

Blessed Rose Gattorno

1831 - 1900

PURGATORY

Blessed Rosa Gattorno was born into a family of ship owners from Genoa, Italy. She was one of six children; one of her brothers was Federico Gattorno, Head of State of the Garibaldi Corps and Deputy of the Kingdom of Italy. On November 5, 1852 she married Gerolamo Custo who died after five years and left her with three children, one who was born deaf and mute.

In 1866 she got permission from Pope Pius IX to start a religious institute dedicated to the assistance of the sick and needy. After founding the Daughters of Saint Anne, she changed her name to Anna Rosa Gattorno.

Pope John Paul II beatified her on April 9, 2000. Her piety was not limited to those suffering in this life; it extended also to the souls of purgatory in need of help, being mindful that living members of the mystical body of Christ must sincerely participate in the suffering of everyone. Therefore besides copious suffering for the deceased of her institution, she desired to make offerings for all the deceased; she was in fact heard many times exclaiming: "Oh if I could gather enough assurance that in our Church a Mass would be dedicated every single day for the souls of Purgatory, how I would be so happy!" She managed just that and she established the necessary funds for a Mass every day and every Sunday; furthermore she reserved charities for the general chapel that had a Mass every day for the souls suffering in purgatory.

On the day of the commemoration of the dead, many priests were invited to the church in Rome to celebrate Masses for the suffering. With her maternal finesse came some benefits, giving money to the

most poor so they could celebrate Masses where they wanted. It was of no surprise because God rewards such requests by sometimes revealing some of the souls after they had already passed to another world. In her writings the Mother herself narrates many apparitions of the deceased. Sister Anna Geromina Mazza tells us a fact that she herself witnessed.

An elderly Canon gave the Daughters of Saint Anne a house in Pistoia, Italy. However, he lived on the main floor of the house until he died. Given his advanced age and illness, he had at his service an old woman with whom he did not always get along since once in a while the house rang with fights and loud voices so much so that the Mother Superior came down from their floor to make peace in the apartment. Three months after the death of the Canon, Mother Gattorno had a chance to go to Pistoia and stay at the house for three days.

On the last day of her stay, she was seen in the chapel engrossed before an image of the Sacred Heart, kneeling as she was used to doing and leaning on a chair. The Superior, who needed to talk to Mother Gattorno, called her with politeness but she did not answer; she called again repeatedly but in vain; then she went away to complain about it to the secretary. After some time Mother went into her room and called out to herself but she seemed strangely occupied; Mother Gattorno let the nun sit next to her, then she took her by the hand, she led her into the chapel and she had her kneel near the first pew. They were there in silence for a good while; Mother Gattorno then asked the nun: "Geromina, do you hear that



voice?" "Yes I do Mother". "Whose voice is that? Do you recognize it?" "Mother, it is the voice of the Canon Biagini".

The nun had in fact recognized the voice having heard it many times during the fights of the floor below; the bedroom of the priest was right below the chapel. "Do not be afraid, Geromina", added Mother Gattorno taking her by the hand; she led her in the bedroom; she made her sit and stay there in the silence. Then she continued: "Geromina, you have heard the voice of the Canon Biagini; he is saved but if he knew or saw the grave pains that one suffers in purgatory and how one must satisfy them by celebrating Masses for the torment of his spirit you would not ever stop praying for him in all your life."

She also said that the Canon was saved because of the good deeds of the institute and by the intercession of Saint Anne. "Go celebrate Masses – concluded the Founder – recite the rosary and pray, pray a lot for this soul".

