt as a little girl. It was there that our lives intertwined in a friendship that grew and was made stronger through the different events which the Lord allowed us to experience, though directed to diverse paths. After having attended the Middle School and the Institute for Teachers, at the age of 18 – on 7th October 1961 – she entered into the Postulancy and on 8th September 1962, made her Vestition. She was just a 2nd year Novice, when she was assigned to teach a class of children in the Elementary School. Thus, her adventure as an *educator* began, an adventure which she would incarnate ever more and much better with the passing of years, also through the deepening of our Charism and the lives of our Founders. She made her First Profession in Turin on 8th September 1964 and her Perpetual Profession in Rome on 5th September 1971.

She continued to teach, alternately in Moncalieri and in Turin-Via Massena, where she was also Mistress of the Boarders. In 1975 she was transferred to the Mother House and in 1976, to San Grato in Carmagnola. The following year, she was appointed Superior of this Community and in 1978 was again transferred to Turin-Via Massena, where she continued her term as Superior. In 1979 she was also nominated First Councillor and Vicar of the Province of Northern Italy, an office which she took up again from 1991 to 1997. In 1986 she was transferred to Moncalieri with the responsibility as Mistress of Formation. During the 1980's, while she continued her service, first as a Teacher and then as Mistress of Formation, she also resumed her studies and obtained a Teacher's Diploma in Religious Studies and Social Work. Later, in 1992, she obtained her degree in Pedagogy and then that of Teaching Philosophy and History. In 1991, she was transferred once again to Turin-Via Massena, where she taught in the High School and became the Principal of the Elementary School. In 2006 she was appointed anew as Superior of the Community and Directress of the School; she remained so until the end.

This is the *curriculum vitae* which enables one to understand only partially the figure of Sr. Marina, which is so much more than that "much" which she has done. Big in stature, Sr. Marina, above all, also had a big heart and spirit. Generous and deeply sensitive, she was always ready to help those who were in need. She loved the Congregation deeply, not just intellectually, even though she also had a great intellectual love, having studied well the history of the Congregation and that of our Founders, so as to write her thesis on the figure of the Marquis of Barolo and to draw up the historical-pedagogical report inserted in the Acts of the Process of Canonization of our Founder. Her love however, was not ideal and abstract, it was simple and concrete, alive and

constant. She loved our Religious Family and for it, did not spare time, effort and dedication, to the point of offering all her sufferings during her illness for its sake.

Gifted with a happy disposition inherited from her family, she was always drawn to see the positive and even humoristic side of things. Her very presence brought a sense of peace and serenity. Aware of this gift, she made use of it as her “specific mission” in order to generate joy during moments of community life, a fundamental element of our consecrated life. There was never an encounter at the Provincial, Interprovincial or Congregational level (even during General Chapters) in which Sr. Marina did not bring joy with her mimics, caricatures and the skits she organized, involving even the most serious persons, managing to make the most difficult moments less tense and helping us to interiorize the most challenging topics. And then, what is uncommon, Sr. Marina was gifted with self-irony, a sign of her intelligence, of her profound sensitiveness and of a spiritual journey which led her to work on herself and to love more and more that Crucified Jesus for whom she had offered her life.

Towards the end of 2008, her greatest act of obedience began: *her Yes to illness and to the cross*. Although she had already been suffering for some time from various ailments, including diabetes, which she had learned to live with serenely, after returning to Italy from India, where she had participated in the General Chapter, Sr. Marina began to suffer from more serious problems. The various tests she underwent, gave far from normal results. Thus, her *Way of the Cross* began. When the disease that was tormenting her body was discovered in 2009, she underwent the first Lymphoma surgery with resection of the rectum and the subsequent chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Since the disease was spreading to other parts of the body, repeated hospitalizations and four other surgical operations followed, which she always faced with great strength of will and with that serene and positive spirit which made her fight the disease with courage and great determination. We prayed for the miracle of her healing, but God’s will proved to be different and much greater than what we desired.

And so, moving ahead from one “*here I am*” to another, Sr. Marina lived her pain with total love, without losing any of her wit, her humour, her zest for life, her desire to be one with those who approached her, so as to win the goodwill of all: doctors and nurses, hospital staff and volunteers, co-Sisters and friends who came to her bedside. Sr. Marina was fully aware of the state of her health; she knew that the time for her definitive encounter with the Lord was approaching. A few days before her death, she told me: “*I am happy, please tell the Sisters ... because in my human misery I have always tried to do God’s Will and I want to continue to do so*”.

On the eve of her death, Sr. Marina seemed to have fallen into a profound sleep, but we were there beside her to watch over her ... In the afternoon of 3rd March, just before breathing her last, while we were praying and whispering our thanks for the gift of her life, she opened her eyes and gazed upon us serenely and profoundly as if in agreement with our prayers and to give back to us her smile and her last “thank you”. Thus, she passed away.

Her body was then placed in the mortuary of the hospital, and was visited immediately not only by our Sisters, but also by so many persons who knew her. In the afternoon of 5th March, after the blessing of her body and the closing of the coffin, it was taken to her Community in Via Massena and in the evening, we solemnly prayed and meditated the Holy Rosary in the Chapel filled with people.

At 9:30 in the morning of 6th March, Holy Mass was celebrated with the participation of the teachers, pupils, ex-pupils and yet so many people. Present were her brothers, Marcello and Corrado, her sister-in-law and a nephew, the Sisters of the two Communities of Via Massena, the Mother House and the nearby Communities and even from some distant Communities. Seven priests concelebrated, including Fr. Aldo Rabino and the Parish Priest of St. Secondo. It was presided over by Fr. Paolo Merlo, Chaplain of the Community of Via Massena. In the farewell message by Fr. Aldo Rabino and by one of her ex-pupils, as well as in the prayers prepared by the students of the School, her basic characteristics were remembered: her faith, her smile, her capacity to relate always serenely with everyone.

After the funeral Mass, her body was taken, together with that of Sr. M. Grazia’s, to the Monumental Cemetery of Turin, where it now rests – as she had desired – beside our Sisters.

Now, dearest Sr. Marina, you, who were on this earth, our Friend and by Wisdom you were made “the friend of God”, intercede for us!

With this prayer, dearest Sisters, in the certainty of a more effective and powerful spiritual closeness of Sr. Marina, I greet you all fraternally.


Mother Franceschina Milanese, Provincial Superior