

Venerable Mother Speranza of Jesus, Alhama Valera

1893-1983

Mother Speranza was born on the 30th of September 1893 in Santomera, in the south of Spain, to a very poor family. From when she was a little girl she was guided personally by Jesus and Our Lady.

In 1914, Speranza decided to embrace the religious life and entered the cloistered convent of the Daughters of Calvary. In 1921, that Congregation joined the Poor Clares, where Mother Speranza remained until the 6th of December 1930, when she left in order to found a new institution. In the most absolute poverty, on the night of Christmas of 1930, she gave a beginning to the Congregation of The Handmaids of Merciful Love. On the 15th of August 1951 in Rome, Mother Speranza gave life to The Congregation of the Sons of Merciful Love, with the mission to announce the love of the Merciful Heart and to help the diocesan clergy. On the 18th of August, Mother Speranza transferred herself to Collevalenza, a small town in the region of Umbria, to open a community of Handmaids and the first community of the Sons of Merciful Love. Mother Speranza, from the 1950s, had begun the construction of the Sanctuary of Merciful Love (in 1982 recognized as a "Minor Basilica"). It "consumed" her life. Mother Speranza died on the 8th of February 1983, at almost 90 years of age. Her remains are buried in the crypt of the Sanctuary. On the 24th of April 1988 the process for her beatification was opened in the Diocese of Orvieto-Todi. The diocesan phase was concluded in about two years. On the 23rd of April 2002 the Church declared Mother Speranza "Venerable."

Mother Speranza was a great mystic. As testified by her fellow sisters, the Angels frequently came to her aid bringing her bread, when they had no more food with which to nurture the starving. The first document which speaks of these extraordinary episodes is a letter written on the 4th of April by the Mother General, Patrocinio Perez de Santo Tomas to Fr. Felipe Maroto, C.M.F., Procurator General of the Poor Clares. In

this letter it is affirmed that in the period that goes from August of 1923 to December of 1927 Mother Speranza was tormented by the devil and many times, above all when she was ill she received Holy Communion in an unusual manner, that is from the hands of an Angel.

Still in 1929, because she had planned to found a new Congregation, she was prohibited from receiving the Eucharist. "But the Lord - she wrote in her diary - who



did not want to deprive me of His Body, when the moment came, permitted that the Host escaped from the hand of the priest and came to place itself in my mouth."

It is she again who indicates the two Communions she received, in 1930, directly from the hand of Jesus: the first time on the 19th of April while Jesus said to her: "Take, my daughter, my Body which is for your eternal life." On this occasion Mother asked Jesus from where He was taking the Hosts, seeing that in the tabernacle of the college there were not any. Jesus replied to her: "My daughter, I take them from the Parish to which you belong." Another time, on the 23rd of April, while she was sick in bed, she wrote in her diary (*Diario*): "I received again Holy Communion that Jesus Himself administered to me, accompanied, as is usually done, by two Angels."