



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



Today, 5 June 2014, at 11 a.m. (Italian time)

In the Community of “Mary Mother of the Good Shepherd” Negrar (VR),

SR MARIA VERONICA MAGAROTTO

has returned to the Father’s house

at the age of 95 and 69 years of Religious Life

In the Eucharistic liturgy on Thursday of the Seventh Week of Easter, as we prepare for the Solemnity of Pentecost, the Gospel reminds us that Jesus prayed to the Father: *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see my glory.”* (Jn 17:24). And precisely today, the Good Shepherd brought with him to the Father our sister Maria Veronica, so that she may always be with him and may contemplate forever the face of the Father. Her long and active expectation has been fulfilled! Sr. Maria was a sister of the Congregation of the very first hours of the Congregation and has accompanied almost her entire journey and development with much love.

She was born on 2 May 1919 at Arquà Petrarca (PD) and was baptized on 11 May, receiving the name of Maria Antonia. She is the second of 11 children and in the bosom of the family with solid Christian roots, matured her vocation to religious life. She entered the Congregation in Genzano (RM) on 20 April 1940, when our religious family was in her first steps. Maria is then followed by her other two sisters. Mature and enterprising, willing to give herself to the Lord, Maria Antonia was admitted to the Novitiate on 1 October 1942 and made her first profession on 11 September 1943 always at Genzano, receiving from Fr. Alberione the name of Sr. Maria Veronica .

She herself narrated those early years: *“When I entered the Congregation in 1940, the Institute had about thirty members. We lived in poverty, but although there were many difficulties we were happy. Primo Maestro motivated us saying that the pioneers had to prepare the future of the Institute. The pastoral apostolate that was practiced in the three houses at that time was strongly felt and lived by all. Time was well spent, even a small part is not lost, because we had to provide for our sustenance with our small business.”*

Immediately after profession, Sr. Maria was assigned in Puos D'Alpago (BL) where the Pastorelle had taken refuge because of the Second World War and she remained there until the closure of the community in 1945. Then until 1949, she was superior of the community of Rio Elba (LI), where she gave impetus to the apostolate in the different pastoral field. And it is in this community where she made her perpetual profession on 21 September 1948. In 1949-1950 she was at S. Pietro alle Acque where she was asked to devote herself to the search of benefactors and she succeeded very well, providing for the many young girls who asked to become Pastorelle, the necessary aid for their sustenance and formation.

Her tireless dedication and resourcefulness in achieving the goal which was asked of her, probably boosted the Founder's inspiration to send her to Brazil to sustain the nascent foundation. Therefore Sr. Maria was sent to the first mission of the Congregation and arrived in Sao Paulo, Brazil on 26 January 1951, at Villa Mariana, where the first Pastorelle started their presence with a small kindergarten school while collaborating with the Pauline Fathers in the parish of St. Ignatius especially in catechesis.

But the most urgent task was to consolidate the Congregation's presence and therefore to seek benefactors for the basic necessities. The Founder wanted that the Pastorelle be also implanted in the south of Brazil, where the affluence of many vocations was hoped. So in 1952, we find Sr. Maria Veronica superior of the community of Terceira Legua, a suburb and a few kilometers from Caxias do Sul, in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. The presence of many young persons seeking to enter the Congregation prompted the necessity to build a bigger house in Caxias do Sul, at Avenida S. Leopoldo. It was an almost impossible feat without a strong faith in Providence and without the cooperation of all, even of the aspirants. Sr Maria, nominated for the occasion as Bursar, labored with creativity in searching for the necessary aid for the completion of the work and she remained in Caxias until 1958. When the goal has been achieved, she was sent as superior in Porto Alegre, the capital of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, to open a new community. She remained there until her return to Italy in 1961. In a letter to the Founder of 3 March 1956, she expressed as follows: *"I want to become a saint in the will of God."*

Back in Italy, from 1961 to 1996 - after a brief stay at Casa Madre- Albano Laziale (RM) from 1962-1963 as a student and the following year at Avellino for the apprenticeship in the kindergarten - we find her engaged in various communities as superior and as a sister animated by strong pastoral enthusiasm. The visit to the families, liturgical animation and catechesis were the privileged areas of her ministry, always carried out with a lot of passion in all the parishes where she had been: Santa Lucia di Fiamignano (RI), in Foggia, in Cive (PD), in Cardinale (CZ), Todi (PG), in Pannarano (BN), in Crosia (CS) and for 15 years in Villimpenta (MN).

In Autumn of 1996, she asked to be part of the community of Negrar for health reasons and she remained there until the last day of her earthly life, accompanied with loving care by the sisters of the community. Here, too, she strove to be helpful as she could, but her health conditions became precarious each year. Her mind remained lucid and serene, always showing interest in the mission and journey of the Congregation. In a letter addressed to me on 5 April 2008, she wrote: *"I do not ask to my Jesus neither to live nor to die, but that His will be done in me. I live simply each day with no worries, because they are useless. He knows what he wants from me and therefore I always pray for the Church, for the Pope, for the problems of the world, for you dear Sr. Marta and your collaborators in leading the Congregation. Yes, your concerns are so many but the steersman of our Congregation is Jesus Good Shepherd."*

Thank you, Sr. Maria, you loved very much our Congregation and have helped her grow with your sacrifices and your enthusiasm. You've been a wise sister and of great faith and have consumed in prayerful offering the last years of your long life. With you, we raise our thanksgiving to the Lord for all that He allowed you to experience. You have worked much for Brazil and Providence wanted that my gratitude may reach you precisely from Caxias, where I am for the canonical visit. Pray for us to the Holy Trinity so that we may always trust in His work.

Sr Marta Finotelli
Superior general

Caxias do Sul, 5 June 2014
St. Boniface, Bishop and Martyr