***Monthly Spiritual Message***

**July 2024**

**CLOSE TO HIS HEART**

**Saint Veronica Giuliani**

Capuchin Poor Clare

*(December 27, 1660 – July 9, 1727)*

Saint Veronica Giuliani was born on December 27th in the town of Mercatello, near Urbino, in the Region of the Marches of Italy. It was the Feast of Saint John the Evangelist.

Veronica was the daughter of Francisco Giuliani and Teresa Mancini. She was the last of seven sisters, of whom two died while still babies. Three of her sisters became Poor Clare nuns in Mercatello, Veronica became a Capuchin Poor Clare in Città di Castello, and one sister remained in the world.

Prodigious mystical events occurred around Veronica, indicating an extraordinary capacity to cooperate with the graces God bestowed on her. The spiritual education of the girl by her mother, a woman of deep Christian sensitivity, was not ordinary. When she died, their mother left her daughters a mystical inheritance: the wounds of the Lord, one for each one. Veronica, barely four years old, got the one on the side of Christ, the one closest to Jesus' heart.

At the age of seventeen, precisely when the world was offering itself to her with all its ardent flattery, the youngest of the Giuliani sisters left her comfortable home and her free life and entered among the Poor Clares of the Capuchin convent of Città di Castello.

There, hidden among the impoverished daughters of Saint Clare, she prepared to sanctify herself in silence and humility. Enclosed within the walls of the cloister, the young woman showed signs of an exceptional and deep mystical relationship with the crucified Jesus.

She visibly began to manifest his sufferings. Her forehead was wounded by an invisible crown of thorns; on Good Friday, she was pierced by the wounds in his hands, feet, and side.

Faced with these extraordinary signs appearing in her life, her Superiors, out of understandable prudence, kept Veronica in total seclusion, suspecting that they could be forms of ostentation or diabolical machinations.

They prohibited her from contacting the outside world and invited her to obey her Superior obediently, because humility is the grounding virtue of holiness.

Upon learning about the case, the Holy Office suspended Eucharistic communion and isolated her even from the rest of the community.

All this was accepted by her humbly as a sign of divine predilection. Aware of the mystical disturbances stirring in his penitent, her confessor imposed on Veronica the task of strictly keeping a spiritual diary.

Thus, daily, for over thirty years, this Poor Clare meticulously wrote in that diary all her sufferings and her joys, prayers, and dejections. Forty-four thick volumes were formed of those pages written without artifice, and the confessor forbade her from rereading them. Even today, the pages written by Veronica Giuliani are among Italy's most beautiful mystical works of literature.

*“Today, the pain in my hands, feet and heart was renewed,*

*and I spent a beautiful night,*

*all of it full of pain and torment.*

*Thank God.*

*…This morning, I made holy Confession,*

*and I believe it has strengthened me to suffer more.”*

(From the autobiographical “Diary.”)

Equally interesting are the testimonies that have come down to us about her life and her attitudes towards the other Sisters.

She spent her life in prayer and contemplation, resolving to conform herself more to Christ Crucified. Because of her love for the mystery of the Cross, she ultimately had the permanent gift of the Stigmata.

Despite all this, in the monastery, she accomplished all the professions: cook, butcher, cloakroom, nurse, turner, baker, and novice teacher for thirty-three years until her death, and abbess for eleven years.

The heroic nature of her virtues surpassed all suspicions and sinister machinations against her.

Uniting her inner martyrdom to that of Christ, she suffered a stroke on June 6th and passed from this life to the heavenly homeland on July 9th, 1727. She was 67 years old. Her body rests in the Monastery chapel of the Capuchin Poor Clares in the town of Città di Castello, which is about 56 km from the city of Perugia and 68 km from Assisi.

Her Feast Day is July 10th .

Fr John Cooper OFM Cap

National Spiritual Assistant OFS - Australia