



**Monastery of Sacred Heart - July 18 2006  
60th anniversary of birth to Heaven  
of the Servant of God Sister M. Consolata Betrone**

**FROM THE HOMILY OF HIS EXCELLENCY MGR. GUIDO FIANDINO  
AUXILIARY BISHOP OF TURIN**

**ONLY AND ALWAYS LOVE**

It's really impressive to see that 60 years from the death of a humble Nun, simple and secluded, that lived many years in this Convent, for all of us and so numerous, to be here in memory together with her Community. We are here to draw from Sister M. Consolata Betrone inspiration, strength, example, and light for our walk of faith, of personal and communal sanctity, knowing well that the example that the Saints looked to is Jesus and Mary his Mother. All the rest comes after. The Saints, even if I can't still call Sister M. Consolata such, that for now is Servant of God, they don't wish as much that our glance is still on them, but that by means of them, it's projected, centered and fixed on Jesus, on the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This evening with us, I would like first of all to praise the Lord, because the Eucharist is a thanksgiving to God, that in the course of history he has given us – and the Saints are really good gifts – with simple hearts, humble, hidden like Sister M. Consolata. These characters help us understand or, if you like, they help us understand that sanctity is possible, that sanctity is dutiful, that it's not optional for the disciples of Jesus, because sanctity is a source of fullness, it's a source of life, a source of joy, even if the Christian joys are never disconnected from the Cross. The sanctity, that is the faithfulness to the Lord, to his Gospel, is the expectation that God has for each one of us, his project of love for us.

Sanctity is possible and dutiful, because first of all it's not our work, but the work of God, of that God in which Jesus, his Son, said: *"My Father always works"* (Jn 5,17). Therefore, God is always at work in our lives: in mine and in yours, in my heart and in your heart! Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, the Archbishop of Milan said it well: *"The Holy Spirit works before us, more than us, better than us"*. It's like that: the Holy Spirit works more than us, before us, and better than us! For this, Mary in front of Elizabeth that said to her: *"Blessed are you amongst women"*, she answered: *"My soul magnifies the Lord. Great things has he done in me the Almighty"* (ref. Lk 1,42.46.49). So: *"My Father always works"*; he had worked the life of Mary that made herself available, he had worked in the life of Sister M. Consolata: God also wants to work in our life. Sanctity is exactly this: let yourselves be molded into the image of Jesus, the only real Saint, from the Spirit Sanctifier that is present in us from Baptism. In fact, our Baptism is not a date to remember like a custom celebration, but like a Sacrament, that is, the constant presence of God in our life. Who, if not the Spirit Sanctifier, made gush forth from the heart of Pierina Betrone at 13yrs of age, while she walked along the streets of Airasca where she lived that intense act of love: *"My God, I love you"*?

To say it to Jesus, certain expressions do not come from flesh and blood, but from the Father that reveals them to us (ref. Mt 16,17). But Sister M. Consolata teaches us that he who ever retires within oneself will not become a saint, but he who opens himself up to God with confidence, and to his fellow brothers in charity. One day Jesus said to Sister M. Consolata: *"Don't think anymore about yourself, about your perfection, about reaching sanctity, about your defects, or about your poverty. No. I will think about your sanctification, about your sanctity. You think only more about Me and the souls. About Me to love me and the souls to save them"*.

It's really true, that sanctity is not our work, it's a divine work, of that God that acts in this moment of mine and your life if we are receptive, open, and available to his action. And it does us good to look with a glance of faith and heart at Sister M. Consolata Betrone to be stimulated to that conversion of which the Gospel spoke to us this evening (Mt 11,20-24). In fact, Jesus reprimanded in a strong way: *"Woe, woe to you!"*, the inhabitants of the town that looks onto the Lake Tiberias: Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum. And why the reprimand? Because they didn't convert themselves. Jesus, in fact, had given for them the best of himself, we could say, with his preaching and with the miracles worked. Despite these gifts seen and enjoyed, they didn't convert themselves.

The mystery of the conversion is entrusted to liberty; a French author from the last century rightly said: *"For who believes, a miracle is not necessary, for who does not believe, a miracle is not enough"*.

And so this evening we are also called to convert ourselves, because finding ourselves me and you, me first of all looking at Sister M. Consolata, we risk applauding the character of the Servant of God, but not listen to the spiritual message. So let's try to listen to what Sister M. Consolata has to say to us, that is, grasp some starting point for our life. And I'd do it by citing some of her expressions. First of all I think that I am able to say that Sister M. Consolata invites us to make of our lives a continuous act of love: it might seem the most simple thing, but maybe it's the most difficult. In fact Jesus said to her: *"Consolata, tell the souls that I prefer an act of love and a Holy Communion of love to any other kind of gift that they could offer me"*. *"Yes, - Jesus says again - an act of love because I am thirsty for love"*. *"Today - the Voice says - like yesterday, likes tomorrow, to the poor creatures - that we are - I will ask only and always love"*.

Our life is certainly beautiful and welcome before God, but it is not so much for the things that we do, as for the love with which we do them. You and I, what have we done that was so special today? Apparently nothing, as always! And yet, this, our day is great in God's eyes, because we have made it rich with the love of our every act and with our every encounter. This same Eucharist that we are living, is the biggest act in itself of our communal faith, which becomes great in God's eyes and beneficial for us, in proportion to our faith and of the love with which we live this encounter with the Lord.

That which has made acceptable to the Father the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is not as much the extent of agony that he suffered, but the Crucified Heart of his, loaded with love, that made him cry out: *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit"* (Lk 23,46) and: *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"* (Lk 23,34). This is the extent that has made great the moment of Jesus on the Cross: he lived the suffering in love and with love, with complete trust in the Father, even if overwhelmed by darkness like in all human suffering.

Jesus said to Sister M. Consolata: *"Love produces light, love produces strength, love produces joy"*. That's the current capable of saving the world, because God is love: therefore, he's also the source that gives us the love to be able to give to the others. Thus had been the life of Sister M. Consolata, to say with all her heart: *"Jesus I love you"*. Maybe we say this every day reciting the morning and evening prayers: *"I adore you my God and I love you with all my heart"*. I confess to you brothers and

sisters, that when I say: "I love you with all my heart" I add: "It's still not exactly true, Lord, and you know this, but make it that my declaration of love becomes true, because if I wait until it is true before I say this prayer, I will say it, maybe, only in Heaven.

And to say certain prayers, like: "I adore you, my God, and I love you with all my heart", make it that this declaration becomes true, because it helps me to love Him really with all my heart. Sister M. Consolata addresses us with still a second invitation: make of our lives an intercession for others like it had been for her, educated by God to feel herself active and responsible for the Mystical Body. In fact in her Dairy she writes these words of Jesus: *"Remember, that your act of love decides the eternal salvation of a soul. Therefore, be remorseful not to lose a single: "Jesus, Mary I love you, save souls".* And again: *"Don't waste time. Every act of love is a soul". "Only in Heaven will you know the true value and the fruitfulness of the act of love to save souls".*

That's because in this optic of the Mystical Body, the Church has proclaimed Patron of the Missions Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus, she that never moved from her Convent and died so young. The mission is not essentially to do and to move oneself, but to have a heart that loves and that dilates to the dimensions of humanity: *"Jesus, Mary I love you, save souls".* Sister M. Consolata asks us to make of our life an intercession for the others. What's more, exactly at Capernaum, was not the paralyzed man healed and forgiven by Jesus for his faith, and for the act of confident love of his friends that had brought him before Him? (ref. *Mk 2,1-2*). Those friends had been the interceptors, and their act of love had been to bring the paralyzed man before Jesus. The interceptor, in her acts of love and prayers, brings humanity before Jesus that saves.

Finally, I would like to underline a third aspect, very encouraging for all of us. Sister M. Consolata indicates to us the way of the intercession of love well aware of her limits, of her defects, of her mistakes, and of her sins. In fact where God finds humility, he is able to work, because he resists the proud, but gives the graces to the humble (ref. *1 Pt 5,5*). Mary would say: "He looked upon the humility of his servant" and the Saints, in their humility, have experimented the truth of the Psalm verse that says: *"His love for me did wonderful things"* (ref. *Ps 30,22*). We can also sing it. I am not the wonder, because, for the presence of sin in my life, the image of God in me, is often, polluted, and faded, but his love for me does wonders.

In her Dairy Sister M. Consolata writes: *"I know that I am wretched, vile and inconstant, but I know that He is omnipotent, and that for Him nothing is impossible: so, between this "little one" and the good God the*

*bridge of confidence is thrown away and, also in my supreme vileness, I believe that Jesus will grant me that which I yearn for". And again: "I remember one day that I had confessed: I feel so nasty that I could bicker with everybody". We smile, because very often we are also like that: but we have to take courage, because the road is long, but if we confide in the power of the lord that works in our lives, we will arrive at the goal of perfection.*

Sister M. Consolata writes again that *"our life is a race made up of jumps and of tumbles, but it's important to rise up quickly and start again to run the race"*. Are these words not comforting? Of course, because they invite us to look and to understand our frailty like the saints did, to then start walking again.

On this subject I think you know that splendid prayer of Saint Agustin: *"Lord, if in the hour of our death you don't find us victorious, make it that you find us at least fighting"*. This prayer is beautiful! In fact it's not taken for granted that on the day of death we will be found victorious on evil, we could still be little sinners on that day. But Saint Agustin invites us to be fighters like Sister M. Consolata, that is not resigned: It's important to rise up again quickly and start running again. And for Sister M. Consolata it was just like that, she revealed it with her life and in her writings. And we are celebrating it in the memory of her death which happened exactly 60 years ago, uniting us in profound communion with Jesus' perpetual "yes" to the Father. One evening, Sister M. Consolata in front of the holy tabernacle exclaimed with a little grief: *"Oh Jesus, I'm always the same, I promise and then..."*. And Jesus answered her: *"I'm also always the same, I never change"*.

Let's ask the Lord this evening to help us also to put into operation the program of life that he gave to Sister M. Consolata: *"Love only me, love me always, answer yes to everything and, to everyone, with intense love, always; that's your way, you don't have to do anything but this. I'll think of and provide for all the rest"*.