



Biography of the Venerable Sister Maria Carola

Fiorina Cecchin was born at Cittadella on 3 April 1877. At the age of 19 she enters the Little House of the Divine Providence, "Cottolengo" of Turin. She takes up the religious habit and starts her novitiate on 3 October 1897, taking the name Sister Maria Carola.

In 1899 she made her religious profession. She does her service in the kitchen at Giaveno college, and later in the central kitchen of the Little House. Her vocation is to give herself, to love God and the souls.

On January 28, 1905, she leaves for Africa. Her first "station" is Limuru, then Tuthu, Iciagaki, Mugoiri, Wambogo, and finally Tigania-Meru. She proves to be a woman who was wise and prudent, active and pious. "*Na bôna mort a pagrâ tut*", a good death will pay for everything, this was her habitual expression. All for Heaven!

At Iciagaki the house is a mere shack, a single pan acts as a pot, so Sister Carola as the superior makes it habitable. She cultivates a vegetable garden, beautifies the courtyard and gathers around herself the small community moved only by unlimited love for Jesus.

When it seems for her the beginning of a normal missionary life, "obedience" comes to her to leave for Mugoiri, then for Wambogo to replace two sisters who left for a field hospital. It's the dramatic moment of the 1915-1918 war lived by her with the light and fortitude of the "*Caritas Christi urget nos!*", like Cottolengo. Tireless witness to God the Father's love for the poorest of the poor, giving, together with the most urgent services, the greatest charity: the proclamation of Jesus, the only Saviour of man. Her last mission is Tigania, where in the midst of difficulties she sings "*na bôna mort*". It seems strange today, but how many saints, heroes and martyrs has the thought of the last realities produced in the Church! So, it is for Sister Maria Carola who is the last to leave Africa on October 25, 1925. On the way back by ship, on November 13, 1925 she went to meet God. After celebrating the funerals aboard the ship, her body is buried in the waves of the Red Sea. She was not given a chance to enjoy some Paradise in the Little House. Jesus wanted her directly in the true Paradise. Even today she remains a model of missionary life, holiness and heroic dedication to Christ and to the souls to be saved!

On 23 November 2020, the Holy Father authorised the publication of the decree on her heroic virtues, a step closer to her beatification.

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