

***Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord
In the Kingdom of the Divine Will***



***From the Writings of
The Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta
The Little Daughter of the Divine Will***

Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord

The Gospel of the Lord –

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out.

And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage.

Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

- Matthew 2:1-12

The Queen of Heaven in the Kingdom of the Divine Will:

Day 23

What was not the astonishment of these Magi Kings, in recognizing in that divine infant the King of Heaven and earth.

Now, my child, another surprise: a new star shines under the vault of the heavens, and with its light it is searching for adorers, to lead them to recognize and adore baby Jesus. Three individuals, each distant from the other, are touched by it, and invested by supernatural light, follow the star, which leads them to the grotto of Bethlehem, to the feet of the baby Jesus. What was not the astonishment of these Magi Kings, in recognizing in that divine infant the King of Heaven and earth – the One Who had come to love and to save all? In fact, when the Magi were in the act of adoring Him, enraptured by that celestial beauty, the newborn baby made His Divinity shine forth from His little humanity, and the grotto turned into paradise; so much so, that they were not able to separate themselves from the feet of the divine infant - not before He again withdrew the light of the Divinity within His humanity. And I, exercising the office of mother, spoke at length of the descent of the Word, and fortified them in faith, hope and charity, symbolized by the gifts offered to Jesus. Then, full of joy, they withdrew to their regions, to be the first propagators.

The Queen of Heaven in the Kingdom of the Divine Will:

Day 24

You know of the coming of the Magi Kings, who caused rumor in Jerusalem

My dearest child, today the heart of your Mama is swollen with love and with sorrow, to the extent that I cannot refrain from crying. You know of the coming of the Magi Kings, who caused rumor in Jerusalem, asking for the new King. And cruel Herod, for fear of being removed from his throne, has already given the order to kill my sweet Jesus, my dear life, together with all of the other children.

My child, what pain! The One who has come to give life to all, and to bring into the world the new era of peace, of happiness and of grace...they want to kill Him! What ingratitude! What perfidy! Ah, my child, to what extent reaches the blindness of the human will! To the extent of becoming ferocious, of tying the hands of the Creator Himself, and of becoming the owner of the One who created it. Give me your compassion, my child, and try to calm the crying of the sweet Baby. He cries because of human ingratitude, because, only a newborn, they want Him dead; so, in order to save Him, we are forced to flee. Dear Saint Joseph has already been advised by the angel to leave for a foreign land. Accompany us, dear child; do not leave us alone, and I will continue to give you my lessons on the great evils of the human will.

The Epiphany The Queen of Heaven in the Kingdom of the Divine Will: Meditation 4
A New Star, with Its Sweet Glittering, calls the Magi to adore Jesus.

Dearest child, you are right in saying that you see me as more beautiful. You must know that when I saw my Son being circumcised and His blood pouring from the wound, I loved that blood, that wound, and I became Mother twice: Mother of my Son, and Mother of His blood - of His cruel pain. Therefore I acquired a double right of maternity - a double right of graces before the Supreme Majesty, for myself and for all mankind. This is why you see me as more beautiful.

My child, how beautiful it is to do good, to suffer in peace for love of the One who created us. This binds the Divinity to the creature, and gives her so much grace and love - to the extent of drowning her. This love and these graces cannot remain idle, but want to run and give themselves to all, to make known the one who has given so much. This is why I felt the need to make my Son known.

Now, my blessed child, the Divinity, Who can deny nothing to one who loves It, makes a new star, more beautiful and radiant, arise under the blue heavens. And with its light, it goes in search of adorers, to say to the whole world, with its mute glittering: "The One Who has come to save you is born! Come to adore Him and to know Him as your Savior!"

But...human ingratitude! Among many, only three People paid attention, and without considering the sacrifices, put themselves on the path to follow the star. And just as a star guided their persons along the path, so also my prayers, my love, my sighs and my graces, in my desire of making known the Celestial Baby - the Awaited One from all centuries - like many stars descending into their hearts, illuminated their minds and guided their interiors, in such a way that, without yet knowing Him, they felt that they loved the One for whom they were looking, and they hastened their step in order to reach and see the One whom they so much loved.

My dearest child, my heart of a Mother rejoiced for the faithfulness, the correspondence and the sacrifice of these Magi Kings, to come to know and adore my Son. But I cannot hide from you a secret sorrow of mine: among many, only three. In the history of the centuries, how many times is this sorrow of mine and this human ingratitude not repeated! My Son and I do nothing but make stars arise, one more beautiful than the other, to call some to know their Creator, some to sanctity, some to rise again from sin, some to the heroism of a sacrifice... But do you want to know what these stars are? A painful encounter is a star; a truth that one comes to know is a star; a love unrequited by other creatures is a star; a setback, a suffering, a disillusion, an unexpected fortune, are many stars which shed light in the minds of creatures. Caressing them, they want to make them find the Celestial Infant, who is fidgeting with love, shivering with cold, and seeking a refuge in their hearts to be known and loved. But, alas, I who hold Him in my arms, wait in vain for the stars to bring me the creatures, in order to place Him in their hearts - and my maternity is restrained, hindered. While I am the Mother of Jesus, I am prevented from being the mother of all, because they are not around me, and do not look for Jesus. So the stars hide, and they remain in the Jerusalems of the world, without Jesus. What sorrow, my child, what sorrow! It takes correspondence, fidelity and sacrifice to follow the stars; and if the sun of the Divine Will rises within the soul - how much attention does it not take. Otherwise, one remains in the darkness of the human will.

Now, my child, as they entered Jerusalem, the holy Magi Kings lost the star, but, still, they did not stop looking for Jesus. But as they went outside the city, the star reappeared and led them, festive, into the grotto of Bethlehem. I received them with the love of a Mother, and the dear Baby looked at them with great love and majesty, letting His Divinity shine through His little humanity. Bowing down, they knelt at His feet, and adoring and contemplating that celestial Beauty, they recognized Him as true God. They remained enraptured, ecstatic - enjoying Him; so much so, that the Celestial Baby had to withdraw His Divinity into His Humanity, otherwise they would have remained there, unable to move from His divine feet.

Then, as they came round from their rapture, in which they offered the gold of their souls, the incense of their faith and adoration, the myrrh of all of their beings and of any sacrifice He might have wanted, they added the offering of the external gifts, symbol of their interior acts: gold, incense and myrrh. But my love of Mother was not yet content; I wanted to place the sweet Baby in their arms, and - oh, with how much love did they kiss Him and press Him to their chests! They felt paradise, in advance, within them. Through this, my Son bound all the gentile nations to the knowledge of the true God, and placed the goods of Redemption, the

return to faith of all peoples, in common for all. He constituted Himself King of the dominators, and ruling over all, with the weapons of His love, of His pains and of His tears, He called the Kingdom of His Will upon earth. And I, your Mama, wanted to be the first apostle. I instructed them; I told them the story of my Son, of His ardent love; I recommended that they make Him known to all, and assuming the first place of Mother and Queen of all Apostles, I blessed them, I had them blessed by the dear Baby, and happy and in tears, they left again for their regions. I did not leave them, I accompanied them with maternal affection, and to repay them, I let them feel Jesus in their hearts. How happy they were! You must know that only when I see that my Son has dominion, possession, and forms His perennial dwelling in the hearts of those who search for Him and love Him – only then do I feel a true Mother.

Now a little word to you, my child: if you want me to act as your true Mother, let me place Jesus in your heart. You will make Him happy with your love; you will feed Him with the food of His Will, because He takes no other food; You will clothe Him with the sanctity of your works. And I will come into your heart, I will raise my dear child again together with you, and I will perform for you and for Him, the office of Mother. In this way, I will feel the pure joys of my maternal fecundity. You must know that anything which does not begin with Jesus, who is inside the heart - even though they may be the most beautiful works on the outside - cannot please me, because they are empty of the life of my dear Son.

Book of Heaven

Volume 3 - January 6, 1900

Today is the Epiphany, and in the example of the Holy Magi, I was to offer something to Baby Jesus. Confidence, the staircase to ascend to the Divinity.

This morning I received Communion, and as I found myself together with Jesus, the Queen Mama was also there, and – oh, marvel! – I looked at the Mother and I could see Her Heart transmuted into Baby Jesus; I looked at the Son and I could see the Mother in the Heart of the Baby. In the meantime, I remembered that today is the Epiphany, and in the example of the Holy Magi, I was to offer something to Baby Jesus, but I saw myself as having nothing to give Him. So, in seeing my misery, the thought came to me of offering my body as myrrh, with all the sufferings of the twelve years in which I had been in bed, ready to suffer and to remain there as much longer as He pleased; as gold, the pain I feel when He deprives me of His presence, which is the most painful and sorrowful thing for me; as incense, my poor prayers, united to those of the Queen Mama, so that they might be more pleasing to Baby Jesus. So I made the offering with full confidence that the Baby would accept everything.

Jesus seemed to accept my poor offerings with great pleasure, but that which He enjoyed the most was the confidence with which I had offered them. Then He said to me: *“Confidence has two arms: with one it embraces my Humanity, and it uses my Humanity as a staircase in order to ascend to my Divinity; with the other it embraces the Divinity and draws celestial graces in torrents, in such a way that the soul remains all inundated within the Divine Being. When the soul is confident, she is certain to obtain what she asks. I let my arms be bound, I let her do whatever she wants, I let her penetrate even into my Heart, and I let her take, by herself, that which she has asked from Me. If I did not do so, I would feel Myself in a state of violence.”* While He was saying this, many rivulets of a liqueur (I call it ‘liqueur’, but I can’t really tell what it was) came out from the breast of the Baby and of the Mother, which inundated my soul completely. Then the Queen Mother disappeared.

After this, together with the Baby I went out into the vault of the heavens. I saw that His gracious face was sad, and I said to myself: ‘Maybe He wants milk, this is why He is sad.’ So I said to Him: ‘Do You want to suckle from me since the Queen Mama is not here?’ But before doing this, I became concerned that it might be the devil; so, in order to be reassured, I signed him several times with the cross and I said to him: ‘Are you really Jesus the Nazarene, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, Son of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God?’ And the Baby assured that He was. Therefore, being assured, I placed Him to suckle from myself. The Baby seemed to revive, assuming a merry appearance, and I saw that He was suckling part of those rivulets with which He Himself had inundated me. And while He was doing this, I felt my heart being pulled, as it seemed that that milk which Jesus was drawing from me was coming out

from it. Who can say what passed between me and Baby Jesus? I have no tongue to be able to manifest it, no words to be able to describe it.

Volume 4 - January 6, 1901

Jesus communicates Himself to the three Magi through love, through beauty and through power.

As I was outside of myself, I seemed to see the moment when the holy Magi arrived at the grotto of Bethlehem. As they arrived in the presence of the Baby, He pleased to let the rays of His Divinity shine externally, communicating Himself to the Magi in three ways - through love, through beauty and through power – in such a way that they remained enraptured and engrossed in the presence of Little Baby Jesus; so much so, that if the Lord had not withdrawn the rays of His Divinity internally again, they would have remained there forever, unable to move any more. Then, as the Baby withdrew His Divinity, the holy Magi returned into themselves; they stirred themselves, stupefied, in seeing an excess of love so great, because through that light the Lord had let them understand the mystery of the Incarnation. Then they stood up and offered their gifts to the Queen Mother, and She spoke at length with them, but I am unable to say everything She said. I can only remember that She inculcated into them, strongly, not only their own salvation, but also taking to heart the salvation of their peoples, having no fear even to lay down their lives to obtain the intent.

After this, I withdrew inside myself and I found myself together with Jesus. He wanted me to tell Him something, but I saw myself so cattiva [bad] and confused that I would not dare to tell Him anything. Seeing that I was not saying anything, He Himself continued to speak about the holy Magi, telling me: *“By having communicated Myself to the Magi in three ways, I obtained three effects for them, because I never communicate Myself to souls uselessly; rather, they always receive some profit for themselves. So, as I communicated Myself through love, they obtained detachment from themselves; through beauty, they obtained contempt for earthly things; and through power, their hearts remained all bound to Me, and they obtained the bravery to lay down their blood and lives for Me.”*

Then He added: “And you, what do you want? Tell Me - do you love Me? How would you want to love Me?” Not knowing what to say, as my confusion increased, I said: ‘Lord, I would want nothing but You, and if You say to me, ‘do you love Me?’, I have no words to be able to manifest it. I can only say that I feel this passion that no one may be able to prevail over me in loving You, and that I should be the first in loving You, above everyone, and no one may be able to surpass me. But this does not content me yet; in order to be content, I would want to love You with your own love, so that I may be able to love You as You love Yourself. Ah, yes! Only then would my concerns about loving You cease.’ Content, one could say, with my nonsense, Jesus clasped me so tightly to Himself, that I could see myself transmuted in Him, inside and out, and He communicated part of His love to me. After this, I returned inside myself, and it seemed to me that for as much love as I am given, so much do I possess my Good; and if I love Him little, I possess Him little.

Volume 10 - December 25, 1910

Then came the Magi, but no priest showed up, while they should have been the first to form my cortege.

This morning blessed Jesus made Himself seen as a tiny Little One, but so gracious and beautiful as to enrapture me in a sweet enchantment. Especially, then, He rendered Himself more lovable because, with His tiny little hands, He took little nails and nailed me with a mastery worthy only of my always lovable Jesus. Then He filled me with kisses and with love, and so I did with Him.

Then, after this, I seemed to find myself in the grotto of my newborn Jesus, and my little Jesus told me: *“My beloved daughter, who came to visit me in the grotto of my birth? Only shepherds were my first visitors – the only ones who kept coming and going, offering Me gifts and their little things. They were the first to receive the knowledge of my coming into the world and, as a consequence, the first favorites to be filled with my grace. This is why I always choose poor, ignorant, abject people, and I make of them portents of grace – because they are always the ones to be more disposed, the ones who more easily listen to Me and believe Me without raising so many difficulties, so many quibbles as, on the contrary, learned people do.*

Then came the Magi, but no priest showed up, while they should have been the first to form my cortege. In fact, more than anyone else, according to the Scriptures which they studied, they knew the time and the place, and it was easier for them to come to visit me. But no one – no one moved; rather, while they indicated the place to the Magi, they did not move, nor did they trouble to take one step to follow the traces of my coming. This was a most bitter sorrow for Me at my birth, because in those priests the attachment to riches, to interest, to families and to exterior things was so great as to blind their sight like a glare, harden their hearts, and render their intelligence dazed to the knowledge of the most sacrosanct and most certain truths. They were so engulfed in the low things of the earth, as to never be able to believe that a God could come upon earth in the midst of so much poverty and so much humiliation. And this, not only at my birth, but also during the course of my life. When I performed the most sensational miracles, no one followed me; on the contrary, they plotted my death, and killed Me on the cross. And after using all of my art in order to draw them to Myself, I put them into oblivion and chose poor and ignorant people as my apostles, forming my Church in them. I segregated them from their families, I released them from any bond of riches, I filled them with the treasures of my graces, and I rendered them capable of governing my Church and souls.

However, you must know that this sorrow of Mine is still lasting, because the priests of these times have banded together with the priests of those times. They have been holding hands in their attachments to families, to interest, to exterior things, and they care very little, or not at all, about that which is interior. Even more, some have degraded themselves so much as to make even secular people understand how unhappy they are with their state, lowering their dignity down to the bottom, and below the secular themselves. Ah! my daughter, what prestige can their word still have among the peoples? Even more, because of them, the peoples keep deteriorating in the faith and into abysses of worse evils, groping their way in darkness, because they see no more light in priests. This is the reason for the necessity of houses of reunion of priests, so that, freed from the mist of darkness by which he is invaded – families, interest, and cares for exterior things - the priest may give out light of true virtues, and the peoples may turn back from the errors in which they have fallen. These reunions are so necessary, that every time the Church has reached the bottom, this has almost always been the means in order to make Her rise again, more beautiful and majestic.”

On hearing this, I said: ‘My highest and only Good, sweet Life of mine, I compassionate your sorrow and I would like to soothe it with my love, but You know well who I am – how poor, ignorant, bad I am, and also extremely taken with my passion for hiddenness. I would love it if You could hide me so much within You, that no one might ever again believe that I existed; and You, instead, want me to speak about these things which so much grieve your most loving Heart, and which are so necessary for the Church. Oh! my Jesus, to me, speak of love, and go to other good and holy souls to speak about these things which are so useful for your Church.’

And good Jesus continued: “My daughter, I too loved hiddenness, but there is a time for everything. When the honor and the glory of the Father, as well as the good of souls, became necessary, I revealed Myself and I did my public life. So I do with souls: sometimes I keep them hidden, other times I manifest them; and you must be indifferent to everything, wanting only that which I want. Even more, I bless your heart and your mouth, and I Myself will speak in you, with my own mouth and with my own sorrow.” And so He blessed me, and He disappeared.

Fiat!!!

Biographical notes

The Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta was born in Corato in the Province of Bari, on April 23, 1865 and died there in the odor of sanctity on March 4, 1947.

Luisa had the good fortune to be born into one of those patriarchal families that still survive in our realm of Puglia and like to live deep in the country, peopling our farmhouses. Her parents, Vito Nicola and Rosa Tarantino, had five children: Maria, Rachele, Filomena, Luisa and Angela. Maria, Rachele and Filomena married. Angela, commonly called Angelina, remained single and looked after her sister until she died.

Luisa was born on the Sunday after Easter and was baptized that same day. Her father – a few hours after her birth – wrapped her in a blanket and carried her to the parish church where holy Baptism was administered to her.

Nicola Piccarreta was a worker on a farm belonging to the Mastrorilli family, located at the middle of Via delle Murge in a neighborhood called *Torre Disperata*, 27 kilometers from Corato. Those who know these places, set among the sunny, bare and stony hills, can appreciate the solemnity of the silence that envelops them. Luisa spent many years of her childhood and adolescence on this farm. In front of the old house, the impressive, centuries-old mulberry tree still stands, with the great hollow in its trunk where Luisa used to hide when she was little in order to pray, far from prying eyes. It was in this lonely, sunny spot place that Luisa's divine adventure began which was to lead her down the paths of suffering and holiness. Indeed, it was in this very place that she came to suffer unspeakably from the attacks of the devil who at times even tormented her physically. Luisa, to be rid of this suffering, turned ceaselessly to prayer, addressing in particular the Virgin Most Holy, who comforted her by her presence.

Divine Providence led the little girl down paths so mysterious that she knew no joys other than God and his grace. One day, in fact, the Lord said to her: *"I have gone round and round the world again and again, and I looked one by one at all my creatures to find the smallest one of all. Among so many I found you. Your littleness pleased me and I chose you; I entrusted you to my angels so that they would care for you, not to make you great, but to preserve your littleness, and now I want to begin the great work of fulfilling my will. Nor will you feel any greater through this, indeed it is my will to make you even smaller, and you will continue to be the little daughter of the Divine Will"* (cf. Volume XII, March 23, 1921).

When she was nine, Luisa received Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time and Holy Confirmation, and from that moment learned to remain for hours praying before the Blessed Sacrament. When she was eleven she wanted to enroll in the Association of the Daughters of Mary – flourishing at the time – in the Church of San Giuseppe. At the age of eighteen, Luisa became a Dominican Tertiary taking the name of Sr. Maddalena. She was one of the first to enroll in the Third Order, which her parish priest was promoting. Luisa's devotion to the Mother of God was to develop into a profound Marian spirituality, a prelude to what she would one day write about Our Lady.

Jesus' voice led Luisa to detachment from herself and from everyone. At about eighteen, from the balcony of her house in Via Nazario Sauro, she had a vision of Jesus suffering under the weight of the Cross, who raised his eyes to her saying: *"O soul, help me!"* From that moment an insatiable longing to suffer for Jesus and for the salvation of souls was enkindled in Luisa. So began those physical sufferings which, in addition to her spiritual and moral sufferings, reached the point of heroism.

The family mistook these phenomena for sickness and sought medical help. But all the doctors consulted were perplexed at such an unusual clinical case. Luisa was subject to a state of corpse-like rigidity – although she showed signs of life – and no treatment could relieve her of this unspeakable torment. When all the resources of science had been exhausted, her family turned to their last hope: priests. An Augustinian priest, Fr. Cosma Loiodice, at home because of the Siccardian* laws, was summoned to her bedside: to the wonder of all present, the sign of the Cross which this priest made over the poor body, sufficed to restore her normal faculties instantly to the sick girl. After Fr. Loiodice had left for his friary, certain secular priests were called in who restored Luisa to normality with the sign of the Cross. She was convinced that all priests were holy, but one day the Lord told her: *"Not because they are all holy – indeed, if they only were! – but simply because they are the continuation of my priesthood in the world you must always submit to their priestly authority; never oppose them, whether they are good or bad"* (cf. Volume I). Throughout her life, Luisa was to be submissive to priestly authority. This was to be one of the greatest sources of her suffering. Her daily need for the priestly authority in order to return to her usual tasks was her deepest mortification. In the beginning, she suffered the most humiliating misunderstandings on the part of the priests themselves who considered her a lunatic filled with exalted ideas, who simply wanted to attract attention. Once they left her in that state for more than twenty days. Luisa, having accepted the role of victim, came to experience a most peculiar condition: every morning she found herself rigid, immobile, huddled up in bed, and no one was able to stretch her out, to raise her arms or move her head or legs. As we know, it required the presence of a priest who, by blessing her with the sign of the Cross, dispelled that corpse-like rigidity and enabled her to return to her usual tasks (lace-making). She was a unique case in that her confessors were never spiritual directors, a task that Our Lord wanted to keep for himself. Jesus made her hear his voice directly, training her, correcting her, reprimanding her if necessary and gradually leading her to the loftiest peaks of perfection. Luisa was wisely instructed and prepared during many years to receive the gift of the Divine Will.

The archbishop at that time, Giuseppe Bianchi Dottula (December 22, 1848-September 22, 1892), came to know of what was happening in Corato; having heard the opinion of several priests, he wished to exercise his authority and assume responsibility for this case. After mature reflection he thought it right to delegate to Luisa a special confessor, Fr. Michele De Benedictis, a splendid figure of a priest, to whom she opened every nook and cranny of her soul. Fr. Michele, a prudent priest with holy ways, imposed limits on her suffering and instructed her to do nothing without his permission. Indeed, it was Fr. Michele who ordered her to eat at least once a day, even if she immediately threw up everything she had swallowed. Luisa was to live on the Divine Will alone. It was under this priest that she received permission to stay in bed all the time as a victim of expiation. This was in 1888. Luisa remained nailed to her bed of pain, sitting there for another 59 years, until

her death. It should be noted that until that time, although she had accepted her state as a victim, she had only occasionally stayed in bed, since obedience had never permitted her to stay in bed all the time. However, from New Year 1889 she was to remain there permanently.

In 1898 the new prelate, Archbishop Tommaso de Stefano (March 24, 1898 - 13 May 1906) delegated as her new confessor Fr. Gennaro Di Gennaro, who carried out this task for twenty-four years. The new confessor, glimpsing the marvels that the Lord was working in this soul, categorically ordered Luisa to put down in writing all that God's grace was working within her. None of the excuses made by the Servant of God to avoid obeying her confessor in this were to any avail. Not even her scant literary education could excuse her from obedience to her confessor. Fr. Gennaro Di Gennaro remained cold and implacable, although he knew that the poor woman had only been to elementary school. Thus on February 28, 1899, she began to write her diary, of which there are thirty-six large volumes! The last chapter was written on December 28, 1939, the day on which she was ordered to stop writing.

Her confessor, who died on September 10, 1922, was succeeded by the canon, Fr. Francesco De Benedictis, who only assisted her for four years, because he died on January 30, 1926. Archbishop Giuseppe Leo (January 17, 1920-January 20, 1939) delegated a young priest, Fr. Benedetto Calvi, as her ordinary confessor. He stayed with Luisa until she died, sharing all those sufferings and misunderstandings that beset the Servant of God in the last years of her life.

At the beginning of the century, our people were lucky enough to have Blessed Annibale Maria Di Francia present in Puglia. He wanted to open in Trani male and female branches of his newly founded congregation. When he heard about Luisa Piccarreta, he paid her a visit and from that time these two souls were inseparably linked by their common aims. Other famous priests also visited Luisa, such as, for example, Fr. Gennaro Braccali, the Jesuit, Fr. Eustachio Montemurro, who died in the odor of sanctity, and Fr. Ferdinando Cento, Apostolic Nuncio and Cardinal of Holy Mother Church. Blessed Annibale became her extraordinary confessor and edited her writings, which were little by little properly examined and approved by the ecclesiastical authorities. In about 1926, Blessed Annibale ordered Luisa to write a book of memoirs of her childhood and adolescence. He published various writings of Luisa's, including the book *L'orologio della Passione*, which acquired widespread fame and was reprinted four times. On October 7, 1928, when the house of the sisters of the Congregation of Divine Zeal in Corato was ready, Luisa was taken to the convent in accordance with the wishes of Blessed Annibale. Blessed Annibale had already died in the odor of sanctity in Messina.

In 1938, a tremendous storm was unleashed upon Luisa Piccarreta: she was publicly disowned by Rome and her books were put on the Index. At the publication of the condemnation by the Holy Office, she immediately submitted to the authority of the Church.

A priest was sent from Rome by the ecclesiastical authorities, who asked her for all her manuscripts, which Luisa handed over promptly and without a fuss. Thus all her writings were hidden away in the secrecy of the Holy Office.

On October 7, 1938, because of orders from above, Luisa was obliged to leave the convent and find a new place to live. She spent the last nine years of her life in a house in Via Maddalena, a place which the elderly of Corato know well and from where, on March 8, 1947, they saw her body carried out.

Luisa's life was very modest; she possessed little or nothing. She lived in a rented house, cared for lovingly by her sister Angela and a few devout women. The little she had was not even enough to pay the rent. To support herself she worked diligently at making lace, earning from this the pittance she needed to keep her sister, since she herself needed neither clothes nor shoes. Her sustenance consisted of a few grams of food, which were prepared for her by her assistant, Rosaria Bucci. Luisa ordered nothing, desired nothing, and instantly vomited the food she swallowed. She did not look like a person near death's door, but nor did she appear perfectly healthy. Yet she was never idle, she spent her energy either in her daily suffering or her work, and her life, for those who knew her well, was considered a continuous miracle.

Her detachment from any payments that did not come from her daily work was marvelous! She firmly refused money and the various presents offered to her on any pretext. She never accepted money for the publication of her books. Thus one day she told Blessed Annibale that she wanted to give him the money from her author's royalties: "*I have no right to it, because what is written there is not mine*" (cf. Preface of the *L'orologio della Passione*, Messina, 1926). She scornfully refused and returned the money that pious people sometimes sent her.

Luisa's house was like a monastery, not to be entered by any curious person. She was always surrounded by a few women who lived according to her own spirituality, and by several girls who came to her house to learn lace-making. Many religious vocations emerged from this "upper room". However, her work of formation was not limited to girls alone, many young men were also sent by her to various religious institutes and to the priesthood.

Her day began at about 5.00 a.m., when the priest came to the house to bless it and to celebrate Holy Mass. Either her confessor officiated, or some delegate of his: a privileged granted by Leo XIII and confirmed by St. Pius X in 1907. After Holy Mass, Luisa would remain in prayer and thanksgiving for about two hours. At about 8.00 a.m. she would begin her work which she continued until midday; after her frugal lunch she would stay alone in her room in meditation. In the afternoon – after several hours of work – she would recite the holy Rosary. In the evening, towards 8.00 p.m., Luisa would

begin to write her diary; at about midnight she would fall asleep. In the morning she would be found immobile, rigid, huddled up on her bed, her head turned to the right, and the intervention of priestly authority would be necessary to recall her to her daily tasks and allow her to sit up in bed.

Luisa died at the age of eighty-one years, ten months and nine days, on March 4, 1947, after a fortnight of illness, the only one diagnosed in her life, a bad attack of pneumonia. She died at the end of the night, at the same hour when every day the priest's blessing had freed her from her state of rigidity. Archbishop Francesco Petronelli (May 25, 1939-June 16, 1947) archbishop at the time. Luisa remained sitting up in bed. It was impossible to lay her out and – an extraordinary phenomenon – her body never suffered *rigor mortis* and remained in the position in which it had always been.

Hardly had the news of Luisa's death spread, like a river in full spate, all the people streamed into her house and police intervention was necessary to control the crowds that flocked there day and night to visit Luisa, a woman very dear to them. A voice rang out: "*Luisa the Saint has died*". To contain all the people who were going to see her, with the permission of the civil authorities and health officials, her body was exposed for four days with no sign of corruption. Luisa did not seem dead, she was sitting up in bed, dressed in white; it was as though she were asleep, because as has already been said, her body did not suffer *rigor mortis*. Indeed, without any effort her head could be moved in all directions, her arms raised, her hands and all her fingers bent. It was even possible to lift her eyelids and see her shining eyes that had not grown dim. Everyone believed that she was still alive, immersed in a deep sleep. A council of doctors, summoned for this purpose, declared, after attentively examining the corpse, that Luisa was truly dead and that her death should be accepted as real and not merely apparent, as everyone had imagined.

Luisa had said that she was born "upside down", and that therefore it was right that her death should be "upside down" in comparison with that of other creatures. She remained in a sitting position as she had always lived, and had to be carried to the cemetery in this position, in a coffin specially made for her with a glass front and sides, so that she could be seen by everyone, like a queen upon her throne, dressed in white with the *Fiat* on her breast. More than forty priests, the chapter and the local clergy took part in the funeral procession; the sisters took turns to carry her on their shoulders, and an immense crowd of citizens surrounded her: the streets were incredibly full; even the balconies and rooftops of the houses were swarming with people, so that the procession wound slowly onwards with great difficulty. The funeral rite of the little daughter of the Divine Will was celebrated in the main church by the entire chapter. All the people of Corato followed the body to the cemetery. Everyone tried to take home a keepsake or a flower, after having touched her body with it; a few years later, her remains were translated to the parish of Santa Maria Greca.

In 1994, on the day of the Feast of Christ the King, in the main church, Archbishop Carmelo Cassati, in the presence of a large crowd including foreign representatives, officially opened the beatification cause of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta.

Important dates

1865 - Luisa Piccarreta was born on April 23, the Sunday after Easter, in Corato, Bari, to Nicola Vito and Rosa Tarantino, who had five daughters: Maria, Rachele, Filomena, Luisa and Angela. A few hours after Luisa's birth, her father wrapped her in a blanket and took her to the main church for baptism. Her mother had not suffered the pangs of labor: her birth was painless.

1872 - She received Jesus in the Eucharist on the Sunday after Easter, and the sacrament of Confirmation was administered to her on that same day by Archbishop Giuseppe Bianchi Dottula of Trani.

1883 - At the age of eighteen, from the balcony of her house, she saw Jesus, bent beneath the weight of the Cross, who said to her: "*O soul! Help me!*". From that moment, solitary soul that she was, she lived in continuous union with the ineffable sufferings of her Divine Bridegroom.

1888 - She became a Daughter of Mary and a Dominican Tertiary with the name of Sr. Maddalena

1885-1947 - A chosen soul, a seraphic bride of Christ, humble and devout, whom God had endowed with extraordinary gifts, an innocent victim, a lightening conductor of Divine Justice, bedridden for sixty-two years without interruption, she was a herald of the Kingdom of the Divine Will.

March 4 - Full of merits, in the eternal light of the Divine Will she ended her days as she had lived them, to triumph with the angels and saints in the eternal splendor of the Divine Will.

March 7 - For four days her mortal remains were exposed for the veneration of an immense throng of the faithful who went to her house to have a last look at Luisa the Saint, so dear to their hearts. The funeral was a realm triumph; Luisa passed like a queen, borne aloft on shoulders among the lines of people. All the clergy, secular and religious, accompanied Luisa's body. The funeral liturgy took place in the main church with the participation of the entire chapter. In the afternoon, Luisa was buried in the family Chapel of the Calvi family.

Jul 3, 1963 - Her mortal remains were definitively laid to rest in Santa Maria Greca.

Nov 20, - Feast of Christ the King: Archbishop Cassati officially opened the

November 20, 1994 - Feast of Christ the King: Archbishop Carmelo Cassati officially opened the Beatification Cause of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta in the principal church of Corato, in the presence of a huge crowd of people, locals and foreigners.

2005 - Archbishop Giovanni Battista Picchierri, current Archbishop of Trani. It is he who requested that the Cause of Beatification of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta be continued.

ARCHDIOCESE

Trani - Barletta - Bisceglie – Nazareth

70059 TRANI - VIA BELTRANI, 9 - TEL.0883-583498

Trani, June 4, 2005

COMUNIQUE

The “Divine Will” has guided the Archdiocese, in this last decade, for the completion of the works regarding the process of the Cause of Beatification of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta. The Diocesan Postulation announces having completed this journey. It communicates that on the days of the 27th, 28th, and 29th of October 2005 it will celebrate the 2nd International Congress with the conclusion of the diocesan process.

The Pious Association Luisa Piccarreta Little Children of the Divine Will*, in Corato, has been charged with performing the job of Secretary for the celebration and welcome of guests. Later the program of the celebration will be published in a definitive way.

May Jesus Christ present in the Eucharist guide us as He has guided His Servant Luisa.

The Vicar General
(His Grace Mons. Savino Giannotti)

* Pious Association Luisa Piccarreta Little Children of the Divine Will
Referent: Sister Assunta Marigliano
70033 Corato (BA) – Via Nazario Sauro, 27 – Tel. +39.080.8982221
www.luisalasant.com - e-mail : pia.ass.luisalasant@libero.it

***Come Holy Spirit, Come Supreme Will,
down to reign in Your Kingdom on earth
and in our hearts!***

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