

**SUORE DI SANT'ANNA**  
*Provincia "Carlo Tancredi e Giulia di Barolo"*  
**Via della Consolata, 20**  
Tel.: 011/234.22.30 - Fax: 011/234.23.37  
E-mail: casamadre.to@libero.it  
**10122 TORINO**

*The Provincial Superior*

Turin, 10 December 2014

*"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them,  
will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. (Matthew 7:24)*

Dearest Sisters,

Holiness is not improvised, but is built in silence, without noise... just as it was for Sr. Rita who did not build her life on appearances and greatness, but on the solid rock of Christ. Her daily choices matured in silence and prayer, the discernment during important moments in life, laid the foundation of what our Sister would become, and which all of us have known.

**Sr. Rita** (Firmo Caterina) was born in San Vigilio (Brescia) on 14 August 1919.

On 26 November 1945 she entered our Congregation in the Mother House at Turin, where she celebrated the important events of her formative journey:

- on 10 August 1946 she made her Vestition
- on 10 August 1948 she made her First Vows
- on 10 August 1954 she consecrated herself to the Lord for life through the Perpetual Profession.

In 1949, as a young Sister, she was sent to Carmagnola-Immacolata as a Kindergarten teacher. Physically slender, but strong and determined, she was gentle and kind to all. Grateful for what she received, she did not demand special attention, even when she was ill or in need of care and rest.

In 1956 Sr. Rita was transferred to Monticelli with the same teaching assignment and the following year, she was sent to Cocconato where she remained until 1960, the year in which she returned to Carmagnola in the Community of Borgo San Michele.

After a break of a few years from school for health reasons, she was transferred to Narzole in 1963; then, to Frassinello Monferrato (Alessandria). Here, Sr. Rita spent several years, so much so that she was considered a townmate a native of that town by all: in fact, she lived there until 1978 as teacher and Superior.

Sr. Rita was a very active Sister, without taking away anything from her life of union with God: she knew well how to combine her apostolic life with that of prayer, from which she drew the strength to carry out with love her generous service towards the students whom she considered "her" children. Her love for children absorbed her fully; she educated them with much care and kindness, fully aware of instilling in each one of them the foundation of human formation. Her attention to the necessities of the families led her to respond with simplicity to their needs, so that very often, she welcomed the children at any time the parents would bring them and she would wait patiently until all the children had gone away, in order then to continue her day visiting the sick who were waiting for her to receive a comforting word and have the joy of praying with her.

In the Parish, Sr. Rita's work was not limited only to teaching Catechism but she also lent a hand in other small services like opening the Church every morning, to help the Parish Priest whose dwelling was far away.

She suffered much when she received the news of the closing of the Community and the withdrawal of the Sisters from that which by then had become "her town". For this reason, she continued to bear in her heart the children and adults of Frasinello, praying for all "her" children who by now have become mothers, fathers and grandparents.

In 2001, she was transferred to Vignale, then once again to Carmagnola San Bernardo and finally to Carmagnola San Grato when, due to her age, she could no longer carry out her role as a teacher.

When this happened, Sr. Rita strongly felt the detachment from "her world", she seemed to have become useless and a burden to the Community. In fact, she was always hard working; she would finish with precision and punctuality

whatever little work she did, and would not rest even in her spare time. Her hands worked fast with the shuttle, tating lace to be put on altar linen or on doilies to be given as gifts to the persons to whom she owed her gratitude.

Recognition for her long and tireless service (50 years as a Kindergarten teacher) was given by the President of the Republic through the award of a gold medal for civic excellence, an event which she accepted with her usual simplicity, so much so that at the end of the ceremony, she exclaimed: "What shall I do with this? *They could have given me some donation for the poor children!*". Even on this occasion, like a true Sister of St. Ann, Sr. Rita manifested detachment from herself and unconditional love for the little ones and the poor.

With this wealth of experience, in 2006 she became part of the Community of Pianezza, then of Casa Betania, where she spent the last years of her life. Here too, the smiling face of Sr. Rita, the delicacy of her dealings, her wit and the ability to joke, made her a Sister who was very pleasant to talk to and to engage in dialogue, at least until she was lucid and could understand. After a slow decline, particularly evident during the last few months, Sr. Rita was little by little wearing out, in silence; and the Lord, our Good Daddy, called her to Himself quietly, almost imperceptibly, on 4 December 2014 at 2:10 p.m.

On the day of her funeral, Sr. Franca Rita addressed Sr. Rita with touching words of affection, remembering her thus:

*Dearest Sr. Rita, I want to bid you farewell with love and esteem on behalf of all the Sisters who have been with you in the Communities to which Providence sent you, on behalf of the Sisters of Casa Betania, in particular of the Sister Nurses who have accompanied you with much love and on my personal behalf.*

*Thank you for what you have been to us.... a Sister who was attentive, caring, sensitive, intuitive. Your serene presence has left an indelible mark in our Community, as well as in the hospital where you had been admitted lately.*

*Your sense of humour, your inherent and ready wit amazed us always and helped us to live our service with joy and availability. Surely, "your" children that you helped to grow, inculcating in them the joy of life and the human and Christian values, have not forgotten you. The presence of the Parish Priest of Frassinello and some parishioners is a proof of it.*

*Thank you, Sr. Rita, for what you have taught and given us! Pray for all of us that we may leave an evangelical sign in those who come in contact with us as you have done. You were not a person of many words but of great witness, made up of smiles and attention toward others.*

*Pray also for your dear ones who loved you much and who, many times have visited you these years. May you enjoy Eternal happiness in Paradise together with your loved ones who have gone before you. We entrust to you the work of preparation for the second part of the Provincial Chapter which we shall begin in a few weeks. Help us to live this year dedicated to Consecrated Life to strengthen the values of our Religious Life. Dearest Sr. Rita, may you be that lighted lamp that burns, interceding for us. Goodbye, Sr. Rita, until we meet again in heaven!*

The funeral Mass held in the Chapel of the Mother House, was presided over by the Parish Priest of Frassinello. The celebration was attended by many Sisters coming from the nearby Communities and numerous relatives from her big family, with whom Sr. Rita had a special bond. After the Holy Mass, her mortal remains were transported to Concesio, her birth place, to be interred in the family tomb.

Dearest Sisters, in her life Sr. Rita built on the solid and secure foundation, giving room to those "Yeses" which opened her heart and made her capable of accepting the unexpected and surprising love of God. Let us ask her to intercede for us so that we may become capable of this abandonment.

Let us continue to pray for her and ask her intercession for our Congregation so that we may know how to live with renewed fidelity, the mission entrusted to us.

I greet you all with love,

  
Sr. Gabriella Profita, Provincial Superior