

**Suore di Sant'Anna**

Provincia "Carlo Tancredi e Giulia di Barolo"

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**10122 TORINO**

*La Superiora Provinciale*

Turin, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020

*"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise". (Lk 23: 43)*

Dearest Sisters,

*"In the supreme moment of life every person seeks the hand and eyes of those who have given him or her a fuller life. They are the ultimate viaticum to cross the last threshold. Death is the moment of full maturity, when everything is accomplished. Love is what remains when there is nothing more left".* (Fr. Ermes Ronchi). With these words we want to remember the passing away of Sr. Giustina who left us almost on tiptoe.

**Sister Giustina** (Vicari Carmela) was born in San Giovanni Gemini (Agrigento) on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1930.

On 4<sup>th</sup> March 1949, she entered our Congregation, in Rome – Viale Marconi, where she celebrated the stages of her formative journey:

on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1949, she made her Vestition,

on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1951, she made her First Profession,

on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1957 she consecrated herself to the Lord through the Perpetual Profession.

Sr. Giustina came to know the Sisters of Saint Ann in the embroidery classes thanks to Sr. Filiberta. This was a meeting place for many young girls who, besides learning to do embroidery, used to listen to the reading of the lives of saints, they prayed and received some spiritual thoughts. Many young people from San Giovanni Gemini, in fact, were formed at the school of Sr. Filiberta and then entered our Congregation. In between cross stitch, stem stitch, chain and double hemstitch, while learning to embroider, the young women, got to know the Charism of the Sisters of Saint Ann.

In 1951 she was sent to the Community of Turin-Via Massena as a student. After obtaining her Teacher's Training Diploma in 1954, Sr. Giustina began teaching at the School of Grosseto. She thus began her apostolate in this town among the children of the Primary School and in 1955 was transferred to Augusta. A few years later, in 1957, she was sent to Viù Colonia, as a teacher of children who lived the painful experience of being separated from their families. The Viù administration bestowed on her an award for her tireless service.

From 1963 to 1977 she taught in the School at Chieri for 14 years during which she consolidated her intellectual preparation. These years of teaching were very demanding for her, the work was intense and required dedication, in which Sr. Giustina manifested the best of her human and spiritual gifts. She followed up the children with attention, helping them to make progress in knowledge and in seeking the good for themselves and for others.

In 1977 she was sent to the Community of Bra Sant'Antonino for two years, and in 1979 she taught the children of the Primary School in Turin-Mother House. Sr. Giustina has always carried out her service as a teacher with commitment and enthusiasm.

In 1980 she was transferred to Altessano, as a teacher and she remained there for more than twenty years. The school became for her and for the children a place full of experiences and a life lived in seeking what is good and the best. In fact, Sr. Giustina's intention was to help the children develop their abilities, becoming aware of their own identity.

After long years of apostolate, in 2001 she returned to the Mother House where she carried out various services. Over the years, her already fragile health was getting worse and worse, requiring care and assistance.

In 2006 she was hospitalized and the diagnosis was Encephalomyelopathy. In addition, the dear Sister was suffering from chronic bronchitis and gastric reflux problems. During the last years of her life, unable to walk anymore, she moved about on a wheelchair.

Struck by pneumonia, Sr. Giustina had overcome it with suitable treatment, but the pneumonia due to COVID, by which she was recently affected, left her no chance of recovery, despite hospitalization, where the doctors confirmed the seriousness of her physical conditions, for which, after a long agony, at 3.30 a.m. on 17<sup>th</sup> September, she took her last breath.

That same night Sr. Gesualda too, of the same Community of “Casa Betania”, reached her heavenly home.

In the morning of 18<sup>th</sup> September, while Sr. Giustina’s coffin left the Amedeo di Savoia Hospital, Sr. Gesualda’s body left the Mother House to reach the Parish of Sant’Agostino for the last farewell.

At the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration, presided over by the parish priest, Don Andrea Pacini, the two coffins, carried across the nave together, were placed side by side, as if the two Sisters wanted to live this moment of celebration together, at which some relatives of Sr. Giustina and the Sisters of the neighbouring Communities participated.

After having addressed Sr. Giustina with a brief greeting that outlined some of her typical characteristics, the Eucharistic celebration began. In his homily, the celebrant underlined how in this experience, in which we were not allowed to be close to the Sisters as we would have liked to, in particular to Sr. Giustina, the Lord asked us to share the experience of many people who in this time of COVID could not accompany their loved ones on their last journey.

After the Communion the following words were addressed to Sr. Giustina:

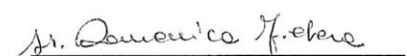
Dearest Sister Giustina,

*You have always been a joyful and serene person but slowly, with the disease, your life became very painful. You tried to overcome the moments of suffering by continually building up courage, offering and praying day and night. You always had the rosary in your hand. The sentence you always repeated was: I’m going home! and on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September, after a long agony, at 3.30 a.m. you returned to your true Home, where the Merciful Father was waiting for you. We are so sorry not to have been close to you at the last moment, but we did not abandon you, you have always been in our prayers and affection. Unfortunately this pandemic forced all of us to live in isolation. You loved the Community and of being together. When you didn’t see anyone, you used to ask for help, yelling loudly. When Sr. Marietta came by to ask you if you needed anything, you answered with a nice smile: “Thank goodness there is someone, I’m afraid to be alone”. Thank you for what you have been to each of us. We remember your simplicity, spontaneity, your ability to interact. We saw your fidelity to the Lord, above all in little things. Now you have returned “Home” to receive the warm embrace of our Good Daddy and to partake in the eternal joy. Goodbye Sr. Giustina, we will miss you. From heaven pray for us and for your dear ones whom you loved very much. Goodbye, we love you.*

At the end of the celebration, the body of Sr. Giustina left for Sicily to be buried in her family tomb.

Dearest Sisters, the death of our loved ones, for whom we have and would have liked to do everything to protect them from all evil, makes us experience our total fragility and helplessness; we are certain, however, that by learning to be women of hope, women grateful for what we receive and have, we can give meaning to sorrow, even of this sorrow.

I greet you all with affection,



Sr. Domenica Fichera, Superiora Provinciale