

Father Cesare Ghilardi

1939 - 2025

He was born in Camaiore (LU) on 23 October 1939, to Giuseppe and Maddalena Marsili, the eighth of ten children, some of whom became priests.

On 26 October 1951, he entered the house in Imperia as an aspirant, where he attended middle school and high school. On 30 September 1956, he entered the novitiate at the Stella Maris house in Borghetto Santo Spirito, where on 6 October 1957 he made his temporary profession for three years, followed by the annual renewal of his vows (in 1960 and 1961) and solemn profession on 8 December 1962, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. He received the Order of Deacons on 4 July 1965 and the Order of Priests on 4 September 1965 in Lappato (LU).



In October 1965, he remained in Borghetto Santo Spirito (SV), in the house of formation and for pastoral work in the colonies of Ceriale (SV). In August 1966, he was transferred to the Civil Hospital of Sampierdarena (GE) as chaplain. In August 1967, he moved to the Civil Hospital of Sorgono (NU) and then to the Sanatorium of Cagliari, again as chaplain. In July 1968, he was transferred to the Dermatological Hospital of Turin as chaplain. In August 1968, he went to Genoa to replace a sick confrere. In May 1970, he was transferred to the Civil Hospital of Imperia, again as chaplain.

Meanwhile, he went through a period of inner turmoil about his identity, which led to a growing desire to combine spiritual service with healthcare, causing tensions both in the community and especially in the hospital wards, where he was accused of intrusion and dismissed. He sought his own path and, in December 1971, requested and obtained a one-year leave of absence from the cloister, which was later extended for several years, in order to attend nursing school and gain experience in the working world. It was also a period of loneliness and searching, as well as physical problems and depression. Finally finding peace and having gained some certainty, in April 1976 he asked and obtained permission to return to the Institute, making himself available but also asking to continue his nursing service.

He was sent to the community in Genoa, at the church of Santa Croce. In December 1981, after obtaining leave from the S. Martino Hospital where he worked as a physiotherapist, he went to Benin, to the Zinvì Hospital, in support of the Sicilian-Neapolitan Province Foundation.

In 1983, he resumed his work as a physiotherapist at S. Martino in Genoa, and in June 1989, he was hired as a chaplain in the same hospital (in collaboration with the Capuchins). Meanwhile, he started a programme to welcome marginalised people in some areas of the religious house of S. Croce.

In 1996, until 2016, he was employed as chaplain at the Galliera Hospital in Genoa. This was a period in which he was particularly valued by the Diocese, which appointed him Archiepiscopal Delegate for Consecrated Life, followed in 2006 by Director of Pastoral Care in Health. In this context, he found time to obtain a Bachelor's degree in Education Sciences in September 2007.

He also received recognition within the religious province: in May 1998, he was appointed 1st Provincial Councillor, and in the summer of 2001, Superior of the house in Genoa. In June 2007, he was appointed Provincial Councillor for the Ministry and also Provincial Treasurer. In July 2010, he was appointed Treasurer of the 'San Camillo' nursing home (Righi) in Genoa. In April 2017, he was transferred to Turin, to the community of Villa Lellia. Later, he agreed to be present in the house in Imperia, which had been largely emptied and entrusted to the Madian Community of Turin, into which he was incorporated.

He died suddenly of illness on 24 July 2025 during a holiday in Sardinia.

N.B.: translated, with Deepl, from the original Italian language .