

**St. Agostina Livia Pietrantoni (Italy) (1864-1894)**

*Nurse at the Holy Spirit Hospital near the Vatican in Rome.*

*Joined Sisters of Charity and worked with the critically ill.*

*Contracted typhus, malaria and tuberculosis.*

*Stabbed to death during a rape attempt by a patient and died praying for his forgiveness.<sup>3</sup>*



**Livia Pietrantoni** was born on March 27, 1864, in Pozzaglia Sabina, a small town between Rieti, Orvinio, and Tivoli. Known as Livia, she was the second of eleven children born to Francesco Pietrantoni and Caterina Costantini. Her parents were hardworking, religious farmers. She was influenced by the wisdom of her grandfather, Domenico, in a household where everyone took care to do well and prayed often.”<sup>1</sup>

She was baptized soon after birth, received the sacrament of confirmation at age 4 and made her First Holy Communion around age 12. Being the second eldest, she helped care for her brothers and sisters. She also worked in the field and cared for the animals. She irregularly attended school but managed to learn to such an extent that the other students gave her the title, “professor.”

When she was seven she was employed, along with other children, transporting buckets of gravel and sand for the construction of the Orvinio-Poggio Moiano Road. At twelve she traveled to Tivoli to work with other girls in the olive harvest. She took moral and religious responsibility for her younger companions and stood up against some overbearing and unscrupulous persons.

Feeling the call to religious life, Livia traveled to Rome with her uncle but was refused admission. A few months later Mother Giuseppina Bocquin, the Superior General of the Sisters of Charity of St. Jeanne (Giovanna) Antide Thouret, notified her of her acceptance at the Provincial House at Via S. Maria in Cosmedin.

At the age of 22, Livia became a postulant on March 23, 1886. She entered the novitiate and was given the name Sister Agostina after the illustrious St. Augustine.

Her first assignment was to work at Holy Spirit Hospital which had served the sick for seven hundred years. Saints who preceded her working there included St. Charles Borromeo, Giuseppe Calasanzio, John Bosco, Camillus de Lellis and others.

Unfortunately at this time, the hospital has been secularized and was even hostile to religion. The Capuchins were forced to leave, and crucifixes and other religious articles were removed and banned. The sisters would have been expelled also but the Romans feared repercussions. The sisters were forbidden to speak of God. “Sister Agostina, however, did not need a mouth to “cry out to God,” and no gag could prevent her life from proclaiming the Gospel!”

Working on the pediatric and later the tuberculosis ward, she showed total dedication to the care of the patient. She contracted tuberculosis and was miraculously cured. During the anti-religion fervor, Sister Agostina found a secret corner in which to place a small statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom she prayed for graces and for conversions, especially for the obstinate Romanelli.

Romanelli was difficult, violent and obscene which caused Sister Agostina to multiply her kindness to both him and his blind mother who came to visit. Romanelli annoyed everyone and was subsequently expelled from the hospital by the Director after he pulled a stunt against the women of the laundry. In his anger he threatened to kill Sister Agostina. She was killed by Romanelli on November 13, 1894, her lips uttered nothing but invocations to the Virgin Mary and words of forgiveness.

Sister Agostina Pietrantonio was beatified on November 12, 1972, by Pope Paul VI and canonized on April 18, 1999, by Pope St. John Paul II at St. Peter's Basilica.<sup>1</sup> (Memorial - November 13).

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#### References:

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<http://www.causesanti.va/it/santi-e-beati/agostina-livia-pietrantonio.html>. Accessed 16 May 2022.
- 2) Hagiography Circle: An Online Resource on Contemporary Hagiography. Canonizations after 1558 (4). Accessed 19 April 2022. [http://newsaints.faithweb.com/CCS\\_Saints4.htm](http://newsaints.faithweb.com/CCS_Saints4.htm)
- 3) "Saint Agostina Pietrantonio". CatholicSaints.Info. 11 May 2020. Web. 8 December 2021.  
<<https://catholicsaints.info/saint-agostina-pietrantonio/>>
- 4) Vatican News Service. Agostina Livia Pietrantonio (1864-1894), virgin, Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Jeanne-Antide Thouret.  
[http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/saints/ns\\_lit\\_doc\\_19990418\\_pietrantonio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_19990418_pietrantonio_en.html). Accessed 31 May 2022.

Note: This biography is for all desiring to grow in holiness and follow His Holiness Pope Pius XI address to 2000 nurses assembled at Castel Gondolfo on August 27, 1935 for the II World Congress of Catholic Nurses ([www.ciciams.org](http://www.ciciams.org) / [www.nacn-usa.org](http://www.nacn-usa.org)): *to first and foremost bring the Christian supernatural, Christ to our patients, bring salvation to souls*. May it also help nursing students with your Nursing History course. Source: Diana L. Ruzicka (2022). *The Book of Nurse Saints*. Available at [www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka)