



**Monastery of Sacred Heart - April 6 1997
94th "birthday" of Sister Consolata**

BELIEVING AND LOVING

FROM THE HOMILY OF DON MARIO CUNIBERTO

We are joined together here in prayer to remember the birth of Sister M. Consolata. With this prayer, with this presence we want to express gratitude to God for the gift which He has given to us of Sister M. Consolata. These thoughts, these sentiments are stressed by the readings for this second Sunday after Easter...In the Gospel (Jn 20, 19-31) we heard Jesus reprimand Thomas for his incredulity and then we heard him proclaim "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed". The path of each man on this earth is a constant effort to believe, though without having seen Jesus as his contemporaries in Palestine did. In this great battle for faith, for the growth of faith, for overcoming moments of uncertainty and doubt, what encouragement comes to the world from centres of contemplative life. I also think that in this Convent, many souls in pain and heavy with suffering in search for the truth, call to have a word of hope and draw encouragement from the example of the lives of our Poor Clare Sisters. It is a gift which comes to our entire lives from these prayer centres, which have the greatest expression of their life of faith in prayer and the contemplation of the word of God. And it is in this fine liturgical context that today we celebrate the birthday of the Servant of God Sister M. Consolata, born in Saluzzo on April 6 1903. If she was still living amongst us she would be 94 years old, a venerable age which is becoming ever more within reach with the fortunate lengthening of life. At this point I must particularly thank the Sisters of this Convent for having invited me to the Holy Mass in memory of Sister M. Consolata. Sister Maria Assunta and all the Sisters, what is it that links me to your convent and you to me? Father Piombino was that common bond between us. Father Arturo M. Piombino who died seven years ago loved your Convent very much. He was very attached to Sister M. Consolata, he was

certain to have received premonitory words from Sister M. Consolata about the mission which he would one day receive from Jesus...

We can see for ourselves what it is like to be in a land blessed by God. In this Convent the Lord has given exceptional graces to Sister M. Consolata and at a distance of a few kilometres Father Piombino went before with a special mission from Heaven, when the Madonna burst into his life presenting herself with the so very effective name of Our Lady of the Thorns and with a message of salvation and peace for the world of today. We are faced by a marvellous entwining of Heavenly works of blessings. Today we can only look at two great souls: Sister M. Consolata and Father Piombino who we have known and to whom we are personally linked. Today it is necessary to understand the gifts of grace which have been given us by them. We must consider the mission which they received from God, because in this mission we have met and known them so well.

In the context of these thoughts there is another reflection I would like to bring to your attention to celebrate the birthday of Sister M. Consolata in this year 1997, which is also the centenary of the death of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Consolata, Pierina Betrone, before entering a Religious Order left us these notes in her autobiographical records; it is the summer of 1924: "I was 21 years old when I had 'The Story of a Soul' between my hands. I remember that Sunday evening seated at the window of the mezzanine floor in the abundant light flowing from the street lamp in Via San Massimo, absorbed in that reading, and in the unfolding of the pages the Divine Light shone ever more brightly in my spirit, and then the hour of Grace, the Divine call and then also the Vocation of love! I felt that evening that I could make the way of love of little St. Thérèse mine and that it fully corresponded to the hidden desires of my heart. I felt that she caused sanctity to be brought to me and that I would like to be able to imitate this Saint". About ten years later, on November 27 1935, Jesus himself confirmed that deep spiritual intuition which she had on reading the autobiography of little St. Thérèse. In fact Jesus said to Sister M. Consolata: "Little St. Thérèse wrote: why is it not given me to tell all the little souls, oh Jesus, of Your ineffable indulgence? I feel that, even if it were impossible, you should find one weaker than mine, you would fill it with even greater favours". And Jesus continues, "Well, I have found the very smallest soul which has given itself to my Compassion with full faith. It is you Consolata, and for you I will perform marvels which will exceed your greatest desires". Jesus called Sister M. Consolata to this simple, profound intimacy, forsaken, in which the Grace works miraculous changes, works a path of sanctification. Jesus opened the sanctified path of incessant acts of love for her. The whole day lived and willed as a continual act of love, an incessant act of love which in Sister M. Consolata is given substance so well in the invocation which she has handed down

and continues to hand down to us even today: Jesus, Mary I love you, save souls.

Sister M. Consolata was very attached to the community prayer, to the Via Crucis which she did every morning; but she was in torment before other forms of prayer, other readings and other meditations. She felt a pressing need to summarise everything in love, to reduce everything to a continual and full act of love. And Jesus bestowed her this spiritual statement which He was expecting from her. On April 3 1936 Jesus confided to her: "It is not the time to meditate or read, but it is the time to love, to see Me and be with Me in everything and to offer everything with joy and thanksgiving". And also, "I do not need you to think, I need you to love". And it is really here, my Beloved ones, that we who are gathered to celebrate the birthday of Sister M. Consolata enter the field. On August 17 1934, a dozen years before the death of Sister M. Consolata, Jesus made her this promise, "When your last 'Jesus, Mary I love You, save souls' will be pronounced, I will receive it and, through the writings of your life, will tell it to millions of souls who, sinners, will welcome it and follow you in the simple way of confidence and love". It is the most, the most encouraging road for us.