

SISTER MARIA TERESA OF JESUS
IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

(Caterina Quaranta)
(1883-1954)



Caterina Quaranta was born in Lagnasco (Cuneo) on March 8, 1883. Her parents were Giovanni Battista Quaranta and Maria Maddalena Mellano. She came from a peasant family: nine children. It was an excellent milieu in which to grow in faith. Catherine's youthful crises – something we all encounter – increased her desire to give herself totally to God. At the age of fifteen she made a private vow of chastity which she renewed each month.

She hoped to enter a religious congregation and in 1899 was accepted by the Salesian Sisters in Nizza Monferrato. Given her youth she remained as a boarding student who would become a postulant one day. She was struck down by a serious illness and her dreams of becoming a Salesian came to nothing; she was obliged to return to her family.

Subsequent improvement in her health rekindled her hopes of religious life. Between 1905 and 1909 she sought admission at various convents: the Salesians, the Visitation Sisters in Turin and even the Parma Carmel where her sister was a nun.

In the meantime she worked in the apostolate in her home parish. With the pastor's agreement she organized in 1909 the Pious Union of the Daughters of Mary. She was unanimously elected and remained the leader of this group until she became a cloistered nun on December 31, 1927. The Servite nuns of Montecchio Emilia (Reggio Emilia) accepted her as a candidate in spite of her precarious health.

On May 10, 1928, Caterina Quaranta was clothed with the Servite habit and given the religious name, Sister Maria Teresa of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. She suffered her usual physical discomfort during her year of novitiate but gave no external sign of her suffering: she was a model novice.

At the end of her canonical year of novitiate she made her temporary profession on May 21, 1929 and became a full fledged cloistered nun. She didn't leave the novitiate, though, since the sisters appointed her mistress of the many postulants the Lord was sending to this monastery. When Sister Teresa entered the convent there were only seven nuns; by the time she died there were twenty-four!

Beginning in 1931 Sister Mary Teresa's monastic life was spent in her sick bed. This continued until her death on January 23, 1954. We would recall the circumstances of her solemn profession. The ceremony was held in the chapel behind the grate on May 21, 1932; Sister Teresa was carried in on a stretcher – almost a throne on which the queen, Sister Mary Teresa, encountered her Divine Spouse.

Word of the indomitable example of strength with which Sister Teresa accepted her sufferings and her singular goodness came to be known outside the walls of her convent and excited admiration in all.

Her funeral put an end to her suffering. She would often tell Father Benedetto M. Marconi, confessor to the community, that "Jesus loves me; He has given me what I asked for when I made the vow to be a victim soul."

The diocesan informational process began on September 8, 1967 and concluded on November 21, 1970. The proceedings were sent to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints in Rome. The Congregation's work in Rome began on November 21, 1971 exactly one year later. Continuation of the Cause requires further archival research.