



The Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will



"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs." *Luke 18:16-17*

"Ice and Snow, Bless the Lord..."

Most religious communities plan their spiritual retreats. The time, the place, the talks...all details usually organized ahead of time. Not the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will. Like a loving Father, the Lord loves to surprise His little children when they least expect it...and surprise us He did! After spending five weeks in the United States visiting family and friends for Christmas and trying to obtain Italian religious visas, we arrived back in Rome on the very day that record-breaking snow began to hit Italy.

About one hour into our five hour drive north to Talamello, we spoke with a few friends back in our small town who suggested waiting out the blizzard before returning. The roads were very dangerous and almost impossible to pass. As we tried to figure out what to do, the Holy Spirit got right to work on our docile foundress. Mother Gabrielle Marie suggested a detour to the small southern Italian town of Corato for a little class trip to the home of Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta – one of our community's spiritual mothers and patrons.

The Divine Travel Agent turned our little detour into a four day retreat with three excursions through San Giovanni Rotondo, Corato, and Loreto. Saint Padre Pio hosted us first after some directional difficulties led our FIAT to his monastery at San Giovanni Rotondo. Arriving on the evening of the Feast of the Presentation, we attended mass and Mother Gabrielle Marie presented our new postulant, Jeanna Desideri, to the Lord in front of the tomb of Padre Pio in a spontaneous, yet intimate

entrance ceremony.

Continuing in Holy Family fashion, we needed a place to stay for the night. However, before beginning our search, we found the home of Adriana Pallotti – spiritual daughter of Padre Pio and founder of the *House of Prayer for the Kingdom of the Divine Will* in San Giovanni Rotondo. Too tempting to resist, we rang the doorbell and were greeted by a beautiful woman in her 90's radiating with Divine Love. After briefly telling her about our new little community and describing some of our travel adventures, Miss Pallotti immediately invited us to stay at her house for the night. Surrounded by images of Jesus, Our Lady, Padre Pio, and Luisa, we listened to Adriana talk about the deep friendship between Luisa Piccarreta and Padre Pio as well as the necessity of living in God's Most Holy and Divine Will at every moment. She stressed the death of our own human wills – the constant "I, I, I" – in order to do God's Will.

Adriana learned about Luisa and her writings on the Divine Will through Padre Pio and one of his spiritual sons from Germany, Federico Abresch. Padre Pio urged Abresch to continue visiting Luisa and to copy her diary entries. Adriana studied and learned how to live the Divine Will spirituality under the instruction of Padre Pio and by attending Divine Will cenacles held by Abresch. By the request and encouragement of Padre Pio, Adriana opened the Divine Will House of Prayer, continuing to spread Jesus' teachings to Luisa. Needless to say, Our Lord could not have chosen a more perfect place for the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will to begin their retreat.

But this was just a taste of the graces and surprises yet to come! Waking up to more snow, we decided to attend an early mass and head towards Corato before the weather grew worse. On our way out, a Padre Pio devotee and



Our buried FIAT



Adriana Pallotti, spiritual daughter of Padre Pio

close friend of the Capuchin community at San Giovanni Rotondo offered us a private tour of the usually crowded shrine (which was almost empty of tourists due to the snow). We sat in Padre Pio's place in the refectory, knelt in the chapel where he celebrated Holy Mass during the years of his persecution, explored the bedroom where he died, and prayed before the crucifix where he received the Stigmata while – according to Adriana Pallotti – he was reading *The 24 Hours of Our Lord's Passion* by Luisa! Our Lord and Our Lady were really showing off to their daughters now!



Santa Maria delle Grazie, San Giovanni Rotondo

teachings...where she learned to do God's Will *on earth as it is in Heaven*. A powerful experience for Daughters of Divine Will.

Armed with unimaginable graces, we set out from Corato and tried to make our way back home. Less than two hours away from Talamello, with the snow continuing to grow worse, we realized our retreat must not be over yet. With little hope of reaching our physical home that night, our community unanimously decided



Bedroom where Padre Pio died.

Taking the spirit of Padre Pio with us, we piled back into the car and drove the last stretch to Corato. First we visited with Fr. Bernardino Bucci, a close friend of Mother



Trading places with Padre Pio in the refectory.

Gabrielle Marie and the only living priest who personally knew Luisa. He spoke of his Aunt Rosaria, a close friend and caretaker of Luisa, as well as his own personal memories of the Servant of God. Fr. Bucci also supplied us with several books he

wrote about Luisa and even showed us *Torre Disperata*, a large farm where she

spent her childhood summers and frequently had mystical experiences of Our Lord. He truly blessed us with his first-hand account of our community's patroness.

Next stop...Santa Maria Greca, home parish of Luisa Piccarreta. Heaven's perfect timing continued as we arrived just in time to visit Luisa's tomb, pray at a Eucharistic Holy Hour, and attend evening Mass. The next morning we received the great gift to visit her home and pray before the bed where Luisa remained confined for 64



Private chapel where Padre Pio celebrated mass during the years of his persecution.

years...where she suffered Our Lord's Passion...where she lived solely on the Eucharist... where she wrote down volumes and volumes of Our Lord's

house...the Holy House that is. As God would have it, we were only minutes away from the Shrine of Our Lady of Loreto - a cathedral containing an authentic part of the Holy House of Nazareth...the same home where Our Lady grew up and the Holy Family lived together. Divine Providence, working through the generosity of a close friend to the community, provided us with a free place to stay for the evening as we waited out the storm. The following day, the Benedictine Daughters spent their entire Sunday morning at mass and



Benedictine Daughters outside the bedroom of Luisa Piccarreta.

in silent prayer in the Holy House... the physical home

that embodies the heart of our community. Only the Lord could have organized such a perfect ending to our "little" retreat!

Despite the almost six feet of snow that had fallen, we finally made it back home to Talamello that evening filled with such amazement at what great things the Almighty had done for his lowly servants. There are no limits to what God can do when we just let go of our will and embrace His!



Luisa's tomb, Church of Santa Maria Greca

So...who is this Luisa Piccarreta?



Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta (1865-1947) was a mystic from Southern Italy who Our Lord chose to be the “Little Daughter and Secretary” of His Divine Will. From a very young age, Luisa already had a deep love for God. Seeing her sincere desire to suffer anything for Him, Our Lord

asked Luisa to sacrifice herself as a victim for the salvation of sinners, in reparation for all offenses committed against the Most Holy Trinity, and to protect the world from the chastisements of Divine Justice.

For sixty-four years, Luisa remained in bed without eating, sleeping, or drinking...sustained solely by the Eucharist. Each night Jesus would place Luisa's body in a rigid, almost corpse-like state while mystically bringing her soul all throughout Heaven and earth. He would show her the souls she suffered for and the calamities her own pains minimized or even prevented. However, Jesus accomplished His greatest work in this humble soul through an abundance of lessons on His Most Holy and Divine Will.

Through frequent mystical encounters, Our Lord taught Luisa not just how to *do* His Will, but how to *live* in His Will. From the smallest to the greatest of actions, Jesus told her to call upon the Divine Will and allow Him to do everything in her...*everything*. Luisa was to unite her own will to God's Will in each breath, thought, word, and act in order to repair for all disobedient human acts throughout history and to give the Eternal Father all the glory He deserves. In the name of every soul and *for* every soul, Luisa reciprocated all of the Love that God continuously showers on humanity. She offered constant praise and thanksgiving to the Eternal Father for all the gifts of Creation and for every gift expressing God's love to His children. Luisa gave to God everything that fallen humanity fails to give its Creator.

Under the obedience of her confessor, Luisa filled thirty-six volumes with these teachings from Our Lord. Saint Annibale Di Francia, another of Luisa's confessors for seventeen years, placed his *Nihil Obstat* (a declaration stating that a text contains nothing contrary to faith or morals) on the first nineteen volumes before his death. He also printed and zealously promoted another of Luisa's books containing meditations on the twenty-four hours of Our Lord's Pas-

sion. When St. Annibale read excerpts from *The 24 Hours of Our Lord's Passion* to St. Pius X, the Pope said such a profound book should be read on one's knees.

On the Feast of Christ the King in 1994, the Church officially made Luisa Piccarreta a Servant of God when the Archbishop of Trani, Mons. Carmelo Cassati, blessed the opening of her Cause of Beatification and Canonization in the Mother Church of Corato. The conclusion of the Diocesan Phase of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization was celebrated on October 29, 2005 and transferred to the Vatican.

Though little Luisa still remains quite hidden, her Divine Will writings are becoming increasingly more popular throughout the Catholic world. Souls are simply thirsting to receive the gift they were created for...to know, love, and serve the Lord completely immersed in His Holy and Divine Will.



Bedroom of Luisa Piccarreta

Want to learn more about Luisa? Check out the following websites...

www.luisapiccarreta.co

www.divinewill.org

Are you looking to grow closer to Our Lord this Lent? Jesus tells Luisa,

“The thought of My Passion never escaped My dear Mama, and by dint of repeating it, she filled all of Her-self with Me. The same happens to a soul: by dint of repeating what I suffered, she arrives at filling all of her-self with me.”

To read the 24 Hours of Our Lord's Passion, go to...

www.hoursofthepassion.org



Deo Gratias

God never fails to provide for all of our needs! In addition to incredible snow accumulations, the Lord had another surprise waiting for us at home – a priest. During our time in the United States, a Diocesan priest working on his doctorate degree moved into our building. Not only can we attend mass in our own private chapel now, but our new neighbor shares our love for the Extraordinary Rite Mass (also known as the Traditional Latin or Tridentine Mass)!

Without a priest in residence, daily mass would have been impossible during the second blizzard that dropped even more feet of snow onto our town and kept us homebound for several days. Plus, with Jesus available in the tabernacle and a brand new monstrance donated by a generous American priest, we have also been able to hold Eucharistic Adoration for eight hours each day in our own chapel. Though not able to walk past our front door for almost a week, the Lord made sure His daughters were well fed...both physically and spiritually. *“Do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not worry anymore...your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek His Kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides. Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the Kingdom.”* (Luke 12:29-32)



Daily celebration of the Extraordinary Rite Mass in our chapel



We hope to open our chapel to the public and spread devotion to Eucharistic Adoration among the community. Please pray that the word spreads and many of the local people take advantage of this precious opportunity to adore our Eucharistic Lord.

If you feel the Lord calling you to make a tax-deductible donation, checks or money orders can be sent to the following address:

The Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will
PO Box 1002
Hanceville, AL 35077

OR donate online at our NEW website below!

Wanna see more of the Benedictine Daughters?

- Check out our latest videos on YouTube.com. Type in the keyword **“Divinewilldaughters”** and click on the link for our channel.
- Come visit us at our NEW website...

www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org



Ora et Labora

Living in Divine Will can be very exciting...when one is flexible and totally abandoned to God's plans, of course! The Lord really seems to love finding fun and unusual new ways to free us of our own wills and trust in His! However, in His Infinite Wisdom, our Spouse also knows we must learn to live in His Will in the ordinary before He can trust us to accomplish the extraordinary. Like the Holy Family in the House of Nazareth, we believe living together in love while humbly doing the "little things" the Lord asks of us each day is the surest way to glorify our Eternal Father. So, when the Benedictine Daughters are not outrunning snowstorms, we try to keep a daily monastic schedule of prayer and work. Take a look at a day in the life of a Benedictine Daughter...



- 6:15 am** Rise
- 6:45 am** Breakfast
- 7:15 am** Divine Office: *Office of Readings and Morning Prayer*
- 8:00 am** Mass
- 8:30 am** Eucharistic Adoration begins (Jesus remains exposed until 1:00pm)*
- 12:00 pm** Spiritual Reading
- 12:30 pm** Divine Office: *Midmorning, Midday, Midafternoon Prayer*
- 1:00 pm** Lunch
- 2:00 pm** Eucharistic Adoration resumes (Jesus remains exposed until 6:20pm)*
- 1:30-2:30 pm** Free time
- 3:00 pm** Divine Mercy Chaplet
- 6:00 pm** Divine Office: *Vespers*
- 6:20 pm** Dinner
- 7:00 pm** Recreation
- 8:00 pm** Night Prayer and Rosary
- 10:30 pm** Lights Out

* Each sister adores Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament for one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. She spends her remaining time working at her assigned duties.



**Postulant, Sister
Jeanna, in the kitchen**



Do you think the Lord may be calling you to the religious life?

Does our life seem like a perfect fit for you?

Please contact us via email at...

daughtersofdivinewill@gmail.com

if you are interested in exploring a possible religious vocation with The Benedictine Daughters of *Divine Will*.