

## Fr. Gaetano De Sanctis

By Tommaso and Maria Paolini

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Father Gaetano was born in Casalincontrada (Chieti) on 12 August 1937 and he entered the Order of Camillians on 16 September 1951. He became a novice on 6 October 1955 and made his temporary profession on 7 October 1956 and his perpetual profession on 18 December 1959. He was ordained a deacon on 22 December 1963 and was ordained a priest on 18 March 1964. In 1964 he was made an assistant for aspirant brothers at the religious house of Loreto. In 1966 he left for the nascent mission of Upper Volta (Burkina Faso). In 1968 he was appointed director of the aspirants in Ouagadougou and in 1974 he was made teacher of novices and future priests. In the year 1975 he returned to Italy and in September 1977 he left for Senegal for a new missionary experience. He soon returned to Italy to work with the Province of Piedmont which was planning to open a mission in the Ivory Coast. After a short period of time, he returned to Italy, only to then leave again for Senegal where he lived for a while as the guest of the Bishop of Thriés. Following the death of the bishop, he returned to Italy and lived in the diocese of Chieti. After a period of *extra claustra*, in September 1992 he returned to the Province and lived in Bucchianico at the then Institute of the Sacred Heart where he was a part of the religious service in a clinic in Chieti. In 1997 he founded 'La Sorgente' ('The Spring'), an association of volunteers who provided help to sick people in their daily needs through Christian works of charity and offered spiritual comfort to the suffering. This activity was carried out for a long period, and with great results, at hospital centres, in line with the gospel motto 'our neighbour is our spring of life!'. In the year 2000 he became the vice parish priest at the Parish of St. Camillus in Rome. On 20 September 2001 he joined the centre of spirituality in Bucchianico and from September 2004 until 2007 he was the Superior of that community. From 2003 until 2016 he was the chaplain of the Hospital of Our Most Holy Lady of the Annunciation in Chieti.

After a period of illness that was lived with prayer and patience, when he was cared for by his confreres of the 'N. D'Onofrio' Centre of Spirituality, on Thursday 12 December 2019 he returned to the House of the Father. His funeral will be held on Friday 13 December 2019, at 15.30, at the Sanctuary of St. Camillus in Bucchianico. His mortal remains will lie in the tomb of the Camillian religious in the cemetery of Bucchianico.

Apparently a shy, silent and austere man, Father Gaetano was capable of deep spiritual thought and proclaimed the Gospel through the force of the spirit of St. Camillus. His enthusiasm for his experiences of missionary work was vivid and tenacious in his accounts of his life, amidst the hopes and disappointments of his ministry and his devotion and prayers for, and with, the sick. May the Lord give to him the reward of the just and His faithful servants!

Rome,

12 December 2019.