

Blessed Pope John XXIII

1881 - 1963

PARADISE

Sister Catherine Capitani was a nun of the Neapolitan Province of the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity. In 1962 she carried out the duty of nurse at the United Hospitals of Naples. She was eighteen years old when suddenly an intercostal pain afflicted her. At first she did not give much importance to it, but after two months she had a hemorrhage in her mouth. Bright red blood flowed out and since she was told that those hemorrhages indicated the person had contracted tuberculosis, she was very distressed because she would not have been able to remain in the Congregation anymore, since it was required that the aspirants were in good health. On account of this, she decided not to tell anything to anyone, even though she was afraid of what had happened. For seven months no other episode occurred, until another hemorrhage took place suddenly. Therefore it was necessary to perform some tests: analyses, x-rays to the chest and the stomach, but the physicians did not find anything. Further visits and tests followed at the "Assalesi" Hospital, where an esophagoscopy revealed a hemorrhagic region in the thoracic segment. Sister Catherine was brought to a renowned hematologist, but without results. She was taken to Professor

Tannini, a famous physician and director of the Institute of Surgical Semiotics at the University of Naples, who performed an operation. The inside of her stomach was completely covered by varicose veins: an ulcerous condition perhaps due to improper functioning of pancreas and spleen. The professor was forced to remove her stomach, spleen and pancreas. The operation was very delicate and there was fear for the life of the Sister. Her fellow nuns began to pray to Pope John XXIII. Then followed periods of respite and others of relapse. Many times she reached almost the end of her life. The professor decided to send her to her home in Potenza, to see if the native air would cure her, but she returned to Naples after two months worse than before. On May 14, 1966, after a brief crisis of vomiting, a wound opened in her stomach from which flowed gastric juices and blood. She had an emergency hospitalization for the perforation caused by an external fistula. Her fever was over 40 °C (104 °F) due to a diffused peritonitis. She was permitted to pronounce her religious vows before the fixed termination date and she was administered the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Meanwhile, a fellow Sister brought to her a relic of



Pope John XXIII and placed it on her wound. On May 25, around 2:30 PM Sister Catherine fell asleep; at one point she felt the wound on her stomach being pressed and she awoke from the voice of a man who was calling her. Thinking that it was Professor Tannini she turned around, but instead, she found in front of her Pope John XXIII who placing his hand on the wound said to her: "Do not fear, you do not have anything anymore. Ring the bell, call the Sisters who are in the chapel, have them check your fever and you will see that the temperature will not reach even 37 °C (98.6 °F). Eat all that you want, as before the illness. You will have nothing more. Go to the professor, have him visit you, get some x-rays and have everything put in writing, because one day these things will be needed."

