



In Memory of

Sister MARIA CRISTINA SANTACROCE

24 January 1920 - 26 June 2023

Sister Maria Cristina was born in Pratola Peligna, in the province of L'Aquila, on 24 January 1920, the daughter of Giuseppe Santacroce and Maria Pizzoferrato. She had a brother and a sister.

The presence of a community of Marist Fathers at the Shrine of Our Lady of Libera at Pratola Peligna introduced the local population to the spirit of the Society of Mary.

In this fruitful environment where Mary's life was breathed, helped by the Marist Fathers, Sr. Maria Cristina responded to the Lord's call by choosing the Congregation of Mary. She left her family, to which she was very attached, to begin her formation in France at Saint Prix, where she made her first profession on 18 December 1939 with the name of Sr. Valeria.

After her years of formation Sr. Maria Cristina lived in communities in France until 1950, the year in which the first Community of Marist Sisters in Italy was founded in Castiglion Fiorentino (Florence). She was part of this first Community of Sisters sent to Italy, together with Sr. Maria Celina, Sr. Maria Letizia and Sr. Bernardette, the Superior, who was French.

There was no shortage of occasions when Sr. Maria Cristina would tell us about the events they had experienced on their journey from Paris to Castiglion Fiorentino for their new mission in Italy. We were fascinated to listen to her, because she had the ability to recall episodes from her long life.

Sr. Maria Cristina had a special talent for preparing and singing in liturgical ceremonies, so even for the celebration of her 103rd birthday, she chose and prepared all the liturgy and hymns for the Mass.

She lovingly tended the garden so that it was always flowering and welcoming.

She always followed the charism of Sr. Jeanne-Marie Chavoin, in the different communities where she lived, especially visiting families where she created friendships and started groups of Marist Laity.

Sr. Maria Cristina was a woman of great faith. In the last years of her life she spent much of her days in prayer, bringing to the Lord all the painful, sad events of the world that she learned about through social communications, and for all the people in need.

As per her wish, her funeral was celebrated on 30th June 2023 at 10.00 a.m. in the Chapel of the Marist Sisters' Community in Treviso, with the participation of some family members and friends from the neighbourhood. After the ceremony she was buried in the cemetery of Ponzano, Veneto, where the Italian Marist Sisters who preceded her rest.

We thank Sr. Maria Cristina for her life lived in abandonment to God's will. Her memory will always be present in our hearts.

May she rest in peace.

