Saint Gemma Galgani

1878 - 1903

Saint Gemma was born on March 12, 1878 in the area of Borgonuovo (Commune of Capannori, Italy). Early on she had mystical experiences that led her to reach perfection. She offered her life up for the conversion of sinners and to this intention she added also the liberation of Souls in Purgatory. She was often heard saying: "Yes, suffer. Suffer for sinners and in particular for the poor souls in Purgatory". She also wrote in her Diary: "My guardian angel told me that tonight Jesus would let me suffer a little more and therefore at nine o'clock for two hours, precisely for a poor soul in Purgatory".

One day she found out during an ecstasy that in the convent of the Passionists in Corneto a nun named Sister Maria Teresa of the Infant Jesus was very ill. Gemma asked her spiritual director, Father Germano of Saint Stanislaw, if it was true that this nun was about to die. After receiving confirmation, the Saint began to pray to Jesus to concede atonement for her sins on her death bed until death takes her directly to heaven. Gemma was granted her prayer, in part. In effect, the nun from Corneto suffered a lot and died after only a few months. Finding out the news of her death, Gemma tried to involve her relatives to pray for the deceased. One day Sister Maria Teresa appeared to the Saint asking for prayers because she was suffering a lot in Purgatory. From that day, Gemma dedicated herself to offer sufferings for the deceased and so she prayed: "Lord,

take Sister Maria Teresa to Heaven soon; she is in fact a soul dear to Thee, let me suffer for her. I truly want to free her from the pains of purgatory."

For two weeks the saint had to undergo atrocious suffering in atonement for the pains that would have touched Sister Maria Teresa, but the Lord granted it as she herself tells: "Around 12:30 it seemed as if the Mother of God came to tell me that the moment was very near. After a while it seemed that also Maria Teresa, dressed as a Passionist, accompanied by her Guardian Angel and Jesus, passed in front of me. How different she was from that day in which I saw her for the first time! She got close to me smiling and she said: now I am truly happy and I am going to enjoy myself for ever with my Savior, and she turned and thanked me. She faced me again and waved to me with her hand and then she went up towards Heaven with her Guardian Angel and Jesus; she was in the middle of them both!"

Saint Gemma had numerous mystical experiences; among them she was seen more than once by various witnesses, crying tears of blood for the pain that she felt because of the sins of men. The phenomenon happened in particular when she prayed for priests. In her *Autobiography*, Gemma tells of her pains that she felt while receiving from Jesus the crown of thorns that they put on his head. The phenomena would happen between Thursdays and Fridays in the presence of many witnesses.