



Chosen for Charity



**Faith, Charity and Hope in the Spiritual Life of Sister Maria Carola Cecchin**

Presentation of don Nicholas Kirimo, SSC

## Introduction



I am happy to narrate the life of Sister Maria Carola Cecchin. I recount it as an African from Kenya, and even more so as the son of St Joseph Cottolengo precisely because he is a man who counts in my life and with immense amazement, I am discovering that I too count in his life, and in the charismatic family so loved by him.

Let us locate this presentation in the processes of canonization, because our Servant of God Maria Sr. Carola Cecchin is a proposal. As we have just heard, the legal-canonical process presupposes moments like this, where the figure of the Servant of God is studied and presented to the people of God precisely because the saints are always friends and models for the whole church and not just for a small group within the church. Let's also put our reflection into history: we are in the midst of an African savanna--almost nothing that Kenya we know today. The English colonialists are able with the consequence that every white, including the nuns, were simply called *mzungu* (as it is even now!). If they were welcomed with generosity among the tribes of Mount Kenya, it is precisely because their approach to the indigenous people was different from that of the colonialists. They proclaimed the gospel; the colonialists were just trying to appropriate their natural resources. In short, it was not at all easy to spend the villages where easily the color of your skin was enough to make you lose your life. If this didn't happen, it's because charity overcomes all hate.

### 1. From the search for meaning to the discovery of the gift of cottolengo vocation

His awareness of the path of faith seems to be made clear during the course of the Spiritual Exercises made in the quest to discover his vocation. His family was already known for his love of silence and the attention he placed on the slightest things, both at home and at school. At the end of those intense days of prayer, he seems to have realized that his life had to take a different path, that of total donation to the Lord. Fiorina, "in the closing of the Spiritual Exercises felt the "*vanitas vanitatum*"[2], had discovered the hidden treasure (Mt.13:44). The element of discontinuity typical of a conversion emerges: Fiorina no longer wanted to continue life ever, there was an unexpected novelty discovered during the Exercises.

She knocks on the door but is not accepted between the Dorothea along with her sister. We are faced with the experience of calling and meeting with Jesus the new man on one side, and rejection on the other side. She knocks on the door but is not accepted by the Dorothea sisters along with her sister.

---

*She knocks on the door but is not accepted between the Dorothea along with her sister.*

---

With the experience of faith in the family and the confirmation of this in the Spiritual Exercises, Fiorina was prepared to give a response of faith to the denial of the Dorothea Sisters, and it is a response that highlights the personalization of her relationship with the Lord. By now, it is not only God's will in general, it is the will of Jesus.

So far, her mind and her spirituality were strongly marked by a search no longer only for God's will, nor for the way in which she had to do this because she was already convinced that she should become a nun. The question was where Jesus wanted to open some doors for her.

With the chaplain's intervention, Jesus opens the door of the Little House of Divine Providence "Cottolengo", first in a formation house in Bigolino (Treviso) for a first contact the reality of Cottolengo, and afterwards God opened the famous entrance in Cottolengo Street 14, Turin. This took place on August 27, 1896. She was welcomed as the 139th postulant of that year. She took the habit and began novitiate on October 2, 1897, under the name of Sister Maria Carola.

Here emerge some aspects of the virtue of hope: beyond the relational virtues that have helped her to progress in her choices and her spiritual journey, she could now give the best of herself.

## 2. Appropriation of the values of Cottolengo life

The season of internalization of Cottolengo values begins with the taking of religious habit where the name Sister Maria Carola is imposed on her and thus begins the novitiate. It continues in the first years of service, where she grows in her relationship with the Lord and service to the brothers.

On her it is written found:

*The virtues that stood out in her were obedience, humility, the spirit of prayer, all made attractive by the **sublime charity of that soul always willing to sacrifice herself to be of help and comfort to all.** One could call her the Angel of the family: always cheerful and good mood, lived in the presence of God and Jesus formed his all by not caring about anything other than Him.*

### **New openings, new adventures...**

---

*Lucidly and freely Sister Maria Carola is on the list of six who left for the third mission.*

---

On April 24, 1903, the first eight Missionary Vincentian Sisters of Cottolengo departed from Turin for Africa as agreed with the founder of the Consolata Missionaries, Can. Joseph Allamano. The departure to the missions was not an obligation for the nuns, in fact the superiors did not oblige anyone to so much sacrifice. Lucidly and freely Sister Maria Carola is on the list of six who left for the third mission. And this propensity seems to be confirmed in these terms: "*The thought that I will be able to contribute in some way to make the Kingdom of Jesus expand fills me with gratitude towards you and to the Lord.*" In this lies her theological attitude. Her missionary vocation has matured: faith, charity and hope are evidently strong in her and, at this point, surrendering in God's hands seems a foregone conclusion.

Sister Mary Carola abandons herself to God with freedom: for this reason, she constantly tries to know and do God's will. Her decision to leave for missions in Africa confirms this attitude that she

wanted to live "through faith" (Rm 1:17), the faith that "works through charity" (Gal 5:6). Consequently, she began a new adventure with God and his people but always with the Little House as her support, a fixed reference point.

### 3. Missionary Experience in Kenya

It seems appropriate to describe here one of the sources of the spiritual experience of Sister Mary Carola. Spiritual theology must take into account human action as "the element of spiritual transformation of the person." Therefore, in this presentation we are not focusing on the objective impact of her missionary work on the African people in the midst of which the Servant of God carried out her pastoral activities. Rather, her missionary commitment that involved visits to villages, the catechism to adults, especially to women and children, and the care at home of the sick is taken into account as the place of sister Maria Carola's transformation. Even community life, which in itself was an effective way to proclaim the gospel, is considered as a place of spiritual maturation. We are simply asking ourselves: what impact did all that have in her spiritual life?

The way Sister Mary Carola performed these duties of her service suggests how much faith and charity she put into it, and how much every experience of pastoral or service of charity offered her raw material for personal reflection. On the one hand, it was not enough simply to do the duty; faith, charity, and hope without which Christian life would be extinguished had to shine through. On the other hand, it was precisely in fulfilling these commitments that the Servant of God was able to exercise the same virtues and not just pass them on. From her correspondences it is clear how much she grew in the *Sequela Christi*. In fact, writes to the Father of the Little House: "*Among us we live in holy charity although there are personal internal weaknesses; we hope that good Jesus sees our fragility....*" She did not lose sight of the fact of human frailty till the end. She writes in one of her last letters: "*You tells me that you hope that we work for God's greatest glory, we hope that the Lord will not look at our feebleness and will accept the little that we do.*"

---

*We are simply asking ourselves: what impact did all that have in her spiritual life?*

---

If in the period between the religious profession and the departure to Africa Sister Maria Carola had become rooted in God, that is, she had managed to establish a relationship with God such that it was impossible to live outside this exclusive relationship, *life in the mission gave her the opportunity to experience this spousal relationship with the Lord by regulating not only the great but also the small daily choices in the work on the ground.* The continuous inner transformation of Sister Maria Carola's life takes place in her ordinary relationship with the Lord, through the decisions she made, as showed above, at certain times in her life but which then followed in a life that lasted her whole life.

She left for Africa, but had to leave many times in search of souls, and especially when obedience called her to begin a new mission. The last station of her mission was Tigania, in Meru, where she once again left the house tidy and well stocked. Seeing the difficulties, he starts to chant: "*.. na bòna mort, na bòna mort.*" **In her semantic field, death is a common word. It is precisely the concept of time, the perception of its passing, that puts us in a position to understand that our material-spiritual existence must end.** There is no way to establish a priori, except in a very vague and abstract way, when the transition from this form of life to another will occur. **The real problem is not so much to know the exact moment, but rather to equip yourself to deal with that moment properly. Authentic Christian living is already an answer, an adequate preparation for the terrible**

**moment when bodily death will come. However, in the context of mysticism, death is also "the act of identifying one's will with that of God. One's will remains lost in God as the perfect obedience of the Son of God. (Phil 2: 7-8).**

The path of total abandonment is also to totally direct one's life towards God. Benedict XVI describes it:

*The "communion of will grows in communion of thought and feeling and so, our will and the will of God coincide more and more: God's will is no longer for me an alien will, which the commandments impose on me from the outside, but it is my own will, based on the experience that, the fact, God is more intimate to me than I am myself. Then abandonment in God grows and God becomes our joy (Psa 73: 23-28).*

In her last mission at Tigania, besides the usual hardships in the mission, a painful and exhausting disease caused her severe suffering: she had to suffer excruciating pain until the day of her death. In a letter of 14 March 1919, to the Father of the Little House, she begs for the return of the sick sisters to Italy, writing: "*Now that the sea passages are free, we hope that they will be called into the Little House, to enjoy a little paradise*". It was not so easy, it took the intervention of Pope Benedict XV, "very firm" to convince Mons Perlo to repatriate the Cottolengo Sisters. **Her personal choice to be the last to leave for the Mother House deserves a separate study for its radicality and totality despite the fact that she had now been weak and constantly suffering.**

#### 4. The last trip... The last "Yes" ...

Sr Maria Carola and Sister Crescentina are the last to leave Africa on 25 October 1925, after twenty uninterrupted years of mission. On the ship, on the way back, she gets worse, and at 5 o'clock on 13 November 1925, Sister Maria Carola, at 48 years of age, goes to meet God. After the funerals on board, her body is buried, as was then used, *in the waves of the Red Sea*.

In her last letters and testimony in *Sweet memoirs*, it is clear how Sister Mary Carola evaluated her missionary experience in Africa. At the same time, she did not emphasize her missionary activity but reflected on God's mercy: "*Eternity will pay for everything and we will always be together.*" That was almost a direct reference to the first "*I will be lucky if Jesus wants to use me for those poor people... my whole life!*" Sister Mary Carola now rejoices, many years later, of having been chosen and sent to live an experience of sacrifice on African soil. It can be said without a doubt that her spiritual maturity was now at the level of union with the Lord, indicated by the confident abandonment in God at the point of her death.

## II. The spiritual structures and dynamics in the spiritual experience of the Servant of God: living the nearness



The spiritual person lives consciously his answer to God's call, accepting the gift of divine grace in his soul, fighting against all personal weakness, for development towards perfection in accordance with his own state of life. Moreover, upstream of the personal vocation, there is an intrinsic relationship between the person and God that determines an objective structure of their relationships, and this relationship is not homogeneous for all: "God does not lead all souls in the same way". With this premise, we now can reflect five aspects of the experience of Sister Maria Carola: 1. *Spending herself in proximity*; 2. *Living for God and in God*; 3. *Seeking and becoming the will of God*; 4. *Giving face to God's tenderness*; 5. *"Dying Well and Going to Heaven"*

### 1. Spending herself in proximity

The approach of evangelization adopted by the Cottolengo Sisters was a simple sharing of faith that transpired from their way of life in community. It is no small thing to read their "success" in this field as the result of their simple style of living in community, a style that had a strong resonance with African culture that tends to define man in his relationship with society. On the other hand, they were used to living next door to those who suffer in a family, always led by *Caritas Christi*. The Christian community was, therefore, a life and form to be proposed without words, with the simple way of living it as the sisters did.

Sister Maria Carola had found a way to relate to the natives by choosing to be close, not only as a neighbor placed by chance, but a presence that was interested in the good of others. Here, the ecclesiastical practice too focused on concern for the afterlife was not visible in her attitudes—it would be counter-current—while instead the African woman in her strenuous and suffered living was the concern of Sister Maria Carola, as evidenced by her letters. The Cottolengo sisters had learned from St. Joseph Cottolengo to take care of man in his needs, to work for their material and spiritual good.

Therefore, the style of evangelization that the Cottolengo Sisters had assumed in the midst of the people of Kenya was to be traced back to what they had received from their formation in the Little House, that is, closeness. Closeness is the style of God, with the incarnation God has made himself one of us (cf. John 1: 14). All missionary activity recognized this fact that God wants close to himself even the most distant (cf. Acts 11:18). This is the motivation that has always driven those who in history have found themselves the bearer of the Word.

Charity lived in the closeness, as is usually done at the Cottolengo, thus became a style of evangelization that easily matched with inculturation. Proximity just like inculturation bears the value of respect and compassion, "agapeic" attitudes that mean that "what is diverse between

cultures, can become for them complementarity, gift and mutual enrichment". This dialectic that took place in the meeting between the missionaries and Kenyans became an important experience for the human-spiritual maturation of Sister Maria Carola.

If with the incarnation, otherness becomes closeness, with the service of charity the other becomes a traveling companion in the journey of faith. St. Paul points out, you were far from Christ, you were strangers, you did not belong to the people of God, you were excluded from his promises and his covenant; you were in the world people without hope and without God. Instead, joined to Christ Jesus, through his death, you have become close (Cf. Eph. 1: 11).

This is, hence, the reason why Sister Maria Carola and the other nuns lived their faith among the women and children of the villages of Kenya, without any demand other than the possibility of seeing a community living Christian life.

Among others, the figure of Sister Maria Carola emerges, and in a short time she learnt Kikuyu language so much as to attract the attention of the Chief of the Village, Karuri. Closeness was also discovering one's own need to be welcomed, to receive hospitality, to make one's own home among the people in order to be able to inhabit their culture. Without this attitude, the mission to save souls would have failed. The audacious Servant of God was moved by the Spirit, trying to be a tool for others. First with simple gestures of closeness such as cooking for the great chief Karuri or spending some time with women and children to discover the values to be cherished and those to be "transformed" with faith and the Word of God. It was the dynamic process of inculturation, that is, "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through integration into Christianity and the rooting of Christianity in the various cultures".

In this context, the attitude of the Servant of God towards the concept of African people's time is not taken for granted. She knew how to respect the times and spaces of others: "She treated everyone with a selfless and simple charity; no gossip, but yes to the heart, good always, to Cottolengo, but with attention and much charity." She found the sense of being in the school of others to thus ask the questions that lead to "more" or the sense of transcendence and the search for truth. Closeness allows us to proclaim Christ not as the absent but as the present, who is, the Emmanuel, especially close to the poorest and most suffering.

At the heart of Sister Maria Carola's experience of faith as well as her charity to the most needy, there is not only the unattainable height of the supernatural but also the warm and reassuring closeness of God who has made himself a man, with his Spirit that gives "life to the life", thus making the life of the Servant of God, a bold search for God's will and a passionate charity towards others. Inevitably, that warm and reassuring closeness was for Sister Maria Carola a constant stimulus to live her faith with joy and tranquility.

*Sister Maria Carola discovered her limitations, her weakness, her fragilities and she has experienced, for the most reason, helplessness in the face of so much misery. Man in his arrogance before the limits begins to be assailed by doubts. But not so for Sister Maria Carola. She was a woman of faith, of charity and living hope, she already had unshakable certainties on which to base her life. These are the certainties that she had been able to give every day to those who approached them.*

## 2. Living for God and in God

The every day mysticism in Cottolengo spirituality is manifested in living the spiritual heritage of the founding saint who wanted his spiritual children to live in *the Sequela Christi* with "the mind and heart as busy as possible of God or of things that belonged to the health of the soul." Thus lived the Servant of God, aware of the vocation of all to holiness, occupied in the service of the poor because



that was the will of God. She writes to her sister: "*We always do our duty, we love the Lord, and then go as he pleases, things will always be fine, because everything is fine when it goes according to God's will.*" This certainty in the infinite goodness of God gave her strength and dynamism that inexplicably helped her to make courageous choices to the end.

One can see the mystical life of the Servant of God, in the full meaning of the word, even in the way she lived obedience. She had embarked on an adventure that was not simple, which demanded not a simple 'Yes' said to satisfy the superiors, but an endless series of 'Yes' to God's will. To find out what task was to be accomplished every day, Sister Mary Carola had to refer to that very first 'Yes', which she had pronounced for the poor. The various transfers faced during her stay in Kenya indicate a woman who has been able to live with one hand in her ear to "listen" to God in life and the other in listening to the needs of the poor. She learned to *ob-audire*, to feel her limits, her own infirmity, and in the end to *ob-audire* death.

A mystic is a person who knows how to seek, find and do God's will as her duty, as her own task, but even more so the one who lives her own truth as a sinner in need of God's mercy. This is what F. Asti writes about mystical life:

*Acting according to God or living in the spiritual way recall the inner aspect of a progressive transformation that involves all man. This is also typical of the mystical journey in which man rediscovers his origin and his end: the spiritual man rediscovers his homeland.*

She does not claim to be perfect even when she sets out to seek and do God's will, always for God's greater glory. Fr Collo says, "Sister Maria Carola knows how to recognize personal miseries and frailties" and, in the context of the impending departure of the sisters, she makes the point of evaluation of more than twenty years of service in the mission without returning to her homeland. **She lived the experience of true ecstasy, that is, "to dis-appropriate" herself, to be providence for the most needy, towards total freedom even from oneself in order to be able to say with St. Paul "it is no longer me who live, but Christ lives in me"** (Gal 2:20). Her faith in God and his mercy emerge.

### 3. Seeking and Becoming the Will God

Of her disposition to do God's will, Sister Maria Carola remained consistent even in her illness, constant in her relationship with the mystery that had always inhabited her. At the invitation to invoke Blessed Cottolengo for healing from her infirmity, she said:

*"I want nothing more than the fulfillment of God's will in everything and above all in me. Blessed [Cottolengo] knows that I am his daughter and at his disposal; help me be truly all of God... Let us pray that the kingdom of Jesus Christ will come into us, into the souls we have left and for faith to spread."*

A woman of prayer, Sister Mary Carola knows how to combine her ordinary life with the consciousness of a mysterious Presence, the Other. She discovers the infinite goodness of this Mystery that descends to be found by every seeker, even the youngest. Or rather, she discovers the paradoxical reality of being reached. In fact, prayer is first and foremost the divine work, God who establishes a relationship of reciprocity by overcoming distances, always in the kenotic style of incarnation (cf. John 13: 8b).

As a confirmation of the continuous commitment of Sister Maria Carola many testimonies are recorded already from the first year of her death as seen in *the Positio*. There are also letters and diaries of missionaries written while she was still alive in mission, a testament to the exemplariness

of her commitment. Mons. Perlo, the superior of the Consolata missions in Kenya writes: *certainly, she did not leave the mission with any remorse*". Always consistent with her Cottolengo vocation, of caring for the whole person in her spiritual and material needs, Sister Maria Carola stood out as a model of dedication. In the same letter Mons. Perlo continues, *"Of course, the Lord will have already given her the well-deserved prize for **so much work and goodness**; and from heaven she will contemplate the great good done among the poor Africans and will more effectively pray the conversion of those who do not believe and the perseverance of those already converted."* Whoever knows the history of missions under Mons. Perlo can appreciate even more this testimony of a man so demanding of missionaries.

#### 4. Giving a face to God's tenderness

Spiritual life has an integrative role throughout the course of human life, that is to say that it with its many aspects concerns the whole person. The Servant of God was able to give the face to the tenderness of God, bringing consolation of God's word to those who did not know Him. It was a choice to live for others, to place the meaning of her life according to the needs of brothers and sisters. Be the eyes for the blind, the feet for the lame, and examine the cause of the unknown (cf. John 29:15).

The Cross that she received in the missionary mandate accompanied her to the last, not just as the symbolic Crucifix she carried as a missionary, but above all in the sacrifices she had to face, in the toil of service and in the sickness, she endured heroically to the end. Sister Scholastica recounts:

*In early January 1923, Sister M. Carola was assaulted by a terrible and painful intestinal infection (diagnosed by the doctor on board the ship "Port of Alessandria" ulcerative enterocolitis). It was six months of incredible suffering for her, endured heroically.... After that she never recovered; She was always in pain, even though she tried to hide her discomfort.*

Although she was ill, *"she wanted to be the last to leave Africa, though sick, out of a sense of responsibility to the other nuns of which she was superior; as she writes in her own letter."*

#### 5. "Dying Well and Going to Heaven"

Spiritual theology affirms the necessary link between life in spirit and symbol. The strongest symbol of total self-giving and abandonment in Divine Providence can be seen in the frequent recurrence of the theme of death, of a good death that emerges in the letters of Mary Carola and in the testimonies collected about her. In the *Positio*:

*In fact, it is not a remissive and pessimistic attitude in the face of existence, but an inspiration of strength and commitment to the present in the suffering and unexpected situations that sometimes arise suddenly and unexpectedly, in the daily life.*

In her thought system it seems that the experience of her total surrendering in the hands of the Lord had a strongly mystical meaning: her search for God's will, the readiness to do this will and the only attempt to fulfill her duty once recognized, seems to consume her life. Her soul was placed in the state of "continuous death", *"a kind of agony that lasts until physical death and consumes the union in the perfect death of Jesus."* Sister Mary Carola writes to the Father of the Little House:

*Deo gratias, Reverend Father, for the prayers you ask for us and **what is more a good death**, the most beautiful and precious wish, **to die well and go to Heaven**; ..., however if Jesus wants and is pleased, first we will see our Beloved Superiors.*

Therefore, one may wonder whether hers was a desperate fixation with the last breath or an expression of hope. Upon her mother's death, she wrote a letter revealing a very positive view of the last step, a step that is taken to enter into eternal joy. *Let's hope mom is already there to enjoy with Jesus, Paradise in Paradise...* and closed with a phrase that indicates all his abandonment in God: *"Sister, courage, we adore the divine provisions; Jesus pains us except for our usefulness. We always do our duty, we love the Lord and then go on as he pleases, which will always be fine, because **all is well when it goes according to God's will.**"*

It is consistent with Cottolengo spirituality that also sees paradise as "*the last act of Divine Providence*": the conviction in the eternal home or the blessed hope of Paradise. Her hope was "characterized by her usual phrase in Piedmont dialect: '*na bòna mort...*' (a good death will pay for everything). Death, therefore, was not an unnecessary concern, it was a strong experience of her union with Christ her Spouse, soul immersed in the will of God.





### III. Concluding reflections



It is a matter of coherence to think that members of the charismatic family who are on the African soil should learn from the Servant of God how to better live their calling among the tribes of Africa. It is a coherence that arises from the very spirit that they bring in the charism and spirituality of Cottolengo. Below are some lines of reflection that may provoke renewed attention on how to propose the message of the gospel today in the light of Extraordinary Missionary Month 2019. I propose three: A. Announcing the Gospel; B. Confronting; C. Realistic Expectations:

#### 1. Announcing the Gospel

The starting point is the discovery of the positive: to whom do we resemble ourselves when we take charge of the weakest in society? The response of the Sister Maria Carola Cecchin is like that of the Good Samaritan, that is, Charity spent in the nearness. "The love of one's neighbor comes from the divine charity spread in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and is therefore an infallible sign of God's love."

Here the question of the testimony of faith arises: every time a person is helped to become aware of her dignity as a daughter of God, a liberation from ignorance of a saving truth begins in her and a new society begins to be born. She is ready to pay every price as the man of the parable of hidden treasure who sells all his possessions and buys the field (cf. Mt. 13:44). Therefore, a new society is built in which the indigent abandons a creed that considers his poverty and his condition of misery as the result of a condemnation, curse or fate, or even worse to be the will of God. The problem is here: every missionary and each Cottolengo in particular must make his own the attitude of the Good Samaritan with the gestures and words that change the fate of the poor (cf. Lk 10:25-37).

#### 2. Comparing oneself to the Servant of God

One can legitimately ask: Why should we confront ourselves with Sister Maria Carola or other missionaries in other historical times? Isn't it enough to know Jesus and his Gospel? Of course, the Gospel is enough for us, and knowing Jesus has a sublime value (cf. Phil 3:8). This problem exists. It must be added that the thought of the Servant of God reflects her context and therefore some points need to be updated. **Comparison with our predecessors is the privileged means of ensuring the awareness, authenticity and vitality of this bond created by the grace of the common vocation.** When Sister Mary Carola was on this earth, she too had challenged herself with the community and individuals, the Founder, and other missionary figures. Now, she becomes a point of reference for us, a source of inspiration in the training courses that consider the future of missions.

The style that should characterize missionary animation today must foster lasting choices, not those that seem to be experiences of a few months, even when they can serve to make discernment for a true and definitive choice. Today, more than ever, the sense of missionary commitment as a building blocks of Christian life needs an awakening, as Pope Francis says:

*so that all the faithful can truly have at heart the proclamation of the gospel and the conversion of their communities into missionary and evangelizing realities; in order to increase the love for the mission, 'which is a passion for Jesus but, at the same time, a passion for his people.*





### 3. Realistic Expectations

From a careful reading of Sister Maria Carola's letters and the testimonies about her, four fundamental aspects of missionary life emerge substantially, in reference to the quality of the expectations of the apostolate:

- the absence of excessive concern about her own future and her own fortunes: she, like the other sisters left for the mission without knowing what would happen to them, but always with the desire to devote themselves to it with all the impetus of their souls.
- The confident abandonment to Divine Providence: the words, "*firm confidence that the good God will sustain me*" highlight a strong attitude of abandonment to Divine Providence which is a characteristic of Cottolengo spirituality.
- the lack of any attitude of presumption that exalts one's own person and her merits: Sister Maria Carola sees her missionary calling as a special blessing. She writes, "*I will be lucky if Jesus wants to use me for the good of those poor.*";
- the realistic expectation that the vigorous proclamation of Easter, the sincere commitment of dedication and sharing of the Easter mystery will inevitably involve sacrifices: "*I have not failed to reflect on the serious sacrifices of soul, body and heart that life missionary imposes.*"