



**Monastery of Sacred Heart - July 18 1996
50th anniversary
of birth to heaven of Sister Consolata**

FROM THE HOMILY OF HIS EXCELLENCY MGR. PIERGIORGIO MICCHIARDI

I BLESS YOU, OH FATHER

Dearly beloved, it seems to me that the readings of today's Holy Mass help us to live very well in the light of the Word of God on the 50th anniversary of the death of our sister Sister M. Consolata Betrone. Above all I refer to the verses of the Gospel which we have just heard (*Mt 11, 28-30*) and I invite you to thoughtfully recall the sentences which immediately precede the passage just proclaimed. When Jesus invites us to praise and thank the Father for the splendid things He has achieved amongst His children, above all because He reveals the mystery of His Love to those who become small, simple and humble.

Now taking inspiration from this prayer of Jesus: *"I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike"* (*Mt 11,25*). I would like us, together, to thank, bless and praise the Lord for the many gifts which He constantly gives to His Church and I would say in a very special way to our Church in Turin. Certainly, our Church, as the Church in general, endures and lives through many problems which lead to suffering. For example the problem of increasing de-Christianisation, namely the problem of an ever shrinking reference to Jesus Christ.

Another problem which, as Bishop, I experience in a special way for this Diocese, is the decrease of vocations to the ministry and consecrated life which have an essential role in the life of the Church. But in the midst of all these problems, how many marvellous gifts our Church has received and receives! The greatest gift is that of the sanctity which shines in many of its members. Sanctity sometimes officially recognised by the

Church...and sanctity which is moving towards the recognition by the Church, that of Sister M. Consolata an cloistered nun, and a sometimes hidden sanctity, not formally recognised, but also existing and also fruitful.

Now, after this introduction, I would like to reflect with you on the special gift which the Lord has given us, to our Church and the whole Church, in giving us Sister M. Consolata. Among other things I am pleased to emphasise that the name which Pierina Betrone received in religion, Maria Consolata, is a name which refers to the Patron Saint of our Diocese, the Madonna Consolata.

Here, the gift the Lord has bestowed on us by giving us Sister M. Consolata, seems to me basically this, namely of having made us enjoy through her, in all her depth, the Gospel, especially where Jesus speaks of compassionate love and humility. It involves parts of the Gospel which have great meaning for our environment which has such need to believe in the love of God. Today there is need to believe in this love of God because religion is diffused, it lacks deep faith in the God of Jesus Christ because it is one thing to believe in God the creator and another thing to believe in the God who was revealed to us by Jesus Christ, who is precisely the God of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Perhaps this lack of faith in the God of Jesus Christ, in the God of love, really depends on the fact that we do not sufficiently proclaim it as compassionate love...Our environment also has much need to belief in the love of God because there is very little love between people. I do not want to be pessimistic, but I think realistically of divided families where there is betrayal of true love, where there is indifference. Here now is the topicality of the message and life of Sister M. Consolata who, starting from the consideration of God who is love, who was invited to live fraternal charity, to give herself, to always say "yes" and not only to God, but also to her brothers and sisters.

The environment in which we live is an environment which needs to be convinced that salvation comes from God because there is the contradiction of two double tendencies: on one hand total dejection, therefore depression and the suicide of many young people, and on the other hand the excessive extolling of the human being with the resulting statement that there is no longer need for God. We must, therefore, welcome compassionate love into our life, love which saves us. The concept of salvation due to Christianity does not mean the reality that crushes man, but the reality that exalts him, which completes him by freeing him from sin, by putting him in communion with God; therefore, not annihilation of the person, but correct raising of the person. And I believe that we really must increasingly announce the salvation that comes to us from our compassionate God and increasingly work with zeal for the salvation of souls. Over the last few days while reflecting on Sister

M. Consolata and her cry *Jesus, Mary I love you, save souls* I have asked myself what my commitment is as regards the salvation of souls. Certainly all that we do for good is turned to this goal, however, we must also be more explicit when thinking of this situation, because what counts is to save people, save them for eternal salvation.