



*"Faith in the resurrection opens us  
to fraternal communion  
beyond the threshold of death"  
(RoL 24)*



Today, 23 December 2015 at 7.30 a.m.  
in the community of Albano Laziale (RM) – Casa Madre,

**SR. GIUSEPPA ANTONINA LA BARBERA**

went back to the Father.

She was 89 years old and 59 years of religious life.

Today, while the community of Casa Madre in Albano Laziale was singing the Alleluia verse: *"O King of all nations and keystone of the Church: come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!"* Jesus Good Shepherd revealed his face as Savior of the world to our Sister Giuseppa, handing her over to the merciful embrace of the Father, thus fulfilling what Pope Francis reminds us in the Bull of Indiction of the special Jubilee of Mercy: *"Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us (MV 2)."*

Antonina, third of five children, was born on 10 March 1926 in Altofonte (PA), in a Christian family that transmitted to her faith. Christened on March 14 of that same year and confirmed the following year, she matured in her religious vocation accompanied spiritually by his Parish Priest and participating regularly in the life of the parish community.

She entered the Congregation on 3 January 1952 in Genzano (RM). She spent the period of her first formation in Transacqua (TN) and then in Albano Casa Madre for her Novitiate in 1955. On 3 September 3 1956 she made her first profession, taking the name of Sister Mary Giuseppa, but she was affectionately called Sr. Ninetta by all.

After her profession, for the period of the Juniorate, she was sent to the community of Borgo Milano (VR) and on 3 September 1961, made her perpetual profession at Albano Casa Madre, where she remained until 1965, helping in the various services of the community which was increasing, accepting young people who were searching for their vocation.

A person of sacrifice, generous and a lover of poverty, Sr. Ninetta presented a rather determined character. Strong but sincere, even if sometimes stern in interpersonal relationships, she showed great love for the Congregation and commitment to the consecrated life. Very practical and sober, she lived wisely her ministry and was faithful to prayer, striving to entrust herself in everything to the Lord.

From 1965 to 2005, she carried out her apostolate in the different communities. Some of which, the service as superior, in the early years: Pieve d'Alpago (BL); Diano San Pietro (IM); Castellammare - Annunziatella (NA); Fonni (NU); Soave Mantovano (MN); Monsole di Cona (VE); Crosia (CS); Cittaducale (RI); Doria (CS); Rieti. Along these forty years of ministry of pastoral care where she devoted herself mainly to the kindergarten, the family ministry and the visitation to the sick, she also remained for some period in Albano to help in the various services of the Casa Madre.

From 2005-2009 she devoted to the assistance of some family members and it was at this period that she became ill, and was forced to retire in Albano where she spent the last six years of her life, suffering from pulmonary fibrosis that was increasingly accentuated with periodic crises of respiratory failure to cardiac arrest, which took place today.

On 18 August, visiting her at the Regina Apostolorum Hospital in Albano where she was being treated for one of the many respiratory crisis, despite the oxygen mask that prevented her from speaking normally, she enthusiastically and joyfully shared with me her vocation story, proud to be a Pastorella and for having given her life to Jesus Good Shepherd, serene and ready when He would call her to himself.

Sr. Ninetta wrote in 1977: *"I desire to do moment by moment only what pleases the Lord and for this I ask for help through prayer ..."* and this is the spirit that animated her entire religious life.

In the last personal encounter with her in Albano, on 6 December, she confided to me: *"I offer my suffering for the Congregation and for the Church and ask the Lord to come quickly and take me!"*.

Thank you, Sr. Ninetta for your offering, now wrapped in the Mercy of the Father, continue to pray for us, so that in this Christmas of the Jubilee Year of Mercy we may *"open our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness (...) called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's action* (cf MV 2-3).

Sr. Marta Finotelli  
*Superior general*

Rome, 23 December 2015  
*8th day of the Christmas Novena*