

SISTER MARIA TERESA VERONESI
(1870-1950)



Teresa Veronesi was born in Bologna on September 28, 1870. Her parents were Giuseppe Veronesi and Clementina Scarani. Her family were farmers – well off but not rich. They were high minded and respectable and excellent milieu in which to bring up a young girl.

Teresa was very lively and intelligent. She very much embarrassed her parents and her uncle, a priest, when she expressed her desire to become a nun and a teacher. Nonetheless they did not oppose her and in July 1887 she entered the Congregation of the Little Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows (*Minime dell'Addolorata*) in Budrie. She had come to know these sisters in 1882 in the neighboring parish of Riolo where they had opened a kindergarten.

She was clothed in the religious habit in 1888 and in 1890 went to Castelfranco Emilia. She later returned to Budrie, completed her studies and was awarded an elementary school

teaching certificate.

From April 7, 1897 (the day of her profession) until 1899 she remained in Budrie under the direction of the parish priest, Don Gaetano Guidi, a genuinely holy man.

On October 3, 1899, at the age of 29 she was sent to open a new house in Bentivoglio of which she would be superior. This new community would include a kindergarten and a work school. Fully clothed she threw herself into a fast moving river to save a drowning child. For this the local authorities awarded her the Civic Courage Medal. The event is written up in the town records.

This kind of generosity was characteristic of her personality. It was displayed in subsequent assignments at Cinquanta, San Ruffillo di Bologna but especially at Sant'Agata Bolognese. She was sent to Sant'Agata in 1908 to be the superior and to oversee the Trobelli-Magnavacca nursery school. She remained in this community for forty-one years – until her death.

It is difficult to describe this exuberant nun's activities in a few words. Besides the nursery school she set up a workshop to teach young women useful occupations. While living at Sant'Agata Bolognese she experienced the horrors of two world wars. Her smiling face and winning ways inspired confidence in men and women who came to her for comfort in their suffering and advice in the many problems that beset their families. Each child in the nursery school brought his family with him and in Sister Teresa's heart they became a single entity. When young people doing their military service came home on furloughs they always went to see her before visiting their families. She was everyone's mother! During the Second World War she was forced to lodge *Wehrmacht* soldiers on the first floor. She assisted these German soldiers while at the same time secretly giving assistance to partisans fighting in the resistance. Because of war damage the Archdiocesan Seminary was closed and a legally established seminary opened in Sant'Agata. Fourteen of the seminarians who studied there were ordained to the priesthood. Her prayers and sufferings bore so much apostolic fruit! She even harassed by the Devil himself.

A diocesan inquest was launched in Bologna on February 19, 2000 and concluded on April 6, 2003. The Congregation for the Causes of the Saints issued a decree of validity on November 5, 2004 and at present we are preparing the *Positio super virtutibus*.