

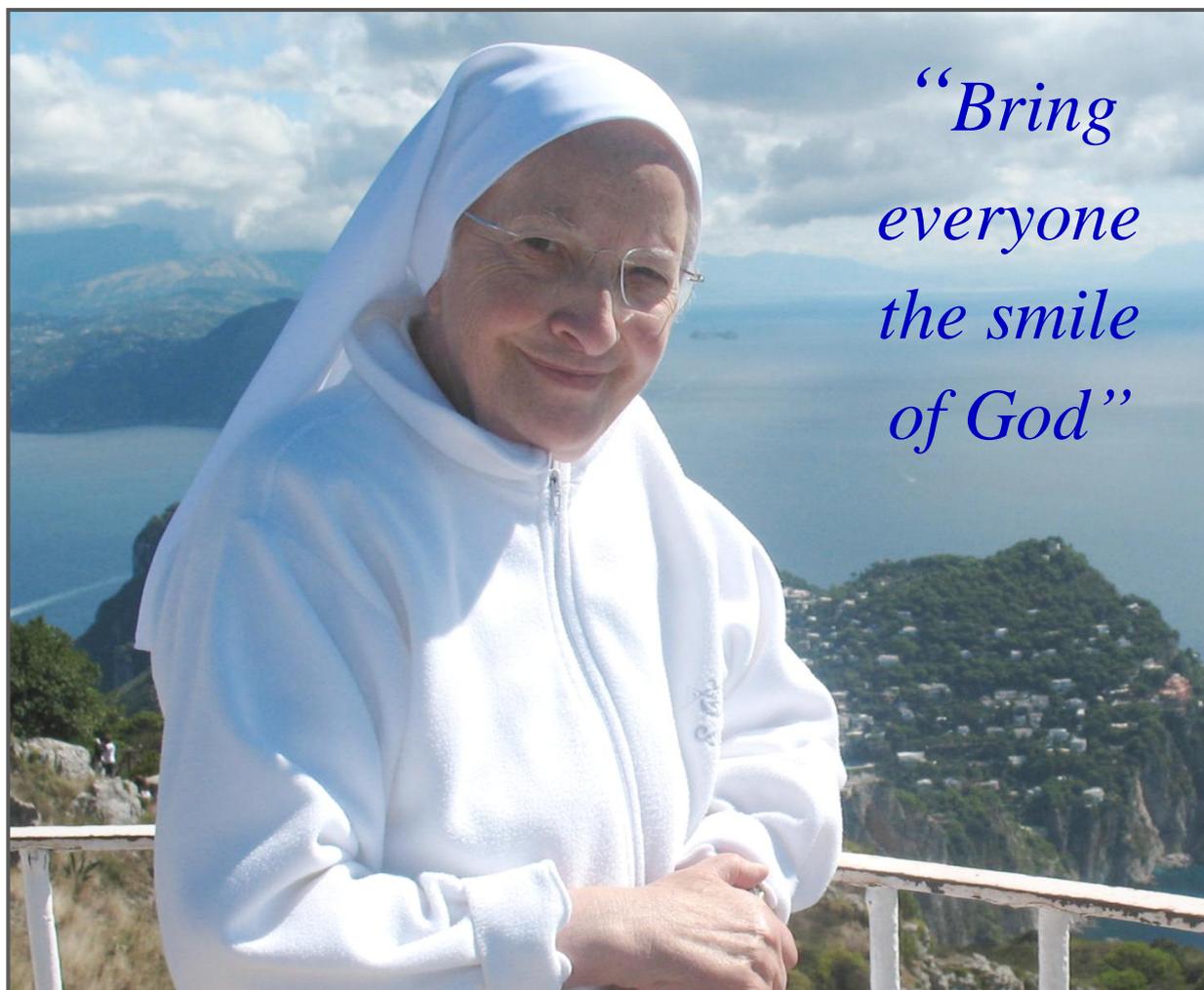
MAGNIFICAT

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE SERVANTS OF THE VISITATION

SPECIAL EDITION in memory of Mother Vincenza Minet

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SUMMARY

3. The Letter

by Sr. Maddalena Ergasti

4. Biography of Mother Vincenza

Minet

6. Homily on the occasion of the funeral Mass - by Mgr Gianrico Ruzza

9. Testimonies

of the Sisters of the "first hour"

16. Hail Queen Mary

by Mother Vincenza Minet

17. "Her life was a message from God"

by Sr. Maria Teresa Spiga

18. Remembering Mother Vincenza

by Father Ubaldo Terrinoni

20. Remembering Mother Vincenza

by Mgr. Rocco Talucci

22. My thanks to Mother Vincenza

by Monsignor Mario Salerno

24. "She will do more good up there"

Mgr. Sosthène Léopold Bayemi Matjei

24. "She always thought of others"

by Mgr. Crispin Varquez

25. Farewell to Mother Vincenza

by Pietro Tidei

26. "An icon of the Lord's will"

by Ciccio and Tea De Felice

27. "I was immediately struck by her wide smile" by Dr. Marco Maggi

28. "Discreet and humble presence"

by Dr. Stefano Rosa

29. The sweet smile of a nun

by Roberto Mugavero

32. Homily of the Holy Mass of Trigesimo

by Mgr. Gino Reali

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LETTER



Dearest

The Grace of the Charism, has made fruitful and kindled with unquenchable Love the life of Mother Vincenza our foundress, continues to work, even if in a different but equally effective way, in each of us her, spiritual daughters.

The love for God experienced through Mother Vincenza suggests that we dedicate this extraordinary issue of the Magnificat to her. Testimonies, reflections, images, poetry... to try to express the "beauty of God" that transpired from her person, from her being fully Servant of the Visitation: in constant communion with her Divine Spouse, attentive, anticipating, humble, intuitive, always reaching out to spiritual and material service, sensitive towards the fragile and the poorest, in religious respect for every person.

On the strictly human level her absence is felt, it is felt a lot, but her spiritual presence is stronger than before, in each of us and in our communities.

We think of her in Heaven, where she has always wanted to be, to contemplate her "Beloved Lord" and the Virgin Mary.

Now, in every circumstance we encounter, she suggests, encourages and consoles us by speaking to our hearts. Her words and example remain alive in us and will continue to be effective in the lives of sisters who have not met her in person.

Let us entrust to her motherly heart and to her prayer our religious family, our personal spiritual journey and the needs of those we know to be in need.

May the Lord grant us that, after her example, we may be bearers of the joy of Salvation and Christian Hope.

Sr. Maddalena Ergasti

Madre Maria Vincenza Minet

Founder of the "Servants of the Visitation"



Born in Scomigo, in the municipality of Conegliano (TV) on March 9, 1929, from a poor but serene peasant family, with 8 children, from father Vincenzo and mother Pierina Maso. From an early age she wanted to be a nun and on July 18, 1939 she marked, as she said: "... the beginning of my journey towards that God that my child's heart longed for", in fact she left her native family to enter, as an aspirant, among the Daughters of St. Paul in the community of Verona. After two years she began the Postulancy in a community of Rome but, because of the war, she was sent home together with all the girls under the age of 18. In the first months of 1945 it was possible, with great joy, to return to the convent, this time in Alba (CN). At the age of 18 she was sent to Rome to enter the Novitiate and on 19 March 1948 she was admitted to her first profession. Obedience sent her to various houses of the Institute, then at the age of 20 she fell ill with tuberculosis. Despite going through various vicissitudes, she has always felt supported by the Lord, despite the difficulties. To be treated she was sent to Albano, in the "Regina Apostolorum" Hospital wanted by Don Giacomo Alberione and, once healed, she was asked to study Nursing. Later she attended the course for Caposala, when she was already engaged in the service to the sick in the same Hospital, much loved and esteemed by all. Of rather fragile health, she underwent various surgeries and, in the opinion of many, it seemed that she had to have a short life. During her time in Albano she had the gift of being spiritually accompanied by the Founder of the Pauline Family, Blessed Don Giacomo Alberione, who

followed her for twelve years. He constantly told her that the Lord wanted something different from her. The meaning of this sentence she understood later when, by God's plan, in 1978 in Assisi, she found herself in a position to give life to a new religious family together with 32 other sisters of the community of Albano. The instrument of God, for this to be realized, was Bishop Dino Tomassini, Ordinary of that diocese, who on June 29, 1978 erected the group of 33 religious in the Pious Union most Holy Mother of the Visitation. They, led by "Sr. Vincenza", as she was called then, chose to live the Charism of the Visitation that the Lord proposed to them, as well as the name: "Ancelle della Visitazione". The new religious family began to take its first steps under the banner of Providence, which did not let them lack anything they needed and always intervened both in small and large needs with surprising punctuality, as continues to happen today. Those of the beginning were years lived in pure faith and Mother Vincenza embraced with great docility the mysterious plan that the Lord proposed to her to live. From this moment on, the stages of Mother Vincenza's life coincided with those of the new religious family which, on February 2, 1981, received diocesan recognition in Rome. In the same year, in June, the Servants led by Mother Vincenza, moved to Santa Marinella, in a ruin of the house that later became the Mother House of the Congregation. Six years after its foundation, Mother Vincenza courageously undertook her first missionary journeys, starting with Brazil and then reaching the Philippine Islands, Poland, Madagascar, Kenya and Cameroon. How many vicissitudes in all these years, but all lived and offered for Love, giving everyone "the smile of God", in total self/forgetfulness to embrace the whole of humanity. In the Marian Year of 1988, Mother Vincenza fulfilled her desire to consecrate a temple to the Virgin of the Visitation: on February 22 of that year the first stone was laid and after ninety days the work was completed. The Sanctuary was blessed by Card. Ugo Poletti, then Vicar of the Pope, on May 31 and the consecration, however, took place on August 13 at the conclusion of the Marian Year.

Soon numerous vocations from various countries began to arrive and the Congregation was increasingly acquiring the characteristics of internationality. On September 8, 1999, the Pontifical Recognition arrived, just 21 years after its foundation. Mother Vincenza, with her strength and sweetness, delicacy and firmness has always been a Mother for all and each one felt loved by her as if she were a favorite daughter! She lived the charism of the Visitation received from God by incarnating it in fullness, for this reason her very presence and her actions were living testimony of the gift of the Holy Spirit who worked in her and through her. For 30 years she led the Religious Congregation of the Servants of the Visitation as Superior General, then health and fragility due to age suggested that she pass this task to others. Despite this, she continued to embrace the whole world with her heart with a special predilection for the poor and the forgotten and to accompany with continuous prayer the spiritual life and apostolic fruitfulness of all her daughters.

The last years of her life were spent in the Mother House in Santa Marinella (RM). Because of intervening walking difficulties, she permanently used the wheelchair, accompanied by the care and attention of the sisters in charge of being close to her all times of the day, she entrusted herself to them with docility always offering her loving smile and her "thank you", continuing

to be always attentive to the needs of those around her. Those who have had the privilege of being able to be so constantly close to her have been able to grasp the most hidden moments of her daily life and learn much from her example of delicacy, firmness and total self-giving to God. She constantly prayed the Holy Rosary all day and night during the waking moments. One could not imagine that she would become so seriously ill that she would die in a very short time. She retained her lucidity until half an hour before her departure at 6:45 a.m. on August 12, surrounded by the Sisters of the Community of the Mother House, gathered next to her in prayer. We are certain that she now lives in Paradise contemplating the glory of God and the Virgin Mary. Continue to be present among us singing the eternal Magnificat!

Thank you, Mother Vincenza!

Homily on the occasion of the funeral Mass of Mother Vincenza

by Msgr. Gianrico Ruzza, Apostolic Administrator of Porto-Santa Rufina



Having finally heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, the one who conquered death, the only word that makes sense in the face of death, let us now remember and give thanks for the life of this creature, of Mother Vincenza, who offered and spent herself in the Church for the greater glory of God.

She chose to communicate love!

The beginning of her vocation is in the Pauline family having as its charism that of communicating to the world the love of Jesus Christ, that love that she, since she was a child, felt invading her heart. That love that pushed her steps even for unknown and courageous paths, leading the same steps where he would never have thought. That love which enabled her to overcome obstacles and difficulties - let us say this honestly, in the religious life difficulty there are so many - and allowed her to walk with confidence in the fulfillment of the Lord's will. This is what her spiritual director, Blessed Don Alberione, said to her. But the desire to communicate love cannot remain a desire and must be concretized in the prophetic gestures of service.

We are faced with an image; the very name of the congregation speaks to us of this evangelical icon lived in Ain Karim. In Mary Most Holy who overcomes the distances and complexity of a dangerous journey, imposing for a young pregnant woman, runs to her cousin Elizabeth there is all the ardor to communicate the great works made in her. The Magnificat that we will be going to pray at the end of this Mass will tell us strongly. Realized in whom? In her: the believer, she who believed. However, there is also in that race the need of diakonia towards those in need. She could have imagined that Elizabeth was fatigued by an unexpected pregnancy and late in time. Here in Mary Most Holy there is all this: the desire to communicate love, but also the desire to make love real, concrete.

In Mother Vincenza there was the desire to say love and to concretize it in the service of the sick, to those who are alone and in need, to anyone who, in short, needs a caress from God. Therefore, I can say that this woman was a true Servant of charity, That charity that the Lord gave us through the Lord Jesus who bends over the least of the earth. And this happens in Palestine, but it also happens in Albano, it happens in Santa Marinella, it happens in Brazil, Poland, in the Philippines, Cameroon, in all the other lands that have been touched by the Charism that Mother Vincenza felt she had to begin by welcoming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God Mother Vincenza learned to trust in God and to follow a word that, like Francis, told her, a young consecrated woman, to build something that spoke of love.

We listened: "I no longer call you servants, but friends!"

The Lord spoke to the heart of this woman to tell her the richness, the depth, the breadth, the height, the length of Christ's love as the Apostle Paul says and so she decided to welcome all this and to remain in this love even when difficulties, in particular misunderstanding, slander, seemed to prevail.

She had to fight, we cannot hide it, to follow the inspiration and she did it with courage, intelligence and tenacity. This God asks from the founders, from those who have the task of targeting a community towards new but necessary experiences.

"Those who trust in the Lord," the book of Wisdom told us, are in immortality and will become light for the whole world." Could Mother Vincenza as a young woman think about the flowering of the Institute when in Assisi she decided to leave for this adventure? I think not! She could not imagine, as perhaps she did not imagine, this beautiful place that hosts us today and that is the heart of the Congregation.

The first reading announced to us punishments and punishments that certainly did not discourage this woman because Mother Vincenza chose, let me use a sports terminology, to play in attack, to give, as St. Maximilian Kolbe did, whom we remember today in the liturgical memorial, he chose to offer everything with fullness and love. He confided, he believed like Mary, and he chose to roll up his sleeves and serve.

It is the certainty that listening to the words of Jesus, who living according to his teaching, would have found, as today's Gospel said, true joy, the one that is the only one that can fill the human heart with authentic hope. So, it was and today we do not celebrate a funeral! It is not necessary to do who knows what panegyrics, but today we celebrate life in Christ, the Resurrection of Christ, the presence of this creature who generated the flowering in the Church of the service of the poor. Today we are celebrating the life that for her continues in eternity and for her community, the one she founded, continues in service to all those who have a request and a need.

The Lord chose her for an important work and she responded by deciding to collaborate with her whole self, so that, as the Gospel told us, she could bear fruit.

In order for all this to be possible, Mother Vincenza chose not to set boundaries either to dreams, or to projects, or to the fraternal, friendly relationship with the sisters because she understood that only those who love with all of themselves and without imposing limits on love, can understand what God's love really is, the rest are human words, they last an instant, a moment, a thread of wind and they are no longer there. Since she was a young girl, she was certain of this love. With this love this woman grew up. She was nourished by this love and in this love, she wanted to serve with all of herself in every day of her life.

I take up his words: "My sweet and lovable Redeemer, wrap me in your immense love that has led you to us. You are true love, the love that saves, the love that gives itself, the love that strengthens, the love that gives life, the love that heals pain, the love that fills loneliness, the love that pushes to the gift of self, the love for which I dare to work everything, the love for which I dare to believe everything, all hope, all dare, in love. For you my only Good, all my little life."

Today we accompany Mother Vincenza toward the definitive encounter with the Holy Spouse to whom she gave her heart, her body, her life, and I am sure and we are all certain, that she has achieved the full joy and true happiness that she has always desired.

I want to say a special thank you to you sisters for what you do in the Church of Porto and Santa Rufina and in many other churches of the world.

I feel I have to say thank you to Mother Vincenza's family, because what she did was incubated in a family, as a child. There he received education in the faith, where she shared the first steps of the Christian journey.

And I feel the duty to say that this local Church owes much to this house and to her, who served it and lived it with so much love, and the testimony of some confreres who are here guests of this house, says it clearly and with affection.

Today Mother Vincenza can say with her beloved Saint Francis: "Lord you are my all"

Testimonies

of the Sisters of the "first hour"



SR. PIERFRANCA:

"Since when I was young, Mother and I were in a particular understanding, what Mother said for me was everything, it was the most beautiful thing that is there. One day we took a trip together, we spent that time, that little time, together and I noticed that she always had this expression of goodness, serenity, donation, she made you stay in a state of well-being.

When I was older there were other difficulties, it was difficult to live that state of well-being of the past because the difficulties were many, especially when we left the Paulines and came away. It was a hard time but she never complained, but we were at the risk of complaining, but we always went ahead because we saw that it was what we had to do, not in the sense of duty for duty, but to go forward on the road on which the Lord had put us and she was passionate about this thing, she wanted us to go forward and wanted our Institute to be beautiful, she wanted us to be good and generous. We left Albano and we went to work at Magliana and we have always distinguished ourselves and for our apostolate, precisely because she wanted just that: to serve, to serve, with generosity and never get tired. We have always gone on like this.

Then we went from the Hospital to the house in Rome. She had taken this house ... Living with Mother has always been a well-being because when there was something I was going to her and with her it is resolved everything. With Mother we were always well. We made some shortcomings and not very well but that she did not look at it. Let's say that Mother is the sister of well-being for her daughters, because it was enough to talk to her you had solved things. For me, Mother is a point of departure and a point of arrival. It was a precious well-being.

SR. GIOVANNA

Mother for me was always everything, because I was received by her and I had no difficulty talking to her, every time we went to her, she always gave us wise and lifeful suggestions. She was the one who always led to the truth. The truth is about everything one experiences. And that's all, because I have good will that I was decided from the beginning and I have never denied myself; Yes, I have encountered difficulties, because there have been and there always are and also falls, but we must always get up again with so much faith, with so much love for the Congregation into which Mother Vincenza introduced us. She always with a smile, until recent times when she came out of the Chapel, always with a beautiful smile. She always invited us to the good, to the donation, woe betide us if we put something that is not good, she immediately took away her word, because there must be

no denial. This is what we experienced with her and I have always been happy. She is the queen to me.

SR. AVE

Speaking of my experience with Mother Vincenza: I did not know how to read or write, I was 16 years old, I wanted to become a nun but they did not take me because I had not studied. She didn't worry about the fact that I was illiterate. She has always had a lot of confidence, because I was behind with the study, but Mother always said: "put faith, put faith that you will see that everything will be fine". She always gave confidence and always saw the positive part. Then every now and then she came to visit us if we were okay and followed us, we always felt supported. I was a bit naughty because I said everything when something was wrong.

She had within her to form this Congregation,... the Mother is wonderful because she was always of much prayer, of much trust, of much work, to work well, always on the positive part never in the negative part.

SR. ATANASIA

Speaking of Our Mother Sister Vincenza, I am afraid to say things that do not seem true. Sister Vincenza had a faith as strong as the diamond and, as far as I could understand, she was able to give it to us too. She admonished us to always look ahead, when we do God's will we must not fear. In her speech and action, she could see that God gave her light and that she followed her in every moment of her day. We left with nothing just hoping for Providence and she told us: "If the Lord wants this religious family, he will give us what we need, and so from the beginning to the end". She transmitted this faith to everyone, so she gave us new assignments, she told us to pray to the Holy Spirit and He gave us the grace to accomplish what she told us to do. I have had several assignments that seemed too great to me, but by doing obedience and praying I have always been able to accomplish what she wanted. Everything I did was thanks to you and to the trust you had in me. In my heart I feel a great serenity and I will go on like this. She is always present near me. Thank you, Mother, for what she made me do, I was an instrument in your hands.

SR. AGUSTA

A crisis came when I was in Albano because I was in the Sacristy, when there was division from the Daughters of St. Paul. I prayed at night and cried. I was about to collapse. At that

moment I did not even know where Sr. Vincenza really was ... there was the confessor and I went to confession and to the confessor I said that he was in that situation, he told me that I had to live my vocation and my profession because the First Master said that after perpetual profession it is sin even to think of leaving religious life. I called Mother Vincenza and she said to me: "Save your vocation, save your beautiful vocation – and I said to myself: then she already knew then! - rather come with us, we do not give anything - and it was true that we had nothing - something that we promise you, that is, to live the Gospel and fraternal charity, come!" I answered on the phone: "Yes I come." When I arrived in Assisi, I saw Mother Vincenza energetic, strong. How to say ... I do not know if that moment she was the General, but she is a humble, meek, sweet person; "Come, she said, and there were not even chairs, so we sat there on the ground in the Benedictine's novitiate, and there she told us to pray. Then we did the solemn spiritual exercises.

Another experience when she sent me to Brazil: I asked what I had to do there and she told me that "I had to act as a buffer for the two sisters". Opportunities have never failed to be a buffer, even until now.

SR. PIERANGELA

We were guests at the Benedictines in Assisi ... What I remember I will never forget ... we were five or six of us sisters. Mother called us ... and in an almost solemn tone she said to us: "What do we want to call ourselves? "Serve" of the Visitation or "Ancelle" of the Visitation?" I remember very well what I replied: "Mother serves I don't like, we already are!". She replied in a solemn tone: "Good! We will call ourselves Handmaids of the Visitation. Let us walk in the footsteps of Mary." A festive chorus of voices came out and we were radiant with joy, on the face of Mother there was a great victory and it was! Only God can do great things.

Another event: amazement and wonder together, when Mother and Sr. Maddalena on their knees, leaning forward towards the Pontiff to present the offerings. It seemed to me to see them in the attitude of those who wants something great and mysterious, even time seemed to me still and static, the emotion was strong. I remember it as an important event, Mother was invited to bring the offerings.

SR. DORINA

So many memories I lived with Mother Vincenza. It was a beautiful period, Mother Vincenza was unique, I had known her again who was a simple sister, with Sr. Costantina they had let me to grow up ...

Madre always loved me and had a lot of confidence, maximum confidence, despite being the most unworthy. She said that we had to open the missions to have vocations. Mother Vincenza sent me everywhere, she really had so much confidence than I deserved, until she sent me to open the missions, the first was in Sardinia. While I was there, since it was hot, she called me every day to tell me to close the house for the moment and come to Santa Marinella because it was cooler; I told her that I could not because where I would send the elderly guests, since at that time we had a dozen in the house ... she always asked if we needed something, but in that mission we lacked nothing. Mother said to me: "Tell me what should I send?" and I replied that we had everything and that her phone call was enough for us to feel close. The second mission was in the Philippines, I was with Sr. Patrizia; she always phoned us to ask if something was missing or if we needed something. That's where young began to arrive. Mother was happy because so many entered. Vocations were not lacking, help also and so on until today. And so, we moved on.

SR. ALFONSINA

Mother for me is the best in the whole world. I was in the ward working as a nurse, in short, at a certain point my sister who was sick called me. I was on the night shift and Mother made me stop doing my shift and told me: "Go to your sister", she sent me to my sister! I will never forget that, never, never.

Then one evening she came to me, because she always came to visit me when I was operated on, she came to see and always gave me the blessing and then she was going away once I told her: "I accompany her in the corridor" and she replied: "I am not afraid" I told her that there were bats flying ... and she laughed ... There is no person like her!

SR. JOSEPH

We have had many experiences with Mother. We worked together, we lived all day in holy faith, because normal things must be lived well even if they are normal because otherwise nothing good happens, that's it. What you have to live, you have to live, and you have to know that your life is in your hands and in God's hands. Every day you have to live that necessary time in the hands of God, everything depends on us and on Him because we, if there is no help from God, do not know how to do anything, while with God's help, if you have faith, you can do everything that is necessary day by day.

Mother Vincenza was always very generous and very cordial, she always loved us to the end. I do not know what I have to say, because if I say she loved us, I say little ... however,

we have been well, always serene, always joyful, always ready to serve the Lord with our lives, what he asked of us every day. In the Lord we have tried to live our lives with His help and without thinking who knows what because the Lord suggests to us every moment of life what we must say and do. Mother Vincenza said to live the divine life and life in Christ. Every day we have to account to God for what we live, it is in Him that we find support.

In Mother Vincenza we always find cordiality. We have lived well together, we live in the love of God, because if we live for other reasons, we will never be happy. So always try to live in faith and love in God, without so many worries. We always try to live every moment of life with serenity and confidence. Always trying to think what the Lord wants from us, to always be faithful to what the Lord asks of us.

Mother Vincenza was always very joyful.

SR. NAZARENA

I met Sister Vincenza when the Superior of the house in which I was inserted sent me to Albano for a short time in the retirement home for the sick Sisters. Sister Vincenza was then the director of the Service wanted by the First Master Don Giacomo Alberione, because he said that suffering had to be for the benefit of the editions. Her presence, her way of being, has always given me great confidence and serenity to go forward with that charge of love, enthusiasm, dedication and self-denial as she used to live.

She intensely loved the song and the choir she formed among the young, she demanded perfection in tone and voice to better praise the Lord. Sometimes she alternated, after the service at the sick and lunch, moments of joyful relaxation and walks to regain new strength for the service of the afternoon shift. In the community there were hardships and dissensions in that period, which lasted so that the work desired by the Founder was questioned.

Sr. Vincenza, after the General Chapter held the previous year, asked the Superior General in office to have a time to pray and reflect and to go to Assisi to the Benedictine Sisters.

In the meantime, she was informed that she no longer had to return to the community so she had to make a new life choice.

What the First Master had said to her several times "The Lord wants something different from you" was coming true, and she once asked him: "Tell me First Master, what wants the Lord from me?" and He replied: "One day you will understand it".

The following Sunday, the whole community of Albano was gathered by the Superior General to inform that Sr. Vincenza no longer returned to the community and therefore

those who wanted to follow her were given a week to think about it and decide. With mature reflection and responsibility, each of us 32 sisters have chosen to join her with full awareness and with great trust in the Lord who would not have left us alone. The reason for this choice was to live a more authentic religious life, we saw in Sr. Vincenza the person who would help us as we wanted to be, we had so much trust in her but above all in the Lord, we walked in the dark but day after day we saw how the Lord guided and helped us.

In each of us there was serenity, harmony, mutual help and it did not cost us discomfort and poverty, the adaptation of the new way of life, we were supported by the courage and enthusiasm to do good like Mary who, full of the Holy Spirit, did not stop, but without hesitation goes quickly towards her cousin Elizabeth, because he needed help. Mary's haste meant her full availability to God's will, so it must also be our going towards our brothers and sisters on the roads of the world.

I remember that Sunday, when after the prayer of Vespers, Bishop Dino Tomassini used to stay with us, he called Sr. Vincenza to give her the Constitutions, read and corrected by him saying them, they are fine he can print them and distribute them to the Sisters. The following Wednesday, the sister with whom he lived, in the afternoon seeing that he had not got up, went to his room and found him already dead. Great pain from all. He constituted us in PIOUS MOTHER UNION SS.ma of the VISITATION in Assisi, the first step of the group: welcomed into the Church, we renewed our vows on June 29, 1978. Then Cardinal Ugo Poletti, Vicar of the Pope, constituted us in the Congregation "Servants of the Visitation", in the diocese of Rome because we had been inserted in various hospitals of the Capital by Mgr. Angelini responsible for the Sisters working in the Hospitals, it was February 2, 1981.

On 8 September 1999 we were erected as a Congregation of Pontifical Right.

For me, Mother Vincenza from the beginning has been a light that has illuminated my path with her example, her word, her bright smile and the enthusiasm of life in giving herself to others. To be like Mary who, with full availability to God's will, goes quickly to her cousin Elizabeth in need of help.

Mother Vincenza from the first moment of the group accompanied us and encouraged us to go forward with trust and love because she said that the Lord would show us the way to follow. There have been difficult, dark moments, but she has always trusted God who has always helped us to illuminate her progress day by day on the path indicated by him. She has always been the pioneer in promoting and sending sisters to the places where we have been requested, she has accompanied every sister who was destined for a new

home, she has always followed them and encouraged them to go forward and to have so much trust in the Lord and in our Mother of the Visitation.

For some time she spoke little and with difficulty, she never complained, she had to understand what she might need, perhaps she was suffering but she did not show it, she was attentive, alert, serene, always with her usual beautiful smile and, not being able to speak, she spoke with her gaze, with her eyes, deep that read in your heart, they were an expression of gratitude, of joy, of peace, sometimes even of a small call, they penetrated the intimate and what she meant was understood. She prayed a lot, especially she always had the **rosary crown** in her hand, day and night, you could see that she prayed because she moved her lips and sometimes looked at the crown to see how many Hails Mary's she missed to get to the ten. She liked the songs, especially the popular ones, in particular those of the Madonna "Dall'Aurora tu sorgi più bella....." In the song her face was illuminated.

In her life I believe she suffered and endured great trials, but because of her great love for the Lord she overcame and did the work He wanted of her.

Now Mother Vincenza, you who have come to see and contemplate the Lord Jesus in Paradise, continues to accompany us and intercede for us so that the work you have begun may grow and always go forward with the help of the Lord and our Mother of the Visitation.

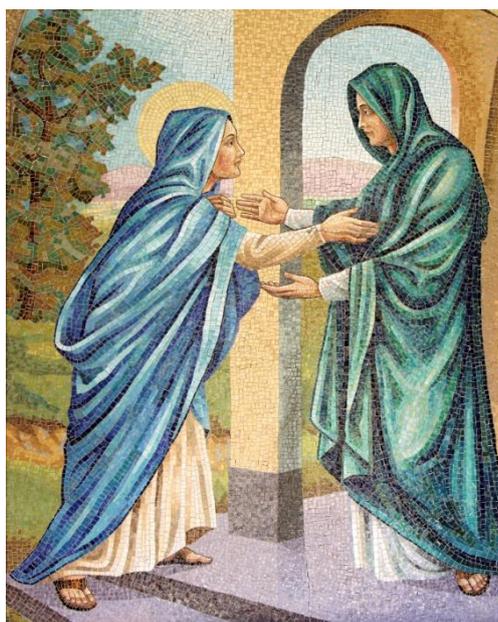
Hail Queen Mary

by Madre Vincenza Minet

*Parent of Your God,
Queen of heaven you are
and the key to paradise*

*Joy of the unhappy you are,
light of the universe you are
and the strength of the Christian
and hope for the desperate.*

*When the Judge will come
the universe to judge
then come to our aid,
O Our Mother in Heaven*



"Her life was a message from God"

by Sr. Maria Teresa Spiga

Dear Sisters,

I also want to participate in this moment of greeting for the dear Mother who left us for heaven.

I am Sr. Maria Teresa Spiga, a Salesian sister. I met Mother on the occasion of a formation meeting to which I was invited a few years ago. I remember that, in the moments when she could, she participated in the meetings and I was amazed that she, the Mother, came to listen because I thought to myself: "She doesn't really need it!".

One memory has particularly remained imprinted on me: We were at the table. The sisters had prepared my place on her right. She spoke little, but observed a lot. She looked at her sisters with much affection and benevolence; from her attitude she revealed the immense joy she had in her heart: in front of her eyes, the future of the Congregation for which she had lived, suffered, worked, prayed and loved.

Every now and then she would turn to me and say, "See how beautiful they are! They are good and committed. They will be able to do much good" And I: "Mother, your charism is what today's world needs" And she: "Yes, it is true, but we must be simple, generous, ready to sacrifice. I think my dear sisters will be able to be like that. Do you think so too?" Of course, Mother, your life has been a school for them, a great legacy that they will surely be able to take on", I replied. And then, the silence and tears in the eyes ... to contemplate once again the wonders that God has done in her Congregation through her life lived as a faithful and joyful bride.

Her life was a message from God to all of us who met her. Now, from heaven she is closer to us than ever and will certainly accompany the Congregation in the mission that was so dear to her in the Church.

Thank you, Mother, for your life! It was a gift from God for all of us!

Remembering Mother Vincenza

by Padre Ubaldo Terrinoni

1. A splendid model of Mother

I had the grace to meet Mother Vincenza when she, for some years now, had been walking towards the avenue of sunset. What immediately emerged about her from the first meetings was to have before me a sister, a Mother and a truly free Foundress! Free in heart, mind, spirit, life, word!

The calm face, set to unalterable calm, the word caring and always measured and convincing. With the passage of time, she had shaped her life on the evangelical yardstick of simplicity, of that simplicity that goes directly to God. It was simple according to God's heart; simple, but not naïve; simple also in the sense of clarity, transparency, clarity, unambiguous, not complicated, not complexed. Incapable of the slightest subterfuge. Opportunism, calculation, servility did not belong to her style of consecrated person.

She knew how to stay with diligence and heart at the Master's school: as an adult she was able to make the return to the age of childhood. Note well, she did not return as a child, but *she "became" a child*. Which presupposes a conquest, a development of personality, a maturity and not a going back in infantilism, in childishness. In this perspective, evangelical childhood is the maximum of a person's *maturity*: it is the precious fruit of adulthood.

Mother Vincenza becomes our teacher and reminds us that adult childhood does not happen easily, almost as a game, but is achieved through suffering, trials, loneliness, darkness, misunderstandings, humiliations and through a patient exercise of stripping and simplification that makes the spirit and the flesh pass to the crucible to experience a *new birth*.

When the Lord called her to be the "mother" of a new religious family, of a new foundation, she did not reject the cross and, although she considered herself unequal to the burdensome task, she accepted it in a spirit of service, with filial trust in the Lord knowing well that he uses the little ones to achieve great things and great projects. Thus, she wanted to be in the new Institute (Servants of the Visitation) as an older sister, a sister in service, always authoritative without ever being authoritarian. I believe that no one has ever seen her gloomy, unsteady,

closed, unenforceable. Concerned about the many problems that were gathering on her table as Foundress, but not distressed; thoughtful yes, but not absent.

Behind this personality so balanced, measured and realized, one can guess a patient, prolonged and at times so difficult ascetic work. Her own sweetness was not at all a gift of nature. It was also an achievement, a fruit of patient self-control, of constant commitment to wrest ground from selfishness, self-love, pride...

2. A teacher of spirituality

The light and strength necessary to continue the journey, Mother drew from it every morning in prayer. This was for her the strongest and most mysterious moment of the day; it was a time of recharge of strength and courage; it was the necessary moment of reflection and light from Above. I admired her prayerful style, her deep inner life. The *incipit* was from prayer. From this she drew the ability to rise in any circumstance, happy or sad, on a spiritual plane of faith and love. In prayer she soon recovered serenity, and full adherence to the Will of God.

Therefore, her spirituality was never abstract, vague, superficial. The confirmation was found in her always joyful and generous availability to her daughters and to every needy; in the spirit of service and exquisite charity for every concrete eventuality; in the incessant tension to spiritual realities. It was always a joyful, radiant, festive, Easter spirituality. Of course, she was a demanding personality, but first with herself, then with others.

In her spirituality the cross had a prominent place; this turned out to be a fundamental component for the construction of the entire inner structure of the "new woman". However, she excluded the sorrowful, pietistic and lamenting conception. That is, the cross did not represent a point of arrival, but an obligatory passage towards the light of the resurrection.

However, to fully frame the personality of Mother Vincenza it is necessary to start from Marian devotion, from her personal relationship with Mary. In fact, it was Mary, the Mother visiting Saint Elizabeth, who weaved in filigree the essential lines of her personal spirituality and, then decisively, for the entire Institute. Through Marian spirituality, Mother Vincenza was able to identify the essential guidelines to be concretized for the formation of her daughters.

From Mary she learned to pronounce that monosyllable very simple but often very difficult "yes"! A "yes" suffered and joyful; a "yes" to set out on a missionary journey in the direction required by the urgency. The first apostolic journey was opened by Mary, Mother of Jesus. And all the others who will follow in the history of men will have to adapt to the style of the first. And it is precisely what Mother Vincenza wisely accomplished. She too immediately set out on a journey to respond concretely to the expectations of many souls.

Her was never a tired step, heavy, slow, hesitant. Far from it! It was a step that took on the rhythm of haste, surprise, novelty, the dynamism of prophecy. Once she arrived at the place, she realized that often the light of truth, faith, joy, cleanliness was lacking and she with generosity and joy personally has always provided.

In memory of Mother Vincenza

Mons. Rocco Talucci, Archbishop emeritus of Brindisi-Ostuni



My acquaintance with Mother Vincenza Minet and her Congregation dates back to the nineties, to the early years of my episcopal ministry in the Diocese of Tursi - Lagonegro in Basilicata, which includes the city of Maratea, in which the "Maria Consolatrice" Retirement Home still operates today. This House was desired and founded by the generosity of a great woman – Donna Giovannina Limongi – who identified herself with her work and always lived there with her equally great love. With her the decision was made

to address to the Sisters of the Visitation the invitation to donate their qualified presence at the service of the elderly. I then met Mother Vincenza, I learned her story, I discovered her Pauline formation, her great heart, her new vocation according to the charism of the Visitation and the Magnificat, reaching out to the care of the suffering as a gift of love rendered with professional competence and praise to the Lord, with a Marian spirit, as a thanksgiving for the gift of so many wonders. The Sisters were present in the House of

Maratea from 1996 to 1999. Their memory is still alive today in the houses and in the city.

Over time I have recorded the clear missionary spread of the Work, the broad lay collaboration, the ready closeness to the local Churches and the full pontifical recognition of its Congregation.

I remember Mother Vincenza's religious serenity, missionary passion, smiling welcome, qualities that allowed openness to others and facilitated the approach to her Work. I visited the House of Santa Marinella, I celebrated the Eucharist with the community, I met many enthusiastic collaborators.

Admirable is the ability of Sister Vincenza, aware of her age and health limits, to know how to set aside in advance to test the autonomy of the Work, remaining discreetly the soul, entrusting the guidance to one of her companions of the first hour. And today I see with joy the presence of the new Mother General, who grew up and formed according to the spirit and perspectives of the Foundress from the beginning, when, as a young doctor, she began to see, with a missionary spirit, a profession of service in favor of the integral good of the person – the health of body and soul – in all times and in all places.

The disappearance from the world of Mother Vincenza leaves the Church a beautiful legacy, a Work in which God acts who, through his consecrated women, continues to visit his people.

Venosa September 14, 2021

Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

+Rocco Talucci

Archbishop Emeritus of Brindisi-Ostuni

My Thanks to Mother Vincenza

by Mons. Mario Salerno



Thoughts crowd and overlap. Twenty years of living together are not few and it is not easy to discern but the Spirit enlightens even the most confused minds and the most restless hearts.

I met Mother back in 1999. They came to Acerno some sisters for the summer holidays, guests in a villa near the Villaggio San Francesco. One of my collaborators insisted a lot that I know them; I was rather refractory but then I was convinced since the Foundress of this religious Institute was also present. And there was the "love at first sight" that enveloped my heart and soul. Yes, literally electrocuted by an extraordinary woman, who seduced me with her sincere and, at times, suffered smile, the transparency of her gaze, the simplicity of her life, and immediately opened up to spiritual confidences in a relationship of interiority that is

sealed in the Heart of God, where she now rests with her only Spouse.

In particular, we began a "missionary" collaboration with the parish twinning for the mission of Mahitsy in Madagascar, just opened in the jubilee year of the two thousand, buying all the equipment for the "Magnificat" Dispensary, at the service of the poorest of the town. In June 2002 I lived with Mother my first missionary journey to Madagascar. And since then, the steps have been many, traveling together thousands of kilometers from the Atlantic to the Pacific, strengthened by the common and evangelical passion for humanity discarded, visited in the peripheries of history and life.

Mother allowed me to make a piece of road and life together, walking on the dusty roads that "from *Jerusalem lead to Jericho*", crossing a humanity torn in soul and body. They are the roads of the Visitation, roads of charity and service, along the red thread of unspeakable poverty and globalized poverty, on which the thread of solidarity and

boundless charity is intertwined, which is expressed in the humble and generous service that the Servants weave with daily and constant patience to save life, to give hope to a piece of crucified humanity and, in particular, to a vilified, mistreated, abandoned childhood.

From *the favelas* of São Paulo to the *smoked mountain* of Manila, from the *slums* of Nairobi to *the squatters* of Las Piñas/Manila, from the straws of the endless savannah of Ol Moran in Kenya to the shacks of Mahitsy in Madagascar, to the poor huts of the Filipino villages and to the plastic and cardboard shelters in the territory of Jaiba in Brazil: an itinerary that tightens the heart in a grip of pain, illuminated by hope, sowing the joy of the Lord.

"Help me to make myself holy", was her plea for help on one of her many missionary journeys. And who am I so that I could be trusted with this tremendous, and, at the same time, fascinating responsibility? "I can do everything in him who gives me strength", I repeated with Saint Paul and therefore, my God, everything is in you and for you. This is YOU the only rock on which Mother built her life, and it is from this rock that the religious Family of the Servants sprang from it as the fruit of the Spirit and as spring water. Paraphrasing Scripture, "*it is by faith that Mother obeyed...*"! Only by faith did Mother Vincenza accept the pruning of the discarded stone that the Lord then makes "cornerstone" and it is only by faith that she welcomed the irruption of the "possible of God" in her long life.

The heart is full of gratitude for having learned that "*when there is an inspiration, we must follow it to the end*", overcoming fears and fears and facing the fatigue of risk, sustained by the apostolic anxiety to do good, because "every life saved is the grace of God".

Our last journey was to the Holy Land, in 2010, for the thirtieth anniversary of my priestly ordination, at the end of a ten-year journey, stopping in the Grotto of the Annunciation, the house of Mary, in *Nazareth*, where we breathed the "yes" of the Virgin, renewing our commitment as consecrated persons. After experiencing strong emotions in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher, in Jerusalem, we arrived on the hill of *Ain Karem* where we contemplated the Mystery of the Visitation and rejoiced, singing our humble hymn of the Magnificat to the Lord of tenderness and mercy.

Thank you, dear Mother, for having wanted me as your confessor, for allowing me to accompany you and make me the depository of your interiority with its light and its darkness. And "thank you, Lord, for allowing our paths to cross to sow love, peace and joy. She is now there with You and sings her Magnificat to Your radiant face of beauty, contemplated for eternity."

"He will do more than good up there"

By Msgr. Sosthène Léopold Bayemi Matjei, Bishop of Obala (Cameroun)



... We offered the Eucharist to celebrate the life of Mother Mary Vincenza Minet I did not get to know Mother Maria Vincenza much, but I had a meeting with her and you could see from the person who she was. In today's first reading, St Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says how he was marked by their faith and then by hope and charity. ...the reading spoke of the faith rooted in the resurrection from the dead. Christ is risen and we too will be resurrected. Mother M. Vincenza died, but with the power of God, with the power of

the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says, God brings with Him because of Christ those who die in Christ.

Therefore, in my opinion, you have a very important task of carrying on that beautiful witness of Mother, I remember her smile, always smiling, which is the smile that brings the joy of Our Lady of the Visitation. So, I believe that the Sisters of the Visitation now have someone, as St. Therese said, who will do more than good up there than when she lived here on our land. Let us remain united in prayer and may the Lord bless you. May the Lord send you his blessing, be courageous, go forward, always go deep in bringing what you have received from that great woman.

"She always thought of others"



"We pray that her life in this world, for almost 100 years, will continue to give us her inspiration to live this religious life by serving the Church for a greater glory of God."

Message Bishop of the diocese of Borongan Philippines Bishop Crispin V. VARQUEZ during the Holy Mass for the suffrage of Mother Vincenza on August 14, in the chapel of his residence.

Your foundress Mother Vincenza, is your inspiration for all of you, she is a holy woman, she did not think of herself, she always thought of others, that's why she was able to inspire many women not only in the Philippines but all over the world, to enter religious life and continue the ministries that she began, many, many years ago. Let us pray to God that she may now be in heaven and let us ask for her intercession to pray to God for you and for all, especially for those people, especially the children, whom you are serving. May the service you offer them be their experience of God's love and presence in their lives.

Farewell to Mother Vincenza

By Pietro Tidei, Mayor of Santa Marinella (RM)



A serious loss not only for all the sisters of the Congregation founded by Mother Vincenza, but for the entire community of Santa Marinella. Personally, I was deeply bound by a feeling of great affection and admiration for Mother Minet, who in turn was always very close to our administration.

A religious whose immense faith and courage I have always admired that have always supported her and that have allowed her to realize, from nothing, also what today is one of the most qualified care realities for the non-self-sufficient elderly in Lazio, a true

excellence for love and care and attention paid to the assisted and which also operates in agreement with the health service, has passed away.

The Servants of the Visitation were founded in 1978 by Mother Vincenza Minet in Assisi, after Mother had gone for a moment of prayer and reflection following some realities that she had faced regarding the hospital of Albano. She was followed on her journey by 32 sisters in Assisi, who possessed nothing but their faith and love for God and who were recognized, in 1981 as a Congregation of Diocesan Right in Rome and, in 1999, by the Holy Pope John Paul II, as a Congregation of Pontifical Right. Since then, with great enthusiasm, courage and above all a lot of faith and love for Her Church, Mother Vincenza has not spared a moment and has founded the community and the Rsa Oasis Tabor in the former convent of the Bonizi family. I myself when I held the position of provincial councilor, at the end of the 80s, I helped this Congregation to realize their important project and from that moment the relationship of esteem for Mother Minet has always been consolidating and that is why today for me is a very sad day. Finally, I would like to address my deepest condolences to all the sisters, in particular to Sister Maddalena, to all the guests who knew and loved her and to all the lay staff who serve at the Oasis Tabor residence.

An icon of the Lord's will"

From Ciccio and Tea De Felice

Mother Vincenza's ascent to the Father also leaves a void in our lives. In addition to you, the MOTHER has been for us an icon of the Lord's will. Her tenacity and determination were the concrete realization of the will of the Lord who used her to carry on his Word and his Mercy in this world of ours.

Like every believer, we too have had, and still have today, moments in which the dilemma arises of knowing whether what we want to do is really the will of the Father or ours. It is on these occasions that the Life of Mother has opened our eyes by showing us concretely how nothing is impossible for God. What many consider a random fact is actually the ability, which each of us must have, to discern the will of the Lord. This ability was the gift that the Lord gave to Mother Vincenza. All that she accomplished by bringing the charism of the Visitation into the world began with seemingly random encounters that Mother perceived as the Will of God. This is what Sister Vincenza represented in our lives and for which we will remember her with affection and esteem.

"I was immediately struck by his wide smile"

By Dr. Marco Maggi

It was the early eighties and I was a young doctor, at the beginning of my professional activity.

One day the owner of the studio where I had started working commissioned me to provide assistance to a Community of religious who had settled, not long ago, on the hill of Prato Rotatore at a structure better known by us as "Istituto G. Bonizi".

After a few days I went to the place. It was a long time that I did not go there and the visual impact I had with the structure left me quite disconsolate at the time. The external appearance was quite neglected and, in some places, cracks could be glimpsed on the walls that were not very reassuring.

I inevitably wondered how it was possible that religious could have chosen these places, long abandoned, as their home. Only over time did I realize how the great Faith and the tenaciousness of these sisters would make these places in the oasis of peace and serenity that we admire today. However, I went inside and was immediately welcomed by a sister who with great deference invited me to the office of the Mother General. It was the first time I had the opportunity to meet Mother Vincenza. She came to meet me at the door and I was immediately struck by her wide smile. I stretched out my hand in greeting and she squeezed it with both hands, inviting me to sit down. I did not feel any embarrassment but a great feeling of serenity and sincere welcome.

Thus began, in this way, an intense collaboration that lasted interruptedly for over ten years, and it is good to specify that in those years there was no health care on the territory still well structured as we see it today.

So, we had to be always ready for any eventuality, with professionalism and dedication, towards our elderly who were becoming more and more numerous. Needless to say, for me they were years of great personal commitment, often tiring. But what I received in terms of human and professional enrichment was incomparable.

In those years I also had the privilege of being able to see with my own eyes the progressive renovation of the Institute which certainly, from a falling building, assumed the conformation of the splendid avant-garde structure that we can see today.

In this regard, I would like to dwell on a brief personal anecdote that struck me a lot.

At work already begun it happened that the pre-existing Church leaned fearfully forward as if to want to collapse. I tried to imagine the desperation of the sisters already very tried by the many hardships of the complex and expensive reconstruction of the entire work. At this juncture I met Mother Vincenza to whom I asked alarmed what had happened, ready to console her. She looked at me with her wide smile and with a serene but determined voice she said to me: "no tragedy doctor. The Lord wanted to remind us to think also of his House which is certainly not better than everything else". I was speechless.

Unfortunately, over time the opportunities to meet Mother Vincenza became more

difficult. It was inevitably occupied by the many needs that followed one another both for the increase in religious vocations, but also for the increase in the number of Guests and not least new houses began to be opened in other parts of Italy and in the world.

Often when I asked for news of the Mother General, I was told that she was somewhere in the world to be close to her sisters, regardless of her notoriously poor state of health.

In recent periods I have had only a few occasions to be able to greet her by meeting her in the large garden of the OASI TABOR, sitting on her wheelchair assisted by the sisters. She scrutinized me with her big eyes, in silence and with curiosity. She no longer recognized me.

I only remember that insisting on greeting her, she instinctively hinted at her wide smile. The same smile that welcomed me, a young doctor, many years ago.

"Discreet and humble presence"

By Dr. Stefano Rosa

I met Madre Vincenza eight years ago, as soon as I arrived at the house of Santa Marinella to carry out the service of doctor in the Work of assistance to the elderly of the Servants of the Visitation. I still remember the atmosphere of welcome, the simplicity and that particular serenity that transpired from her face and that recalled the "things of Heaven".

During my daily work, when I headed to the administrative offices, the ajar door of her office "invited" me to stop, sometimes for a brief greeting; upon entering, I often found her intent on writing letters and reflections for her sisters. A discreet and humble presence, in the meeting she listened attentively to the interlocutor, encouraging towards the good and remembering how important it was to share and move forward together. Once I asked her what really mattered in the service of the most fragile, she replied: "To love yes, but with ... joy!"

She then frequently repeated to me that she could not explain how it was possible to reach many parts of the world except by the will of the Lord, who, precisely starting from that house, had always guided every step in a surprising and not always humanly understandable way.

Over the years she lived with dignity the physical limits that time imposed, communicating her inner world through a benevolent and maternal gaze. Available to follow any advice on her health, she docilely relied on the constant and generous care of her sisters.

"By their works they will recognize your faith": this is the most significant witness of Mother Vincenza that I carry in my heart and for which I thank the Lord.

The sweet smile of a Sister

By Roberto Mugavero, Publisher

How much good have you done in your life?
How many sisters have you welcomed?
How many poor people have you fed?
How many children have given you a smile to say thank you?
How many prayers have you said for all of us?

If I had you now next door
I would ask you and you would look at me
certainly, with those shiny light eyes
and with that sweet smile of yours
that always made me think that
God smiles like this.

Many years have passed since we, together with other Sangiorgesi of our Parish, still run at that time by Don Silvano Stanzani and the Committee of the Parish Nursery School directed by Don Roberto Macciantelli, came to meet you up to Santa Marinella near Rome, do you remember Mother Vincenza? We were really desperate; we were losing the sisters without a new Order the future of our glorious and historic kindergarten named after "Agostino Ramponi" which raised hundreds of children risked being forever compromised until its possible closure.

The journey was pleasant and once we arrived on that hill overlooking the sea where the general house of the Servants of the Visitation stood, we were welcomed by kind sisters all dressed in white and took us to the Foundress and Mother General, precisely Mother Vincenza Minet.

We walked silently inside their beautiful garden worried about receiving yet another "I'm sorry but we can't come".

Don Roberto also tried to mitigate our own concern, but you could see that he was worried like all of us.

I was absorbed in these thoughts when I heard a sound of a guitar next to me.

I stopped and was struck by a young sister who was playing for other sisters. She had a sweet face and a kind smile. I stood still for a few moments listening to her and looking at that sister who continued to play the guitar regardless of my presence.

I joined the others and we presented ourselves before the door of the Mother General; a few moments and they told us: "You can sit down Mother is waiting for you".

We entered with our hearts beating a thousand and she came to meet us smiling in that bright room of hers.

We sat down and Don Roberto explained to her our problem and our history as a parish kindergarten so felt by our community also for the presence of the sisters.

Mother Vincenza listened to him in silence, not losing a single word of him. I tried to scrutinize from her gaze if there was an interest in us who had done all those kilometers to ask her to enter the life of our Sangiorgese community.

Don Roberto finished his exposition and there was a brief silence between us, a sort of pneumatic void to keep us all in apnea, then Mother Vincenza joined her hands and told us that she understood us and that she wanted to help us, but she all had sisters especially African or Filipino young people who were finishing their studies and had only one Italian sister suitable for this task. That sister was the sweet Sister Athanasia.

Our eyes certainly became disconsolate and I saw myself already on the way back with yet another "No, I'm sorry, we can't come to you" inside my heart.

She probably understood our despair that filtered through our eyes, smiled at us and told us "Let's do this, I will give you three sisters who I believe can carry out well this important mission of Faith towards you and your beautiful community and let's see how it goes".

I would have liked to shoot on my feet as I do after a goal by my beloved Bologna, but I held back shaking my hands tightly, but I was young and I came up with a phrase as brazen as improvised given the delicate moment ...

"Thank you, Mother, you do not know what joy this decision of yours is for us – and I added – Is it not that among the three sisters we can have those young who I saw playing the guitar outside in your garden?".

She smiled at me with such sweetness that I seem to have her here in front of me now and that I will never forget and replied "this sister is called Sr. Ruby. Let's see if I can satisfy you."

It was the year 2000, that of the Jubilee and on September 20 the three Sisters of the Servants of the Visitation led by Mother Vincenza Minet made their official entry into our community.

We filmed that day and I remember that it was a great celebration for the parish community of San Giorgio di Piano and from that day those white clothes of theirs have entered our lives and on them many of our children have clung to them.

We still had the sisters and the merit was all hers, of Mother Vincenza Minet, a sister with a spirituality and love of neighbor that I have rarely met in my life.

From that day I remained a friend of her and of all of them and I happened to visit them in Santa Marinella, welcomed by Sister Rosalia, by Sr. Maddalena and of course by her, Mother Vincenza who always saw me with rare affection, perhaps also for common affinities of origin, because she was a native of a town near Conegliano where my uncles and cousins also live.

And these sweet memories accompany today the painful news of her death. I knew that she was not well, but she lived happily with her sisters in Santa Marinella and prayed so much for all of us and I happened to say my evening prayers also for her who on one of her books dedicated to her Faith in God and in Mary wrote: "Our roads have turned various. Joys and sorrows, anxieties, expectations, as well as the paths of our Mother Mary. Will we be able to welcome them in the light of faith and hope that does not disappoint? May the Virgin our Mother be not only our model, but also the One who sustains us and keeps us on the path of charity".

You know, Mother Vincenza, you always suffer a lot when you lose someone you love and the pain comes from so many good memories you have of him and of not being able to hold him to you anymore to say kind words and why not, even that you love him.

I thought I was prepared to say goodbye, but I again have that lump in my throat that prevents me from being as serene as you would like me to be. You gave us Sangiorgesi a great gift saying: "Yes, we will come to you and I am sure you will have love for us and Faith in Mary".

Now you are already up there, finally next to your Mother Mary and from that place that we call Paradise you will pray – I am sure – for all of us and please greet us who we love and that you see now next to you and tell all of them that we never forget them.

I will always remember you Mother Vincenza as your Sisters and those who had the same fortune to know you and hang out with you will remember you. And I will always remember your infinite goodness and that smile of yours made me understand how the smile of Mary and God must be.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, "God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer" and I am now willingly in silence, listening and therefore praying.

Yes, today I pray only for you, Mother Vincenza Minet, a good sister with a smile of God.

Forever

Homily on the occasion of the Holy Mass of Trigesimo of Mother Vincenza

by Msgr. Gino Reali, Bishop emeritus of Porto-Santa Rufina



It is always very difficult to give the homily and prayer for our deceased brothers, for those who have gone before us. Our prayer is always accompanied by a sorrow for their loss and at the same time for the urgency of answering the questions that Jesus asks us as he did that day in Caesarea Philippi. We heard that Jesus said "Who do you say I am?" and we heard the different answers, some said "You are the John the Baptist, others said you are Elijah, others said we do not know who you are, you are certainly a man of God, you are certainly a prophet, you are a person who performs miracles and you talk to us about God and show us the face of God. And Jesus asks another question to which we try to answer today, the question according to Jesus that is consequent to the first "Who do you say that I am?". Dear brothers and sisters, every time we read Scripture we are faced with this question: Who is Jesus for us, who is Jesus for me? and we must try to give an answer, an answer that is not accommodated but sincere, an answer that we feel we must give in secret to Jesus. Who am I for you? The answer to this question that leads us to a following question, who is Jesus for me? and how does my life qualify in relation to Christ?

Here, in the life of Mother Vincenza we find help to answer these questions. In the courageous choices of this woman, in the choices she has made precisely because of the question: who am I and for you? That it had been taken away by the Lord, we find answers, but for us to give answers we must still know: what is faith for me? Of course, we all have

to give the enlightening answer, the history of each of us, if nothing else, puts us in an attitude of greater attention. All of us who are present here, especially you Sisters whose religious vocation has led you to make courageous choices, such as the choice of consecration of life that you have made by leaving your family, leaving the world to follow Jesus, you have not called the Lord aside, you have not found yourselves, like Peter, you call to give an answer in secret, but you have given your answer publicly; we have publicly given our response following our vocation. You too, lay brothers and sisters, have given the answer of wanting to follow the Lord on the path of fidelity in marriage, in the family, in the demanding journey of education and you, religious sisters, have given the answer by following your vocation within a young Congregation, but bearer of ancient values, bearer of the value of a concrete witness through a work, the work of service to people who suffer, weak and fragile, the work of service to sick people, people are fragile because of old age and because, sometimes, of the rejection of their own family. This is the answer that we must allow the Lord, the answer before the world through the works of faith. We have heard the word of Jesus in the Gospel: faith without works is dead, said the Lord. And we have heard again the second reading, the letter of St. James, here it says precisely that "Faith without works is dead". Around the discourse of the relationship between faith and works there is often a great confusion, there are some who believe they can live the faith without works, there are some who believe they can manifest the faith without the works that are inspired by faith. Instead, through the teaching of Jesus, through this word addressed particularly to Peter, we understand that faith needs precisely to be manifested as the light of life. If someone wants to come after me - Jesus says - if you Peter you come after me, if you believer and disciple of all times, you want to come after me deny yourself, remember that you are a creature, recognize your limit, take up your cross, that cross of every day, that cross that irritates and disturbs you, that cross that humiliates and weighs you, the cross that you do not want even if it is inevitable in your life, the cross that you try to shake off, take this cross and follow me. To follow me, Jesus says to the disciples and to us, the painful way, often obscure, which does not lead to death, leads to endless life, to the resurrection to the happiness of love and gift. The message is clear, Peter does not understand it as his other colleagues did not understand it, but there is an opening of life in a wider horizon, it seems like here, your home when you climb up from the valley of the cemetery and you see the sea and you open your heart. The life of faith is this openness of immensity, it is this openness that leads us to a different position, that makes us overcome all fears, that says that your journey is still a path that gives service to others, a witness and a path that frees us from all anguish. We repeated in the Responsorial Psalm this will to walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living. Faced with this perspective, the mystery of death is even better understood and above all how this mystery of death, of which we speak and of which we often do not want to speak, is deeply linked to the

mystery of life. There is no separation between the mystery of life and the mystery of death.

We brothers and sisters walk towards our death and the day will come when we will have to cross this knot and we will be able not only to see from the outside and from afar the way of salvation, the land of the living, but we will be with our sisters and with all our brothers and those who have gone before us, we will be within this way of resurrection and this realization of peace.

Here, I would not like to add anything else, but I want to say only a word of gratitude to our sister Mother Vincenza. This time, among the various memories we have made of the life of this sister of ours, of your Congregation, has happened to remember in particular the forty-three years of presence here in Santa Marinella. It was 1981 when you came here, to this place, and this city became your city and this house became your home and then a word of gratitude. Your presence has not been an inoperative presence, you have manifested the faith through the works, the great works that you do towards people precisely in need, towards families who need to be helped in the service of the older and weaker members of these families that the families themselves are not able to accompany. I would like to say special gratitude because your home, this house, has also become the home of many priests who live the difficult years of old age, but live-in serenity thanks to your service, to your company. I would like to express this prayer, this admiration, you know that I am no more responsible for this diocesan Church, but I have been for many years, 19 to be precise, and during this period I have always looked with much plot, with affection and with gratitude at your service and I have had the opportunity to hear many times from Mother Vincenza that she remembered the complicated years, her passage from the experience of the Pauline family to a family that she managed to create thanks to her generosity and thanks to the ability to read men of the Church who recognized the goodness of a path that was proposed to them. Here, I have said it other times and now I repeat, if I need, I will not hesitate to knock on your door, I also said it to Mother Vincenza in our meeting last time and she, despite the difficulties of the last years of her life, always with great generosity always consented with her smile. Smile that we remember and remains for all of us. I remember this woman of God, who bore witness to her faith with great, generous works of charity.

AVE, VIRGIN MARY "IN VISITATION"

Woman of long silences,
that ripens the word
vate of remembrance
in the most splendid of songs:
your MAGNIFICAT!

O daughter of observance
where a cradle curve
o Eve of obedience
in which the new man is born.

Hail, Virgin Mary in Visitation,
ark of another covenant
where love becomes law
end of the hard wandering
when your faith stands,
Mother You in Hope
where God makes himself joyful to us,
mother in suffering
at the foot of many crosses

Hail Virgin Mary in visitation . . .
Beautiful you are of that childhood
in which God has put us back,
or sheaf of seed
which his people have nourished,
flame you of evidence
on a perennial visit
to our late night,
and you are a sign of hope
of which the breath surrounds us . . .

Hail, Virgin Mary in visitation.

Sr. M. V. Minet



"We cannot be content with a mediocre life, like a dying beacon, but be beacons of light, set on high, so that the light may 'shine on all those who live in darkness'."

Mother Vincenza Minet