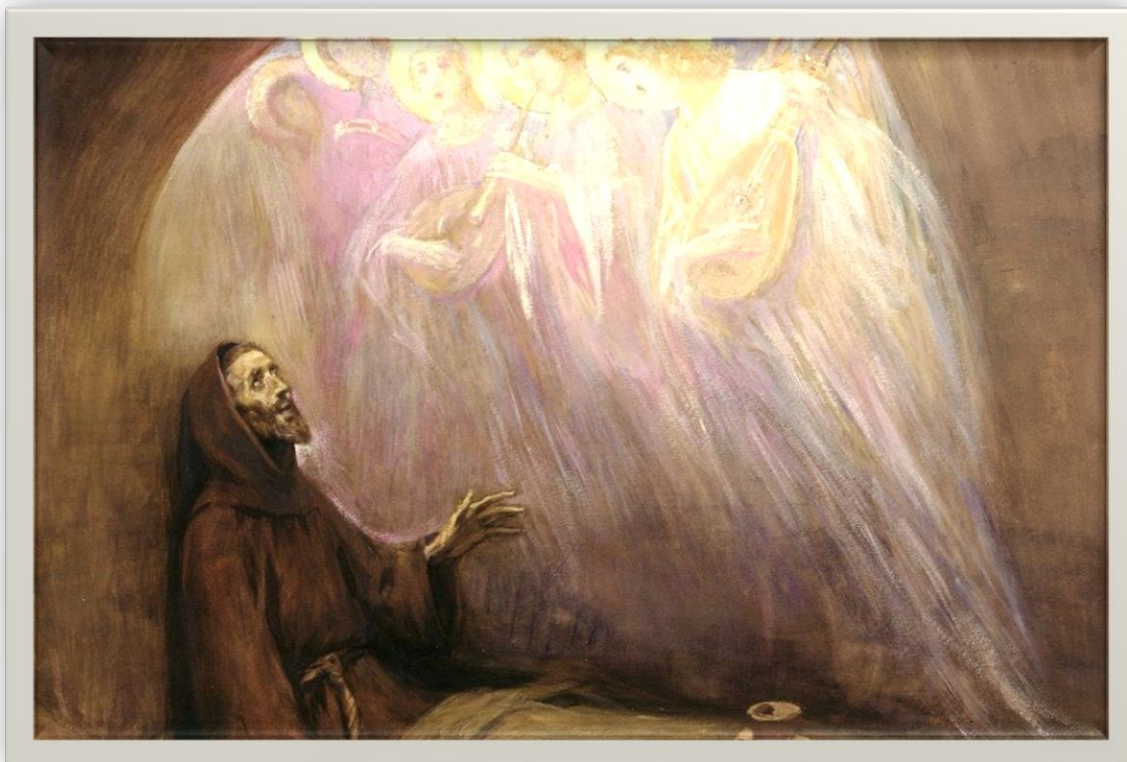


MYSTICS OF THE CHURCH

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St Gemma Galgani :

The distinguished servant of God, Gemma, earnestly committed herself to the spiritual life. With her adopted mother, the notable Mrs. Cecilia Gianinni, she had long discussions about Jesus and spiritual things.

Avoiding the frothiness of society life, she spent much time in fervent contemplation of the passion of Christ. Day and night she was engaged in intimate communion with God. Reliable witnesses testify that, during the last years of her life, the servant of God, Gemma, was often in a state of rapture and was favoured by God with prolonged ecstasies and unusual gifts, such as we read about in the lives of many saints.



"He asked me if I loved Him. I wept, for you know, Father, whom I have loved more than Jesus. I have loved myself, and often times creatures and pleasures. What could I answer to Jesus? I wept for a long time, and that was my reply. It is Jesus alone whom I should love, and I have never loved Him as I should." - St. Gemma Galgani

Gemma cured by Miracle:

Gemma soon began to grow ill. She developed a curvature of the spine. Also, meningitis set in and left her deaf. Large abscesses formed on her head, her hair fell off, and finally her limbs became paralyzed. A doctor was called in and tried many remedies which all failed. She only grew worse.



Gemma began a devotion to Venerable Gabriel Possenti of the Sorrowful Mother (Now St. Gabriel). On her sickbed she read his life story. She later wrote regarding Venerable Gabriel:

“... I grew in admiration of his virtues and his ways. My devotion to him increased. At night I did not sleep without having his picture under my pillow, and after that I began to see him near me. I don’t know how to explain this, but I felt his presence. At all times and in every action Brother Gabriel came to mind.”

Gemma, now 20 years old, was seemingly on her deathbed. A novena was suggested as the only chance for a cure. At midnight on February 23rd, 1899, she heard the rattling of a rosary and realized that Venerable Gabriel was appearing to her. He spoke to Gemma:

“Do you wish to recover? Pray with faith every evening to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I will come to you until the Novena is ended, and will pray together to this Most Sacred Heart.”

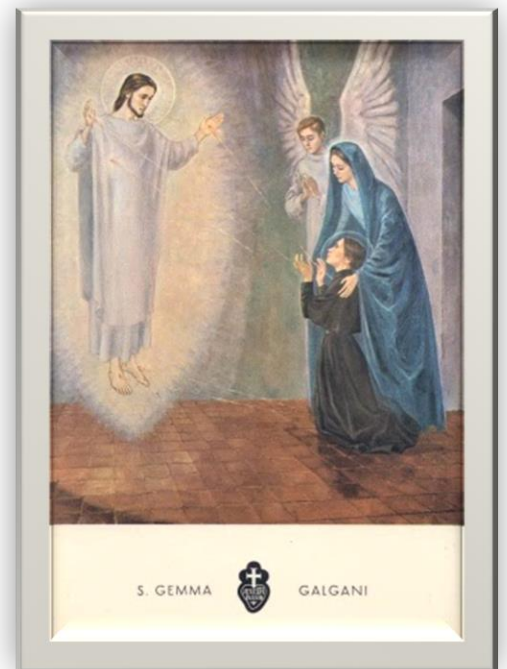
On the first Friday of March the Novena ended. The grace was granted; Gemma was cured.

As she got up, those around her cried with joy. Yes, a miracle had taken place!

On the 8th of June 1899, after receiving communion, Our Lord let His servant know that the same evening He would give her a very great grace.

Gemma went home and prayed. She went into ecstasy and felt a great remorse for sin. The Blessed Mother, to whom St. Gemma was tremendously devoted, appeared to her and spoke:

“My son Jesus loves thee beyond measure and wishes to give thee a grace. I will be a mother to thee. Wilt thou be a true child?” The Most Blessed Virgin then opened her mantle and covered Gemma in it.



Here is how St. Gemma relates how she received the stigmata:

“At that moment Jesus appeared with all his wounds open, but from these wounds there no longer came forth blood, but flames of fire. In an instant these flames came to touch my hands, my feet and my heart. I felt as if I were dying, and should have fallen to the ground had not my mother held me up, while all the time I remained beneath her mantle. I had to remain several hours in that position. Finally she kissed my forehead, all vanished, and I found myself kneeling. But I still felt great pain in my hands, feet and heart. I rose to go to bed, and became

aware that blood was flowing from those parts where I felt pain. I covered them as well as I could, and then helped by my Angel, I was able to go to bed ...”

During the remainder of Gemma's life, several people, including respected ecclesiastics of the Church, witnessed this recurring miracle of the holy stigmata to the pious maiden of Lucca. One eyewitness stated:

“Blood came from her (St. Gemma’s) wounds in great abundance. When she was standing, it flowed to the ground, and when in bed it not only wet the sheets, but saturated the whole mattress. I measured some streams or pools of this blood, and they were from twenty to twenty-five inches long and about two inches wide.”

Like St. Francis of Assisi and recently Padre Pio, Gemma can too say: *Nemo mihi molestus sit. Ego enim stigmata Domini Jesu in corpore meo porto*: Let no man harm me, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body.

St. Gemma’s Devotion to her Guardian Angel :

Gemma’s Guardian Angel would frequently appear to her. They would carry on a conversation the same way as if one were speaking to his best friend. Gemma’s purity and innocence must have drawn this Glorious Angel from Heaven to her side. Gemma and her Angel with his wings outstretched or kneeling beside her, would recite vocal prayers or Psalms alternately. When meditating on the Passion of Our Lord, her Angel would inspire her with the most sublime insights into this

mystery. Her Guardian Angel once spoke to her regarding Christ's Agonies:

“Look at what Jesus has suffered for man. Consider one by one these Wounds. It is Love that has opened them all. See how execrable (horrible) sin is, since to expiate it, so much pain and so much love have been necessary.”

St. Gemma's Last Illness and Heroic Death :

In 1902 Gemma in good health since her miraculous cure, offered herself to God as a victim for the salvation of souls. Jesus accepted her offer. She then fell dangerously ill. She could not keep any food down. Though briefly recovering her health, through Divine Providence, she quickly fell sick again. On September 21, 1902 she began to throw up pure blood that came with the violent loving throbbings of her heart. Meanwhile she went through a spiritual martyrdom as she experienced aridity and no consolation in her spiritual exercises. To add to that her enemy the devil multiplied his attacks on the young Virgin of Lucca.

Satan redoubled his war on Gemma as he knew the end was near. He strove to persuade her that she was entirely abandoned by God. He used hellish apparitions and even rained physical blows on her fragile body.

An eyewitness who was nursing Gemma said:

“That abominable beast will be the end of our dear Gemma - deafening blows, forms of ferocious animals, etc.- I came away from her with tears because the demon is wearing her out.”

Gemma unceasingly called on the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, still the battle waged on. Her Spiritual Director Fr. Germano regarding Gemma's last struggle stated:

“The poor sufferer passed days, weeks and months in this way, giving us an example of heroic patience and motives for salutary fear of what may happen to us, who have not Gemma's merits at the terrible hour of death.”

Yet through all these trials Gemma never complained, she only prayed. Gemma was at the end. She was practically a living skeleton but still beautiful despite the ravages of her sickness. She was administered Viaticum.

In her last words she said:

“I seek for nothing more; I have made the sacrifice of everything and of everyone to God; now I prepare to die.” She gasped, “Now it is indeed true that nothing more remains to me, Jesus. I recommend my poor soul to Thee ... Jesus!”

Gemma then smiled a heavenly smile and letting her head drop on one side, ceased to live.

Thérèse Neumann (1898–1962)

Bavarian peasant girl of Konnersreuth, whose stigmata, visions of the Passion of Christ, and other supernatural phenomena aroused worldwide attention. Neumann was born on April 8, 1898. As a young girl she was educated to have a religious mentality and aspired to become a missionary sister. Constitutionally she appeared robust. In March 1918, while she aided in putting out a fire that had broken out in a neighboring house, she was stricken by a violent pain in the lumbar regions and collapsed. In the hospital of Waldsassen she was seized with terrible cramps, became blind, from time to time deaf, and paralyzed, first in both legs, then in the right and left cheeks. She spent miserable years at the home of her parents in constant suffering and religious meditation.



On April 29, 1923, the beatification day of St. Thérèse de Lisieux, she suddenly recovered her sight. On May 3, 1923, an ulcer between the toes of her left foot that might have caused the foot to be amputated was unaccountably healed after she put three rose leaves from the tomb of St. Thérèse in the bandage. On May 17, 1925, the canonization day of St. Thérèse, she saw a light and heard a voice that comforted her and assured her that she would be able to sit up and walk. She sat up immediately and afterward could walk about the room with the help of a stick and a supporting arm. On September 30 she dispensed with this support and went to church alone. In

December she was seized with violent intestinal pains. An urgent operation for appendicitis was recommended. She had a vision of St. Thérèse and heard a voice that told her to go to church and thank God. During the night the pus found a natural outlet and she was cured.

The stigmata appeared during Lent in 1926. An abscess developed in her ear, causing violent headaches. She saw in a vision Jesus in the Garden of Olives and felt a sudden stinging pain in the left side. A wound formed and bled abundantly. It was followed by stigmatic wounds in the hands and legs. There was no pus and no inflammation, but there was a fresh flow of blood every Friday. She also shed tears of blood and became, by Friday, almost blind. With an awe-inspiring dramatic vividness she lived through the whole tragedy of the crucifixion; and in ancient Aramaic (which famous linguists established as such) she reproduced what were claimed to be the words of Christ and the vile swearing of the crowd as she clairaudiently heard them in that archaic language. Her pronunciation was always phonetic and many believed that she was in communication with someone who was a spectator of the events.

At Christmas in 1922, an abscess developed in Neumann's throat and neck. From this date until Christmas 1926 she abstained from solid food. She took a little liquid—three or four spoonfuls of coffee, tea, or fruit juice. After Christmas 1926, she only took a drop of water every morning to swallow the sacred host. From September 1927 until November 1928 she abstained even from this drop of water. Nevertheless she retained her normal weight. But four Roman Catholic sisters declared on oath that during the Friday ecstasies Neumann lost four pounds of weight, which she regained by the following

Thursday without taking nourishment in any form. On August 15, 1927, Neumann had a vision of the death, burial, and ascension of Mary. She visualized Mary's tomb at Jerusalem and not at Ephesus, as usually assumed.

In the socialist and communist presses of Germany, Russia, and Austria, many libellous statements and quasiexposures were published about Neumann. Whenever they were followed by suits for libel the editors were found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment and fine. Neumann was something of an embarrassment to the Nazis during World War II, and the authorities made difficulties for visitors to Konnersreuth, but immediately after the war, hundreds of thousands of American and other servicemen lined up to visit her. She often gave accurate information on distant events through out-of-the-body travel, and appears to have traveled astrally to the death chamber of Pope Pius XII.

Although pilgrims presented many gifts to her, she would not use these for her own comfort and, before her death September 18, 1962, she had contributed to the church a training seminary for priests, as well as a convent. During her lifetime over 133 books or papers were written about her.

Visions of Christ and the disciples

The stigmata appear :

Within a year of being cured of paralysis, the first signs of the stigmata appeared, beginning with the wound above the heart. Therese said:



One night, I was busy with my prayers, without being particularly conscious of the passion of Christ, when for the first time, I saw the Savior in the Garden of Olives sweating blood. He looked at me with a loving expression, and at that very moment I felt as if someone had pierced me through the heart with a sharp object, and then withdrawn it. I noticed that blood was flowing, and I felt this stabbing pain in my heart which, with the exception of Easter Week, has never left me completely.

Subsequently, on Good Friday, April 13 1926, Therese had her first vision of Christ's entire passion. Once again, whenever Christ looked at her lovingly, new wounds would appear on her body. Therese received these wounds and those that appeared later as God's will, sent to propitiate the sins of others and to draw souls closer to the Christ.

Visions of Christ and the disciples :

During her weekly visions of the Christ's passion, Therese experienced the same physical and mental agonies as Christ. The visions occurred every Friday, except for certain holy days, and increased in intensity during Lent, reaching a climax on Good Friday.

In her ecstatic state, Therese answered questions that elicited more details about the historical events. Linguists confirmed her accurate use of Aramaic and other foreign languages, unknown to her. Each year, Therese also had as many as a hundred others visions of the lives Christ and his disciples.

On August 6, 1926, following a vision of Christ's transfiguration, Therese experienced no further need of food or drink, and little need for sleep. Therese told Paramhansa Yogananda in 1935: "One of the reasons that I am here on earth is to prove that man can live by God's invisible light, and not by food only."

Gabrielle Bossis (1874-1950)

was a Catholic Mystic and layperson who lived in France in the 20th century. Born in Nantes, France in 1874, she was the youngest child of a family of four children. As a child in a well to do family, she was taught and raised in proper social graces and etiquette, and she grew up to be a graceful, happy and high spirited young woman, but as from her childhood she possessed a strong yearning for God and the things of the Spirit. She obtained a Degree in Nursing, and enjoyed the fine arts of that time, including sculpting, painting, illuminating and music. Later in life she discovered that she had another talent- that of writing moral plays and also acting. From that point on until two years before her death she traveled extensively in France and abroad, producing her own plays and acting in the principal role. Those who still remember her remark about her infectious laughter and her unflinching charm.



He and I

On very rare occasions in her early life, Gabrielle had been surprised by a Mysterious Voice, which she heard and felt with awe, and sometimes anxious questionings, which she perceived to be the Voice of Christ. It was only at the age of 62, however, that this touching dialogue with the "Inner Voice" began in earnest, continuing (at least in her notes) until two weeks before her death on June 9, 1950.

The journal that she kept of her dialogue with the Inner Voice has been published in numerous languages under the title "He and I" (see note above) and has become a source of deep inspiration and edification for those who read it. Below are a few excerpts from this extraordinary dialogue between "the Inner Voice" and Gabrielle.

April 12, 1945. In the [train] station at Angers.

Coming from Paris I had a seat in spite of the dense crowd.

"You see what great care I take of My own. Even in the tumult I draw them into solitude where the heart is on the alert to hear the Beloved. Didn't I say to them in the past, 'When I sent you out without purse or staff did you lack anything?' And they answered, 'Nothing'"

'Lord, it is often I who am lacking.'

"For these omissions humble yourself, and don't be astonished by them. Wish to be cured of this lack of carefulness in My service. Take frequent stock not only of the value of your actions, but above all, of the value of your motive in doing them - the forthrightness of your will to glorify Me.

Perhaps if you paid attention more often to what you do for Me, you would intensify your fervor and tenderness. You would be more faithful in the details - these precious details that can earn so much. They are the specks of goodness that fill life....You get the picture -the invisible grains of sand that make up the immense Sahara. Take great care in the very little things, My Gabrielle. Say to yourself, 'They are made to the Measure of My little nature'. And this thought will keep you humble.

Have you noticed how often the work of the humble has to be done again? Put all your heart into it, knowing that you please Me. And since you want to live for Me, since you want to see everything in relation to Me, and pattern your life after Me, then consider how short the time is that remains for you on earth. You can give Me glory in that time. Give it to Me unstintingly," **April 20, 1945 - Le Fresne. At church.**

I had seen flowers of all kinds at the edge of a ditch.

"You see how insurgent the spring is! Let a springtide of love in your soul blossom out in good deeds of every color. I shall look lovingly at them just as you looked at the flowers in the underbrush. Tell yourself that love alone can make fresh wonders spring forth.

Then give yourself to Love so that Love may possess you. Don't divide yourself into two - one part for you and the other for Me - since I long to have all of you and cherish this hope. Your love quenches My thirst. I am most demanding: you see I want My children to be wholly and utterly Mine at every moment. So don't withhold a thing. Don't take anything of yourselves away. You would steal from Me if you did, because everything is Mine.

If I require this of you it is because My yearning for you is a consuming fire. And My yearning is born of My love. Do you understand? Do you at last believe? Do you acknowledge My power to love? And if Mine is a love beyond all others, then how could you fail to go beyond your usual ways of loving to make your home in the higher realms - the realms where all is simplicity in our oneness. Above all when you know that it is

there that I'm waiting for you and that great is My need to Meet you.

Meditate on this need of Mine and you will call to mind that it is in your power to give Me this alms. Then remember the value of a free gift - the gift of oneself when offered out of tenderness. What inexpressible joy will be His who receives it. He will multiply His blessings so that the one that receives them will be lost in wonder and gratitude. 'What have I done to deserve the kindness of My God?' he will ask. And I shall reply, 'You loved Him with all your strivings and you let Him love you''

April 26, 1945 - 'Lord, Your poor little girl, Your poor image is here before you, yearning for You with all the strength of her being.'

"Have you noticed how people talk among themselves, discussing all their personal affairs? They spend so much time this way and it does them so little good. Don't you think that if they gave themselves to Me, their Friend, I should rejoice to have My place in their thoughts and I should know how to reward their confidence in abundance? Don't you think that it would create a moment-to-moment intimacy between them and Me, and this would be a joy for them, because close to Me their lives would lose their tension.

You understand? It would be life together with Me- I carrying the heavy end of things. So again I say: speak with Me, My little ones. Speak with Me. And our hearts will Merge. Isn't this the aim of My Christians? Isn't that why you want to die? Then begin living this heart-oneness. Seize upon every opportunity. Find every pretext. You aren't bold enough. For some of you it is because you are indifferent.

But My close friends, why, why don't they call to Me from their heart's depths? If only their belief were less like unbelief! If their hope were fixed upon My help ... And if, in all simplicity, their love loved Me more. I should be there looking after everything in their day, and when night fell, their eyes would close again on My face."

Aug 12, 1945, Le Fresne Church.

"When you say to Me 'Beloved Jesus, I give You My entire life' do you realize that at the same time I have given you more, since even what you are giving Me is what I've given you? Admit that everything you have comes from Me. It's all a gift from Me, and not to display My power, not chosen at random, but by My most attentive love -chosen especially for you, My children -for your path in life, in order to help you reach the goal that is yours."

"You have everything you need to perfect the Gabrielle I dreamed of in creating you. Did you watch Me creating you? You see, you can have no idea of the tenderness that I pledged to your soul so long ago -from all eternity. Then I ask you not to consider Me too exacting if I say to you, as I do so often, 'Give Me everything'.

March 21, 1946 -Holy hour

"All night long I waited for you in My Eucharist -waited to give Myself to you in the morning. Why should this astonish you? You believe in My presence and a tabernacle, don't you? You

believe in My immense love? Then put the two together. And when you wake up during the night, look at the One who is already longing for the dawn to bring you to Him. This will quicken your love and give you confidence in My power. Let Me profit by the days of your life, they are not many. Prolong Me in them as much as you can don't let a day go by without doing something for Me, for there is not a single day that I am not at work, you for your own happiness. Do you believe Me?"

'Yes Lord'

"Then humble yourself for not having responded better to all the loving kindness of your Creator. You know how I love to forgive? You know how your confidence attracts My compassion? Your trust can win anything from My heart. Count on Me. Call Me. Don't you love your name? I love to hear Mine on your lips. Don't deprive Me."

December 19, 1946

"Don't be afraid to discover how little it takes to touch Me. I am the sensitive One and you can never know how your gestures make music in My heart. Be afraid of hurting Me. Always try to give Me joy and above all don't imagine Me to be far off. You realize that I am in you, don't you? And if you do, why don't you think of Me more often? I was going to say, always. Then My longing for you, would be completely satisfied. I am the same for all people. They are all My children. I long for every one of them. So, in offering yourself offer the others to Me with My joy in mind."

February 6, 1947 –Holy hour

"Your desire in itself is a call that pleases Me and gives Me great honor. You make amends for yourself and you make amends for the ingratitude of so many others. Do they think of Me with a little affection even once a year? Do they accept the thought of My love for each one of them? When will you realize that time -the span of earthly life- is too short, that I need all eternity to love them? That this present life of theirs is not their goal, but only a Means given to them to earn the Alder life? Pray for them. You can do a great deal without seeing the fruit. But I see; I hear. I see that in helping others to arise you rise yourself. Do you believe Me? Come to Me and bring others with you."

February 14, 1947 -in a moment of sadness

"Remember that I traveled all of your roads".

"If you want to gain strength to make a sacrifice, don't look at the sacrifice. Look at My joy."

"Don't you realize that I have been waiting a long, long time for you? No two souls are alike. None other can give Me what I expect from you."

March 6, 1947

"Each soul is the object of My special love. That is why I am so grateful to those who are resourceful and bringing back

sinners to Me. Keep this in mind then. I gave My life for them in the most atrocious torture, for these poor beloved ones. A humble repentance, and they are already on My heart. So speak gently to them. Speak with tenderness. A brusque remark could drive them farther away.

'I am going to meet one tomorrow, Lord'

"I will give you the necessary tact. As always, I will be in you. You will look at Me and call Me and say 'speak through me'. I will be the listening Brother."

'I have just received telegrams and telephone calls for 101 things'

"That his life, unforeseen events, moving from one place to another, rough weather. But, come what may, remain steadfastly in My heart. Keep your eyes fixed on Me as you ask Me for advice, or as you tell Me that you love Me always. Remember that nothing happens without My permission, and be very calm and serene. There is nothing like serenity for convincing people of the Good. This was My response to the craftiness of the Pharisees. So, be calm in your soul, and happily docile to My will. As you look back over your life, don't you see that My will was always for your good? This is because I love you, and it's the same for everyone, since I love each of you individually. I see you all differently; I see every detail about you, do you understand? My love is not of global love.

I need each one of you as though you were the only person in the world, as though the cosmos had been created for you alone,

and My love is greater than the cosmos. So let this thought be a strength to you and your smiling calm.

Let us include My Mother in this life of ours. Do you really believe that Her love is active on your behalf? Oh, My little girl, have faith in the great things that you can do with Us. Without Us...but you are already aware of your nothingness. "

April 8, 1948

"Have you thanked Me for all I did for you, for mankind, for the angels, for My mother? What a concert of blessings, My child! Gather them all as though they were yours and join in the symphony of thanksgiving. Sing your part in the choir of number-less voices, and I'll know it from all the others. Are there two voices alike in the whole world? Aren't you struck by the diversity in human creation? In heaven too, each saint differs from the other, and if you are enchanted by the variety of colors in your garden, you may be sure that Paradise flashes with a myriad of countless splendid things, all for My glory. There too, I know the voices, for I know you all. My children, I atoned for all of you and I know My redeemed ones.

‘Lord, who will teach me to thank You and what words should I use?’

"The most simple - straight from your heart. Say them to Me at Mass. Say them again after your Communion when we are only one. Once more it will be I who give them to you. How I love to act for Myself in you. Can you believe that? I feel at home, and I feel you are Mine. Be very much Mine ... I was going to say, 'Be your Christ before the Father, before others. Be the gentlest and the smallest'

April 17, 1948 - 'Lord, I should so love to live Your words, and I am always myself, still my old self.'

"Is it so difficult to think of your Lord? Is it so difficult to talk with Him and to keep Him company? When you meet someone in a waiting room, don't you instinctively approach that person and in a kindly way do your best to make the time pass pleasantly for him? And if he were a poet, or a scholar, or someone great in the eyes of the world, wouldn't you go even further and show more joy?

My child, it's a God who is waiting at the door of your heart, a God who is all yours and who is in you. You open to Him when you talk to Him, when you look at Him, when you try to take your thoughts off the things around you so that you may turn them to Him with the utmost tenderness.

Don't think that this is a fable I'm telling you. It is the simple reality. But as it's all happening in the shadowland where everything is imperfection, you find it difficult to believe, and you are slow in acting upon it. That is why I am like that person in the waiting room. If only you could approach Me more often with all your kind charm, you might suspect My long yearnings. You might think, 'He's waiting for the world: Yes, My little child, for everyone, and for such a long, long time ... I came to Bethlehem to seek them and I shall go on seeking them right to the end of the world.

This is the patience of God. This is His love. Then how could you ever understand? Yet it would be very sweet to believe, wouldn't it? So quicken your faith by telling Me about it often.

More often. Don't get weary: you will hope more and love more. It's your great God who wants you greatly, My very frail little girl"

November 4, 1948

“I knock at your door. You don't believe that I need my children, do you? An yet, My God-Love needs your love. That is how it is. Always. You remember My words, 'I thirst'? I am always thirsty. If you knew this thirst, more intense than the thirst of men, you would devise every means in your power to quench it. That is why I knock at your door.

Do you remember the heat of the Sahara? The desert burns less than I. Can you understand My thirst for your awareness of Me, for your desire to be pleasing to Me, for your gratitude for My pitiable sufferings, your compassion for all the disgrace, the filth and the hatred I received during the night before My crucifixion and on the morning of My death? And for the blows, and the torture of My body and mind. Do you sometimes think of it?

Can you measure this love that made Me give Myself up when I could have escaped into the invisible? It was My love that went out to meet the torture.

Don't you believe that I paid for the right to have at least your friendship? You recall what the thief said: 'Remember me when You come into Your kingdom'? And I say to you, 'Remember Me during your life'. Place Me as a lighthouse in the center of your mind, not just a lighthouse that illumines, but one that gives warmth. Where can you be where I am not? When you

are hunting for Me, I am already there, and when you love Me, I love Myself in you.

I am your Source. Give everything back to Me in joy and simplicity. So few stop to think about this.

Then tell Me now, do you want Me to knock at your door?"

November 11 - Holy hour.

"Practice being more attractive for love's sake. You could do immense good with an affectionate look and a smile. If you keep yourself for yourself, you are your own slave. But if you go to meet people with delicate thoughtfulness, you bring peace and rest; you give the balm of Gilead. How a smile from you would have soothed X this morning if you hadn't shut yourself up in your ivory tower. There is a demon called the spirit of contradiction; he fraternizes with the spirit of self-seeking.

Remember that love is not puffed up with pride and that it will never pass away. What you do for yourself will perish miserably. What you do for others, for the love of Me, will go on re-echoing throughout all eternity.

Have you tried to see Me in others? Have you understood that I live in that old crippled woman on the 'sunken road' and all others like her? Couldn't you bring Me a little wood for this winter, and some clothing? Won't you give Me something to eat? Suppose she is bitter and doesn't thank you, what difference does it make? Since I am the One who receives, and I am rich.

Don't be shy when you give. Be daring in goodness:' I was thinking that I should be ashamed to wheel a barrow with wood in it right to that place.

"Perhaps. But I shall not be ashamed of you at the last judgment. Don't run away any more from what costs you something, and you will be among the happiest people. Besides, I've done so much for you ... You are free though. You will not even commit a fault by not going. I'll just have the sadness of wanting some-thing without getting it."

"Lord, I'll go."

December 15, 1949 - Holy hour.

Coming back from Mass in the dark at 7am in the freezing rain. "This too, Lord, may I offer for Your sinners in this Marian year?"

"I take all sufferings little and big, and place them in the treasury of the Church - the treasury used for the making of saints. You forget your past sufferings, but they continue to bear fruit in My sight. You have already forgotten your travel weariness, weather annoyances, desert thirst, the fears, exile in distant countries, the slow journeys back, the long tests of endurance, times of illness. But remember that you offered Me everything and that I've kept everything.

You love to look at the precious jewels in your mother's jewel box, or your favorite books in your library, or the unusual souvenirs given to you during your long tours. Often it's only a trifle, something that hasn't cost the donor much. You remember the Moslem's terebinth, the Indian's moose glove and

the pressed leaf given to you in Larache? You treasure these things because those who gave them to you wanted to please you. For the same reason I have found joy in all the little presents given to Me by My children. Even, if they have not cost you very much, even if you gave them to Me only because My Father put them into your hand by some circumstance other than your own free choice, you offered them to Me like good and affectionate children. And so I treasure them as though they were a part of you. Such is your power over Me! You bind Me to you by a single hair of your head. And the more you believe how utterly disarmed I am by your love, the more My unfathomable tenderness overflows to you. The great wrong is to lack faith in it. Then offer Me everything –every gesture, every thought.

-Looking at the preparations for Christmas- ‘Thank you Lord. How could you come down to earth, knowing that You were going to suffer so much?’

“And, if I had not come down, should I have had the joy of instituting My Eucharist where I remain right to the end of the centuries?”

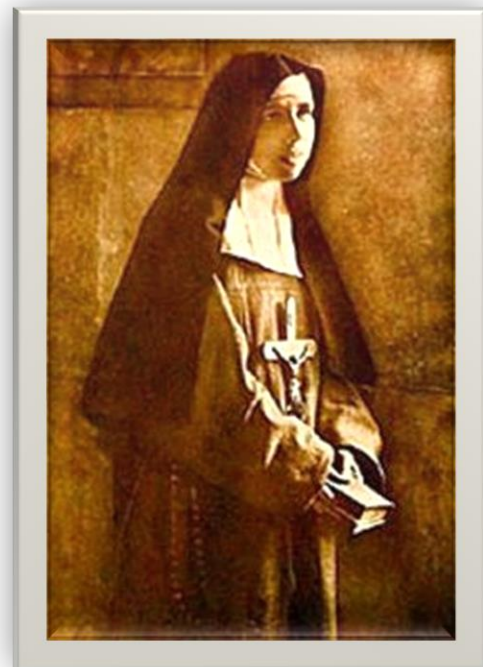
Sister Maria Consolata Betrone (6 April 1903 – 18 July 1946)

,baptised as Pierina Maria Betrone was a Catholic mystic and nun of the Franciscan Capuchine Order. Betrone was born in Saluzzo, Piedmont, Italy in a middle-class family, and later died in the convent of Moriondo, Testona, Italy.

She was known for the intense propagation of the Holy Rosary, along with an alleged apparition by the Sacred Heart of Jesus and her personal Guardian Angel in 1916 during the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The alleged messages reputedly asked the recitation of

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you! Save Souls!", an ejaculatory prayer which Betrone claims to release a soul from Purgatory and pardons 1000 blasphemies against the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The pious devotion is very popular among Filipino and Portuguese Catholics, who include invocations in their recitation of the Rosary along with the Fatima Prayer.

Nothing in the early life and background could foretell that this young girl would become one of Jesus' beloved victim souls. She seemed to live a normal childhood up until the age of 13 when one remarkable day our Lord cast His loving gaze upon her. It so happened that while she was hurrying to do her errands in the village when, unexpectedly, an intense prayer suddenly came forth from her heart: "***My God, I love you!***" and a unusual spiritual fervor overcame her. It was the



beginning of her extraordinary experiences with the Lord.

On December 8 1916, which was the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pierina dedicated herself to the Virgin. After receiving Holy Communion, she distinctly heard within her the words "*Do you want to be Mine?*"

Deeply moved by this extraordinary grace, she wept with tears of emotion, and without understanding the extent of the question, she replied "Yes" to Jesus, entrusting herself to Him.

As the weeks and months progressed, Pierina began to feel God calling her to the religious life. During the same time, and continuing for several years, she began a period of spiritual doubts, dryness and temptations, which were surely sent by the Lord to purify her soul. Our Lord first led her out into the spiritual desert in order to prepare her for her mission as victim soul.

Three failed attempts at entering the religious life

It was not until she was age 21 before she was finally able to realise the religious vocation that God was calling her to.

"Nothing attracts me about the Capuchins", she said, after three failed attempts to take the veil in "open" religious orders

It was her confessor, Don Accomasso, who, enlightened by God as all sincere confessors are, advised her to enter the Convent of the Poor Clares (Order of Franciscan Capuchins) in Turin, Italy. This was on April 17, 1929. After the normal period of preparation and discernment she gratefully received the Veil on February 28, 1930, taking the name of Sister Maria Consolata,

The new name, “Consolata”, chosen by young Pierina is indicative of the spiritual path and life that Jesus was calling her to, for the word “Consolata” means consoler, and it was she who soon became the consoler of the Heart of Jesus. On this very day of the Ceremony of taking the Veil, she received an inner locution from Jesus that indicated to her what His will was for her. Jesus said-

"I do not call you for more than this: an act of continual love." And for more than 16 years of enclosed Capuchin life this “act of continual love” would be the foundation on which she concentrated all her spiritual efforts.

On April 8 1934, she took her perpetual vows, working in the convent as a humble cook, doorkeeper and cobbler. She was transferred on July 22 1939 to the new foundation of Moriondo, Moncalieri Turin, where she was also a nurse and secretary. Her exterior life was one lived out in daily sacrifices, penances and self denial, hidden to the world, in fulfilment of the tasks assigned her by her superiors. Although her exterior life was similar to her fellow religious sisters, in her interior life she was receiving exceptional and extraordinary graces from God, which unfolded unnoticed in the intimacy of her spirit. She became the confidante of Jesus and His Sacred Heart.

The confidante of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

On November 9, 1934 Sister Consolata writes:

"Jesus reveals to me the intimate sufferings of His Heart

caused by the faithlessness of souls consecrated to Him''. After this, she began to have a burning desire to make reparation for the sins of the world, and to lead sinners to Jesus. And thus began the intense spiritual relationship, and intimacy between Jesus and Consolata: together in love, together in pain, together to deliver a countless number of souls to the Father, who seeks them in His infinite love, mercy and compassion. After all it was the Lord Himself who told her:

"Do not think of me as a harsh God, because I am foremost the God of love!"



**Jesus, Mary, I love You!
Save souls!**

It was then that our Lord also inspired Sister Consolata with this important universal prayer, "Jesus, Mary, I love you! Save souls!"

Remembering what Jesus had told her on the day that she took the Veil-

"I do not call you for more than this: act of continual love", Sister Consolata began

to thus repeat this one prayer, over and over again, during all her waking hours, in every form of work as she went about her daily duties. For it was Christ himself, who instructed her

in the practice of what He called the “unceasing act of love” expressed in the words- "Jesus, Mary, I love you! Save souls!"

Concerning this prayer, our Lord said,
"Tell me, what more beautiful prayer do you want to offer me? ---'Jesus, Mary, I love you! Save souls!'--- Love and souls! What more beautiful prayer could you desire?"

Her littleness and humility

Though Sister Consolata was blessed with these extraordinary interior enlightenment's by God, she remained very humble and still felt small, and she saw herself as the “even smaller one” which Saint Therese of Lisieux had referred to in her diary. This feeling of littleness that Consolata felt within her soul was confirmed by our Lord in the following words:

"I have found that still weaker soul who has abandoned herself with complete faith to My infinite mercy: it is you, Consolata, and through you I will perform marvels which will far exceed your fondest desires."

And later Jesus tells her: - *'You are to love. You are too small to climb to the summit: I will carry you on My shoulders'*

Here are some of the revelations given to her by Jesus:

‘Write this down Consolata, for I demand it of you under obedience, that for one act of love from you, I would create heaven.’

‘The soul that is dearest to Me is the one who loves me the most.’

‘Transform everything that is disagreeable to you into little roses, and gather them with love, and then offer them to Me with love’

‘See Consolata, the enemy will make every effort to shake your blind faith in me. But you must never forget that I am and love to be always kind and merciful. Understand my heart Consolata; understand my love, and never permit the enemy to gain entrance into your soul, even for an instant, with a thought of a lack of confidence in Me. Believe Me, I am solely and always kind; I am solely an always like a parent to you! So, imitate the children who at every little scratch of the finger, run at once to mother to have it bandaged. You should always do the same and remember that I will always cancel out and repair your imperfections and faults, just as a mother will always bandage the child's finger, whether it is really hurt or only seems so in his imagination. And if the child were to really hurt his arm, or his head, how tenderly and affectionately would he be cared for and bandaged by the mother! Well, I do this very same thing with regard to your soul when you fall, even though I may do so in silence. Do You understand Consolata? Therefore, never, never, never have even a shadow of doubt; a lack of confidence wounds My heart to the quick, and makes Me suffer.

“Love Me and you will be happy, and the more you love Me the happier you will be. Even when you will find yourself in utter darkness, love will produce light; love will produce strength, and love will produce joy.”

“I prefer an act of love, and a Communion of love to any other gift. I thirst for love”

"I delight to work in a soul. You see, I love to do everything Myself; and from this soul I ask only that she love Me."

"You see, even in good thoughts which creep in, there is always a bit of self-love, of complacency; and it is easy to see how they will spoil the act of love. But if you will complete trust in Me, that I am attending to everything and will continue to do so, and if you will not permit even one other thought to enter, then your act of love will possess a virginal purity."

"You see, Consolata, sanctity means self-forgetfulness in everything, in thoughts, desires, words....Allow Me to do it all! I will do everything; but you should, at every moment, give Me what I ask for with much love!"

"Consolata, place no limits on your confidence in Me, then I will place no limits on My graces for you!"

"Trust always in Jesus! If you only knew how much pleasure that gives Me! Grant Me this solace to trust in Me even in the shadow of death."

‘When suffering is accepted with love, it is no longer suffering, but is changed into joy.’”

"If you are in Me and we are one then you will bring forth much fruit and will become strong, for you will disappear like a drop of water in the ocean; My silence will pass into you, and My humility, My purity, My charity, My gentleness, My patience, My thirst for suffering, and My zeal for souls whom I wish to save at all costs!"

"You must think only of loving Me! I will think of everything else, even to the smallest details!"

“ ‘Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls’ encompasses everything, the souls in Purgatory and the souls in the Militant Church; the innocent soul and the guilty soul; the dying, the atheist, etc... Do not lose time; remember that every act of love is a soul. Of all the gifts, the best gift you can offer me is a day full of love. I desire an uninterrupted Jesus, Mary I love You, save souls! from when you get up in the morning till when you go to bed at night.”



Her holy death

In June 1939 she wrote "*It is my fate to die in little pieces*". In November 1944 she noted:

"For many days my soul has halted on this divine phrase - 'sacrificial victim for the Sacrificial Victim'". It is in this way that, for the peace of the world [for World War II was raging], for the dying and for the conversion of souls she many times repeated the offer of herself as the sacrifice of expiation for

the sins of humanity

In the winter of 1944 her corpse-like color betrayed her. In obedience to her Superior she subjected herself to a visit from the doctor. The doctor's reply was : "*This sister is not ill, she is destroyed*". On September 24 1945 Sister Consolata asked for half a day of rest and she laid down. The Mother Abbess took her temperature --39° C (102.2 F)! '*How long has she been carrying on like this?*' it was asked. On October 25, 1945 and X-ray was taken revealing damage to her lungs; thus she was officially diagnosed with tuberculosis. On November 4, 1945 she left for the sanatorium. She remained there until July 3 1946, when an ambulance returned her, in the last stages of consumption, to the Convent of Moriondo. Now, "everything was finished", except to begin a new and eternal life forever united with God in Heaven. Sister Consolata died at dawn on July 18, 1946 in the Convent of the Sacred Heart of Moriondo Moncalieri Turin, Italy.