



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



Today, 16 September 2017, at 7.55am
in the community of Albano Laziale (RM) – Mother House,
our sister **MARIA ARMIDA SR ROSA ALFANO**
has returned to the Father's house
at the age of 86 years and 56 years of Religious Life.

Today, as the Church commemorates the memorial of the holy martyrs, Cornelius and Cyprian, and the liturgy invites us to sing with the psalmist "*Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time on and forevermore*" (ps 112), the Good Shepherd presents to our Father our sister Rosa who spent her life in the pastoral mission with joy and with the essential necessities of life.

Rosa was born on 3 April 1931 in S. Cataldo (Caltanissetta) and was baptized on 5 April in the parish dedicated to St Stefano. She came from a large family and was the first of eight children, two brothers, one of whom is a priest, and five sisters, one of whom is also a Pastorella, sr Gemma, who preceded her in joining the Congregation. Rosa worked hard for her family of origin and entered the Congregation only after helping her parents in raising her sisters and brothers. In her work, she often did not charge people, as she was aware of the poverty of those asking her to sew a dress or for some other needs.

She entered the Congregation on 1 December 1959, at Albano Laziale (RM) - Mother House where she spent two years of initial formation. On 14 June 1960, she asked to be admitted to the Religious vestition using these words: "*I have longed for the way of perfection and with God's grace I hope I can fulfill the duties of my vocation*", and asked with simplicity and humility to take this step towards the consecration as a Pastorella.

She entered the novitiate on 2 September 1960 and made her first Profession the following year on 3 September 1961, taking the name of Maria Armida. Straight after her first Profession, she was sent to the community of Saliceto Panaro (MO) where she stayed from September 1961 to August 1969. In this house, which was set up as a vocation promotion

house, “Prevocazionario”, Sr Rosa generously put her skills as a dressmaker to good use, and performed various tasks in the care of vocations.

Sr Rosa had special gifts for practical things and pursued a diploma in sewing. In 1969-1970 she returned to the Mother house to do further studies and obtained a diploma in teaching from “Regina Victoriae” Institute in Rome.

In her application for admission to the first profession, she wrote: *"I am pleased to serve the Lord, to spend my energies for the good of souls, through parish works. [...] I have understood that this is the will of God, for His greater glory and for the good of my soul "*; words that express what Sr Rosa sought to live always with the joy of belonging to the Lord and serving him in the ministry that was entrusted to her.

Sr Rosa was described by the sisters who accompanied her in the various stages of formation as a person who *"loves prayer, applies herself in everything, loves the apostolate, has a good character, is very sensitive, loves common life, and is sociable though of few words. She loves work and poverty, loves the Institute, and she is generous."* In her generosity, from 1970 until 2010, she accepted the invitation to live her ministry in a somehow “itinerant” manner and in various areas: 1970 Presso di Lavis (TN); 1972 Gizzeria (CS); 1976 Caltagirone (CT); 1981 Castellammare - S. Antonio (NA); 1982 Crosia (CS); in 1986 Rossano station (CS); 1988 Castanea delle Furie (ME); 1995 Albano Laziale – Provinciate; 1998 Castellammare - Annunziatella; 2006 Sambiasi (CZ); 2009 Albano - "Community of Mary Mother of the Good Shepherd"; 2010 again in Castanea. Her ministry was mainly in the areas of pastoral care of families and teaching in kindergartens. In the communities of Crosia and Castanea she also exercised the ministry of local superior.

In 2011 Sr Rosa returned to the Mother House community and for some years she suffered severe cardiac problems that became more and more acute until she was diagnosed with mitral insufficiency and severe heart failure as well as chronic bronchitis that caused her breathing difficulties. She always remembered the apostolate and the places in which she lived her pastoral ministry. She often asked the sisters who visited her about different people she knew and the parish priest she had worked with. She was warmly remembered especially for her meekness and graciousness in her relationship with people.

In the past few years lived in the community of Albano, she continued to be a generous, meek, simple presence, and her joy was reflected in her relationships that were marked by an acceptance for all. The precariousness of her health never prevented her from living with intensity and fidelity her community life and to sustain with her prayer the life of the Congregation and the Church.

As we entrust our sister Rosa to the mercy of our Father, we ask for her intercession that, in imitation of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian – we may become Pastorelle Sisters that are ever more generous, strong and persevering in faith so as collaborate tirelessly for the unity of the Church.

Sr Aminta Sarmiento Puentes
Superior General

Rome, 16 September 2017
Saints Cornelius and Cyprian