

# Saint Luigi Orione

1872-1940

PARADISE

In the life of St. Luigi Orione appear some important episodes about his experience of the life beyond: *“Mauro Montagna and the Different Fellow: A flower of holiness, and a cautionary tale.* Fr. Orione called the first one his Dominic Savio. He came home sick, and went straight to heaven. A short while after his death, Fr. Orione had an extraordinary vision. It was nearly midnight on Saturday, January 30, 1897, and in the kitchen of the Collegio di Santa Chiara. Orione was sleeping, seated, his head resting on a table. A short distance away sat Fr. Sterpi, then a deacon, who was finishing the recitation of the Divine office. At a certain point, Fr. Orione shook violently and cried out like a frightened man:

- Montagna, Montagna!
- You're all right, you're all right – observed Father Sterpi, with his usual calm.
- Mauro Montagna! – Father Orione insisted.
- Let me say the Office. You fell asleep.
- No, no, he was here, Montagna.

Montagna had appeared, dressed in white, surrounded by a halo of sunlight, lifted up above the ground, and below his feet was a newly closed grave, his own, and two others that were open. Pointing to one of them, he cried out: Tuesday, Tuesday.

The next day, Father Orione spoke to the young people about the event that God had sent him through their angelic companion Mauro Montagna, and in the evening he invited them to pray an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be for the first one of them destined to depart this life.

Among those present was the ‘Different Fellow’, a student in the third

year of the high school, strongly developed – today he would be called a daredevil – not very inclined to piety, tending to give his superiors a hard time.

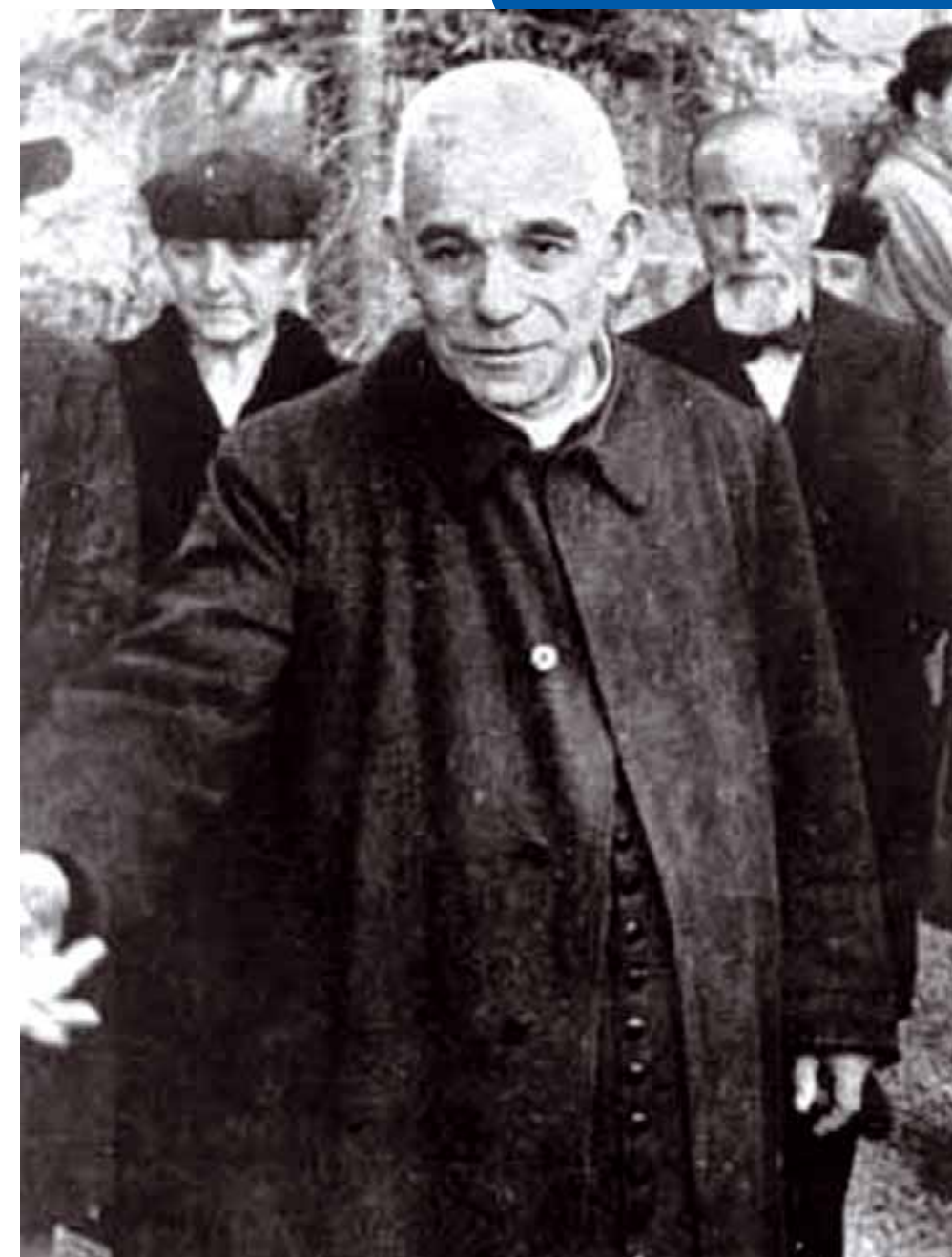
The following Monday, during school, Father Sterpi just happened to call on the ‘Different Fellow’, who did not respond as he should have, but said, ‘I don’t feel well.’

A doctor was sent for, who quickly arrived and warned that the illness was serious and that the sick youth was getting worse.

He was seized with strong agitation and went into convulsions. When his mother arrived and bent over him, weeping, to kiss him and wipe away the perspiration, he bit her on the cheek. Tuesday, the second of February, around midnight, he passed away. His rigid body took on a terrifying appearance and his face had turned black. He was buried in his native place, Mornico Losana, during a snowstorm.”

The story continues: “I happened to be on a religious mission in an alpine town in the diocese of Tortona, where the parish priest was an uncle of the ‘Different Fellow’. I begged him to put at my disposal any writings he had from his nephew, his relatives, and from Fr. Orione; and to my great surprise, I came upon a document of the utmost importance. It is an extraordinary letter, written by Fr. Orione about eight months after the event narrated above.”

Here is the text: “Dear Fr. De Filippi, not ten minutes ago, in this very room in which I am writing to you, I conversed for about half an hour with your nephew, Felice De Filippi who, by the Lord’s disposition, came to see me, for my



warning and consolation. I knew that I was speaking with a dead person, and I was as aware of myself as I am now, writing to you. He spoke to me about various things, and he warned me about some arrangements that needed to be made at the school. Dear Fr. De Filippi, how consoled I was! It was not 15 minutes ago that he was with me, and I was not a bit upset, but so in peace and so at ease – he will pray for us, but we must also pray for him. I wanted to take him by the hand, and at first he seemed not to want to, but then I touched him, and went quite close to him, and touched his skin, and in that moment he gave me some serious counsel about the confessions of young people. He was not at all sickly, but he had eyes as beautiful as the eyes of one who is innocent... This letter is for you alone, and for your family, for their comfort. Felice is praying much for us: let us be consoled... Tortona, September 25, 1897.”

