

Bl. Liduina Meneguzzi
(Italy/Ethiopia) 1901-1941

*Housekeeper, sacristan, nurse and big sister
to the girls at Santa Croce boarding school.
Nurse in the Parini Civil Hospital in Ethiopia, caring for
civilians and then injured soldiers in World War II*



Elisa Angela Meneguzzi (Sister Liduina) was born on September 12, 1901, in Giarre, near Abano Terme, Padua, Italy, to a poor farm family who was rich in faith. She was the second of eight children. She began each day with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and praying the Rosary, even though she had to walk two kilometers to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. She frequented and later taught catechism. She shared the faith with her brothers and sisters and, in the evening, prayed with her family.

At age 14, she assisted in supporting her family by working for some well-off families and in some hotels in Abano which had a well-known thermal resort. She was loved by many who appreciated her mild and willing personality. Her father died in 1923 when she was 22 years old, at which time she increased the hours she worked at the

Hotel du Torri in Abano to help support the family.

In 1917, she had met the Sisters of St. Francis de Sales who began teaching in the local kindergarten and elementary school in Abano. Called to religious life, she joined the Sisters of the Congregation of Saint Francis de Sales on March 5, 1926, taking the name Sister Liduina. She professed her final vows on September 8, 1929.

Sister Liduina worked for 11 years at Santa Croce boarding school in charge of linen, as a sacristan, nurse and among the girls who considered her as a good friend. She was an exceptional listener and she assisted them in resolving their concerns, imparting wise advice.

On July 16, 1937, her dream to work in the missions was realized when she was assigned to the public hospital “Giacinto Parini” in Dire-Dawa, Ethiopia. Fifteen sisters accompanied her from Italy.² Here she remained for the last four years of her life. She worked as a nurse in the Parini Civil Hospital which, after the outbreak of World War II, became a military hospital. Thus she cared for both civilian patients and injured soldiers. When the city was bombed, she worked in the streets, carrying the wounded to shelter, baptizing the dying children and leading dying Christians through acts of contrition. Shouts rang out on the street and in the hospital, “Help, Sister Liduina!” She rushed to help, seeing the image of Christ in her suffering brother.³ The natives called her “Sister Gudda” (Great).

She worked caring for people of many backgrounds, races and religions including Catholic, Copts, Muslims and native pagans. Her work gave her a chance to speak to them about the faith, and she would tell any who would listen about the goodness of God the Father. She led many to convert, and she became known as the “ecumenical flame.”⁴

Sister Liduina died at age 40 on December 2, 1941, in Dire-Dawa, Ethiopia, from an abdominal tumor. She underwent a delicate surgical operation which initially seemed to go well but left her intestines paralyzed. She accepted her illness patiently. Upon her death, she abandoned herself to God’s will, offering her life for peace in the world. One doctor commented, “I’ve never seen someone dying with such joy and bliss.”

She was initially buried in the military cemetery at the insistence of an injured soldier. Twenty years later, in July 1961, her remains were reinterred at the motherhouse of the Sisters of the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales in Padua, Italy.

Blessed Liduina Meneguzzi was declared venerable with the promulgation of the decree of heroic virtue on June 25, 1996, and beatified on October 20, 2002,⁵ both by Pope St. John Paul II. (Memorial - December 1).

References:

- 1) "Blessed Liduina Meneguzzi". CatholicSaints.Info. 12 November 2021. Web. 8 December 2021. <<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-liduina-meneguzzi/>>
- 2) EWTN. (20 Oct 2002). Biographies of New Blesseds - 2002. Bl. Liduina Meneguzzi (1901-1941). Accessed 13 April 2022. <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/biographies-of-new-saints-5251>
- 3) Sr. Liduina Meneguzzi (1901-1941). Accessed 12 April 2022. https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20021020_meneguzzi_en.html
- 4) Angelus (2 Dec 2021). Saint of the day: Blessed Liduina Meneguzzi. Accessed April 13, 2022. <https://angelusnews.com/faith/saint-of-the-day/blessed-liduina-meneguzzi/>
- 5) Hagiography Circle: An Online Resource on Contemporary Hagiography. 1941. 24) Elisa Angela Meneguzzi (Liduina). Accessed 12 April 2022. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/year/1941.htm>

Note: This biography is particularly for nursing students and nurses desiring to grow in holiness and follow His Holiness Pope Pius XI words to first and foremost bring the Christian supernatural, Christ to our patients. I hope the biographies and references will help you with your Nursing History courses. Source: Diana L. Ruzicka (2022). *The Book of Nurse Saints*. Available at www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka