

St. Vincenza Gerosa

(Italy) 1784-1847

Practiced charitable works especially nursing the sick

Founded a hospital

Founded the Sisters of Charity of Lovere with St. Bartolomea Capitanio



Caterina Gerosa was born October 29, 1784, to a well-off Italian family in Lovere, Bergamo, Italy. When she was seventeen, her father died, and she saw her uncles push her mother out of the family home. During this time of interior suffering, she began to practice charitable works, especially nursing the sick.

Caterina Gerosa lost her family in rapid succession and was left alone to manage the family business. She used her family's money to provide charitable activities to the community. Caterina became involved with her parish Church, organizing the women's oratory at meetings and retreats, and established a practical school to teach poor girls the domestic work of the community to improve their station of life. In one of these meetings, Caterina met 16 year old Bartolomea Capitanio. Bartolomea had suffered under an alcoholic father before being sent to a convent school. She had since made a perpetual vow of chastity and begun a school for poor girls. Together they embarked on a new mission to start a hospital to care for those who could not afford medical care.

After doing so, they decided to expand their mission to establish a special religious institution with the goals of providing assistance to the sick, free education for girls, Christian orphanages, and programs designed to promote goodness of youth. To accomplish this mission, they together founded the Sisters of Charity of Saints Bartolomea Capitanio and Vincenza Gerosa (SCCG) in 1824. Together they consecrated themselves to God in a simple ceremony on November 21, 1832, in the presence of Fr. Rusticiano and Fr. Angelo Bosio at the altar of the parish church of St. George at Casa Gaia. Thus began the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Lovere. Bartolomea Capitanio was 26 and Caterina was 48.

They were God's merciful witnesses in the area of nursing and education. Bartolomea composed a rule based "on the rules and example left to us by our Redeemer." Only six months later, Bartolomea fell gravely ill of tuberculosis and died on July 26, 1833. Caterina assumed the work of building and spreading the charism of the order. Caterina was elected Mother Superior and went on to serve as Sister Vincenza, taking her name after St. Vincent. She introduced charitable service in prisons and went on to build hospitals for the needy.¹

The Order of the Sisters of Charity of Lovere was approved by His Holiness Pope Gregory XVI in 1840 and quickly spread throughout Italy and later to India and other countries. Vincenza oversaw the order until her death in 1847. The Order is known today as "The Institute of the Sisters of Charity of Saints Bartolomea Capitanio and Vincenza Gerosa (SCCG) and also the Sisters of Maria Bambina.

Vincenza died on June 29 1847, after a long illness and was succeeded by Sister Crocifissa Rivellini. She was declared venerable with the promulgation of the decree on heroic virtue on July 24, 1927, and beatified on May 7, 1933, both by His Holiness Pope Pius XI. She was canonized on May 18, 1950,³ by Venerable Pope Pius XII. (Memorial - June 28).

*He who has not learned what the crucifix means knows nothing,
and he who knows His crucifix has nothing more to learn.*

References:

- 1) Sisters of Charity of Saints Bartolomea Capitanio and Vincenza Gerosa (Sccg). Accessed 29 January 2022. [https://newsventure.org/en/Sisters_of_Charity_of_Saints_Bartolomea_Capitanio_and_Vincenza_Gerosa_\(SCCG\)-4026648824](https://newsventure.org/en/Sisters_of_Charity_of_Saints_Bartolomea_Capitanio_and_Vincenza_Gerosa_(SCCG)-4026648824)
- 2) Dicastero delle Cause dei Santi. Vincenza Gerosa (1784-1847). <http://www.causesanti.va/it/santi-e-beati/vincenza-gerosa.html>. Accessed 17 June 2022.
- 3) Hagiography Circle: 1847. Accessed 17 June 2022. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/year/1847.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