

TOGETHER pilgrims on the way towards MADRID 2011

Spiritual journey in the company of CA young saints

Eleventh stage (May 2011)

TIME TO MEDITATE

Luke 24,13-35 • YOU ARE OUR ROCK.

THAT OUR FAITH IN YOU MAY BE THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF ALL OUR LIFE!

«Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread».

We all know from experience what disappointment means and that the greater our hope and our expectations are, the harder it is to accept the fact that everything has vanished into thin air. We know what it means "to have to retreat", to restart with bowed head along the same way which we had gone through with so much pride and confidence. The disappointment could be really hard to bear... Human wisdom tells us that the best medicine to cure this is to speak about it, to identify the difficulty and to find a friend with whom you can share your disappointment. How very similar to us were the two disciples of Emmaus!

Jesus was the unknown companion who joined in their rather depressing conversation. He was the one who seemed unable to understand their disappointment. Yet it is He who warms the heart, explains the Scripture and breaks the bread. He has told us clearly that we can never be His disciples if we rely solely on ourselves because sooner or later we will be disappointed. But we have two reliable means which can help us to make Jesus our solid rock: the Word of God in the Scripture and the Holy Eucharist. These are two simple and fundamental means and we do not need anything else. In the Word and in the Bread, every day, Jesus makes Himself the silent companion who warms, nourishes and guides our heart. In the Word and in the Bread Jesus accompanies us and makes us experience His resurrection. What else need we ask for?



BLESSÈD PINA SURIANO

Short biography

Giuseppina was born in February 1915 in a peasant family in Partinico, Province of Palermo, in the Diocese of Monreale. She was the first-born. Together with the other members of her family, she lived in her grandparents' big house. Here, she was brought up and educated in the faith and on the moral catholic teaching of the Church. The religiosity which could be felt in the air soon became part of her. She was of a timid character and very submissive. At the age of four, she started attending the nursery school run by the nuns 'Collegine di Sant'Antonio'. In 1921, she distinguished herself by her interest and her love for study in all subjects. The following year, she received the sacraments and joined the Catholic Action Female Youth Group. When she was twelve years old, she attended the meetings and got greatly involved. She was beniamina (member of the Children's section), aspirante (member of the Adolescents' Section), giovane (member of the Youth Section) and finally, from '45 to '48, she was president of the Youth Section in the

Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, which had just been set up. The parish became the engine which generated all her actions and interests. Her religious disposition, her sense of belonging to the Church and her spirituality were inspired by the fact that she was a member of the Association. The association had a major role in her life. Her assiduous and profound religious life brought about some clashes with her mother who feared that the marriage proposals which her daughter had would vanish in thin air. In spite of this, in 1932, Pina took the vow of Chastity in the small church of the 'Figlie della Misericordia e della Croce', the headquarters of the CA Female Youth. She constantly renewed her vow and cultivated her desire to join the religious life, refusing several proposals for marriage. The difficulties were however insurmountable. She did not even get her family's blessing and so she understood that the door for her to join a religious order was closed. So she carried on with her life as a committed lay believer and as a CA leader and president of the Figlie di Maria, a union which she herself set up in 1948 and of which she was the president until her death. On the 30th March of the same year, together with three friends, she offered herself to Jesus as a victim for the sanctification of priests. She just had time to participate in the 30th anniversary celebrations of the CA Female Youth. She then started suffering from a very painful type of rheumatic arthritis which brought her to her death on the 19th May 1950. She died in the odour of sanctity. Evidence of this was the large number of people who attended her funeral and the many examples of perfection which she gave right up to her death.

Pina's words

«Jesus, I abandon myself to You. You want me to follow this way and here I come». *Maundy Thursday, 1935*

«Surely, Father, You understand how bitter the chalice which Jesus presented me at that moment was, but nevertheless you had to drink it to the last drop and so I still continue to cherish it. Every time that Jesus presents it to me, I repeat every minute: not my will but Yours be done!».

To Padre Pio da Pietrelcina, 1947

«You, o Jesus, understand the void, the discouragement, the dispondency and the torture which engulf me... so I come to You, not to be alleviated, but to ask You for more and to help me understand clearly Your will for me. So, what is the grace which I ask of You? – that You speak to me clearly through circumstances. That You, o Jesus, strike me with a terrible and incurable disease so that I may know clearly that the religious life is not for me and so that, in between the spasms of my body, I may be able to offer You the rest of my life so that it may be consummated slowly like the oil in the altar lamp».

Easter 1949, the anniversary of her offer as a victim

«As CA brings together people who come from all classes of society, it can carry out the most effective apostolate on a large scale. Different categories can carry out their apostolate in different spheres, that is, workers with their fellow workers, students with their schoolmates, professionals with their colleagues, etc. – in all spheres and at all times; an apostolate which knows the hearts' desires and the quickest and best ways of reaching out to people so as to lead them to Christ – an apostolate which only we, lay people, can carry out...».

A young person like us

«Since childhood, she had been a member of the female branch of Catholic Action, of which she later became parish director, finding important incentives in the Association for human and cultural growth in an intense atmosphere of fraternal friendship. She gradually developed a simple, steadfast desire to give her young life to God as an offering of love and especially for the sanctification and perseverance of priests».

John Paul II, *Homily at the Beatification of Pina Suriano*, Loreto, Montorso Esplanade, 5 September, 2004