

St. Maria Domenica Mantovani
(Italy) 1862-1934

*As a young girl, visited and assisted the poor and sick.
Co-founder, Institute of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family.
Served the poor and needy, provided religious instruction,
assisted sick and elderly in their homes,
worked with children in nursery schools.*



Maria Domenica Mantovani was born on November 12, 1862, in Castelletto di Brenzone (VR), Italy to Giovanni Battista Mantovani and Prudenza Zamperini. She was the eldest of four children. She was confirmed on October 12, 1870, and received her First Holy Communion on November 4, 1874.

She was unable to complete primary school due to the poverty of her family but she had good common sense. She also had an active prayer life.

When Maria Domenica was 15 years old, Blessed Giuseppe Nascimbeni entered Castelletto, first as a teacher and cooperator (1877-1885) and later as the parish priest (1885-1922). He served as her spiritual director, and they collaborated in many church activities. She taught catechism to the children and visited and assisted the poor and sick. She enrolled in the Daughters of Mary and served as a roll model for her companions.

On December 8, 1886, at the age of 24, she made a vow of perpetual virginity to her spiritual director and parish priest, Fr. Nascimbeni. She had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus and the Holy Family. She had a great intimacy with Jesus, and the contemplation of the Holy Family gave her great strength.

Together with Blessed Fr. Nascimbeni, she collaborated to found the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family to serve in humility of life for love of Christ the poor, orphans and the sick. On November 6, 1892, at the age of 30, she became the congregation's first Superior General. The constitution of the order was based upon the rule of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis.

Upon the death of Blessed Father Nascimbeni, on January 21, 1922, Blessed Maria Domenica continued to lead the Institute. At that time, there were approximately 1200 sisters in 150 branch houses in Italy and abroad.

Mother Maria Domenica Mantovani died on February 2, 1934, after a few days of illness. Mother Maria Domenica was declared venerable with the promulgation of the decree of heroic virtue on April 24, 2001, and beatified on April 27, 2003, both by Pope St. John Paul II. She was canonized on May 15, 2022,² by Pope Francis. (Memorial - February 2)

Miracle #1 - The first miracle required for her beatification was the miraculous instantaneous cure of an infant who suffered severe brain injury and was in a coma after she fell from a bed the day after her birth. One of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family, a nurse at the hospital touched a medal-relic of Mother Mantovani to the child's head who instantly shook and was healed in a very short time with no sequella. This miracle occurred in the Italian hospital of Bahia Blanca in Argentina.

Miracle #2 - The second miracle required for her canonization occurred in 2011. A twelve year old girl who had been born with a myelomeningocele and paraplegic lower limbs was rushed to “Privado del Sur” hospital in Bahia Blanca for severe “Reynaud Syndrome,” which affected her lower limbs. During arteriography, she suffered convulsions, cardiac arrest, and respiratory failure. She subsequently developed a lung and urinary tract infection from pseudomonas. The attending physician who had witness the first miracle, invoked the intercession of Mother Maria Domenica. The mother and relatives joined in prayer. The parents of the sick child were given an image with a relic of Venerable Maria Domenica. The relic was applied to the young girl on June 10, 2011, and she began to improve and was extubated on June 12, 2011. In a short time, with rehabilitation, she returned to a normal life.

References:

- 1) Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi. Accessed 30 May 2022. <http://www.causesanti.va/it/santi-e-beati/maria-domenica-mantovani.html>
- 2) Hagiography Circle: 1934. Domenica Mantovani. Accessed 17 June 2022. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/year/1934.htm>

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 / 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