

Turin, 5 September 2010

“Receive me, O God, into your abode”.

from the Liturgy

Dearest Sisters,

These words of the Psalmist were commented upon in the light of Sr. Patrizia’s life experience, during the homily at her funeral Mass celebrated on Saturday, 28 August 2010. The Celebrant of the Holy Mass which also concluded the Retreat held at the Mother House, invited those who were present – the Sisters, her relatives, friends, teachers, former students...- to listen with docility to the lesson which the “teacher” Sr. Patrizia was imparting at the end of her life: the passionate search for God and unconditional obedience to His Holy Will. These were the fundamental attitudes which gave significance to her 75 years of life.

Sister Patrizia (NATTA Adriana) was born in Buttigliera d’Asti (Asti) on 10 December 1934. She lost her mother when she was 5 years old and was admitted to the Boarding School of the Sisters of St. Ann at Fossano. At the age of 19, she also lost her father.

Helped by the Sisters who were educators, she learned how to discern the signs of the call to Religious life and on 24 November 1955, she entered the Novitiate of the Mother House, where she made her Vestition on 10 August 1956. In a letter during this period of time, her brother wrote: *“You are really a good girl; as your brother, I admire you and I assure you that if you go ahead as you are now doing, you will become a great nun”*.

This “prophecy” was fulfilled! Sr. Patrizia put at God’s disposal her exuberance, her strong will, her desire to do good to everyone, above all to the little ones and the poor. He accepted her availability.

After her Religious Profession (10 August 1958) she was sent to Fossano as teacher of the orphans. She dedicated herself passionately to the children entrusted to her care. She understood profoundly the need for affection, the desire for happiness and for meaning of these young lives, to whom she offered concrete and real responses as was her manner. With serene firmness, because she loved to understand everything thoroughly, and with joyful openness in as much as she knew how to welcome the positive side of reality, she brought out the fundamental values and the personal qualities in them.

She made her Perpetual Profession in Turin on 8 September 1964.

Simultaneously she obtained her diploma in Nursing and received her Teacher’s qualification in order to teach in the Nursery School. She made use of her training to serve in various Communities: Moncalieri (1970-1973), Torino-Via Massena (1973-1975), Vignale (1975-1978), Pianezza (1978-1980).

In 1980 she was sent to Viù and with passion, dedicated herself to the service of the smallest and the poorest. In fact, children burdened with serious family problems were received into this Community during the year. Sister Patrizia welcomed them, taught them and offered them the warmth of affection. The children were many and her greatest suffering was when the time needed for dedicating herself to the most needy was limited.

In 1989 she was transferred to the Community of Moncalieri with the task of teaching in the Elementary School, a qualification for which she had also obtained. Rheumatoid arthritis, the first signs of which she had felt before, was by now manifesting itself and gradually gripping her body. Notwithstanding the suffering, she was always present in class and was devoted to the children to whom she never made her illness a burden. To them she gave the best of herself and her knowledge. At the end of each school year, her students came out prepared in all the subjects and grown in age, in human and Christian values.

In this regard, she sought and obtained the collaboration of the families, establishing with them a relationship that went beyond the concern for academic advantage alone. For this reason, she remained in contact with the children and their parents even after the end of the school year. She prayed for them and took an interest in them and the world in which they were called to live their lives as adults. To this educative passion was added her commitment to update herself on political and social affairs through the means of social communication, above all through printed matter.

Her Superior at that time affirmed: *"In spite of her physical frailty, she did not spare herself from anything. I never heard her say "no" to any of my requests but was available for any kind of work"*.

Transferred to the Mother House in Turin in September 2003, because she could no longer teach in the school, she dedicated herself to the children whom the teachers entrusted to her with confidence, so that she might help them overcome their academic difficulties. She took care of them individually. She was a strict and affectionate mother to each one of them.

She was remembered with love by those who, on becoming adults, still came to visit her in the Infirmary of the Mother House where she spent the last years of her life. She remained the point of reference even for the other former students.

A Sister, her companion in the Novitiate, testified: *"I knew her in the Novitiate when she was young and strong and I came to see her again in the Infirmary. To the question: «Sister Patrizia, how are you?» she always answered me with a smile, without any complaint. Her whole body was in pain, but she knew how to suffer and to offer"*.

Admitted to the Gradenigo Hospital due to her worsening illness, she seemed to be getting better when, all of a sudden, at 5:00 p.m. on 26 August 2010, she died of septic shock.

After the solemn celebration of the funeral Mass in the Chapel of the Mother House, we accompanied her mortal remains, which as desired by her relatives, were laid to rest in the family tomb at Buttigliera d'Asti.

I heartily join her relatives in thanking all the Sisters, especially the Nurses, who took care of our dearest Sr. Patrizia throughout her long illness.

While we offer our suffrages for her through fraternal prayer, let us learn from our Sister, who was filled with the desire to live and enthusiastic exuberance, the "lesson" how to comply, not without moments of difficulty and withdrawing into herself, with the plan of God who taught her at the level of being rather than of doing. May the Lord grant us all this wisdom of heart.

With fraternal affection, I remain united with you.

Mother Franceschina Milanese
Provincial Superior