



Ministers of the Infirm

Newsletter

N. 108

The Camillan world seen from Rome...and Rome seen by the World



A beacon of hope
amid crises



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“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed... it is the smallest of all seeds, but once it has grown, it becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches” (Matthew 13:31-32).

Dear confreres,

The parable of the mustard seed presents us with the dynamic of our life in Christ: what is born small, if rooted in the Gospel, has the potential to grow, mature, and become a point of reference, offering protection and hope. This also applies to our Camillian history: starting from humble and hidden beginnings, it has developed over time, taking root in a fruitful way in the life of the Church.

The month of August has a special meaning for our Camillian religious family. It is the time when the Church solemnly celebrates the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, and for us Camillians it is also the time when we vividly remember the foundation of our Order.

On the eve of the Feast of the Assumption in 1582, Camillus was inwardly moved, as Fr. Sanzio Ciatelli writes, by a revolutionary intuition: “to free the sick from the hands of those mercenaries” and to create a “Company of pious and good men” who would serve them not for money, but for the love of God, with the same tenderness “that mothers usually show towards their sick children” (Vita manoscritta, p. 52).

This is not a mere coincidence. St. Camillus’ devotion to the Virgin was intense, profound, and filial. After the Crucifix, it was Mary Most Holy whom he considered the inspiration for the Order: “the Most Holy Mother of Mercy wanted to show the world that this Congregation was to be entirely hers” (cf. Mario Vanti, *Lo Spirito di San Camillo de Lellis*, 2025, p. 185).

This was the beginning of a history of holiness, born under the gaze of Mary and rooted in the Gospel. It is a history that continues today, after more than four centuries, thanks to the fidelity and generosity of many religious who have adhered with passion and fidelity to the same call. The memory of this original inspiration is an invitation to rediscover the source, allowing ourselves to be renewed interiorly

by the Camillian charism, a gift of the Spirit for the Church and for the world of health and sickness.

From the very beginning, Camillus' intuition and deep motivation were based on the "supernatural principle of charity" (Mario Vanti, *Lo Spirito di San Camillo de Lellis*, p. 250). This memory challenges us even more urgently today, in the face of the health, social, and spiritual challenges of our time.

The Camillian charism, present in thirty-eight countries on five continents, continues to generate works of charity and gestures of consolation. The Order presents itself as a large, expanding family, with established realities and recent foundations; new vocations are sprouting in some parts of the world, while other geographical areas are suffering from a sociological crisis of faith and spiritual life. The "little seed" planted by Camillus is alive, and where it sprouts, it gives life, bringing with it a prophetic and contemporary mission.

It is our personal and communal responsibility to allow ourselves to be continually inspired by the Spirit, "who impels us." It is our task to support the growth of the missions, lovingly preserving existing realities, but also opening ourselves with courage and realism to new horizons of mercy. The foundations in mission lands, the presence alongside the poor and needy who populate the world of health care, are signs that the charism is alive.

The living memory of our origins urges us not to be satisfied, to always desire more according to the heart of Jesus, to let ourselves be inspired by emerging needs, and to respond with creativity, zeal, and hope. Today, more than ever, the world needs visible signs of mercy, credible witnesses of the love that heals.

In this context and with these sentiments, I invite every community and every confrere to live this anniversary as a time of personal and community renewal. Let us celebrate with joy and gratitude this original grace that has been given to us. Let us promote moments of prayer, reflection, and sharing; let us tell young people about the beauty of our vocation; let us support the most fragile missions and prepare ourselves with confidence for new foundations and new paths of service.

Despite the challenges, the pearl of charity will continue to shine beyond our limitations and our efforts, because it is God himself who goes before us on the journey. May Mary, mother and patroness of our Order, accompany us with her maternal protection.

May St. Camillus intercede for us and obtain for us the grace to live our ministry every day with the same zeal, the same tenderness, and the same fire of love that burned in his heart.

Fr. Pedro Tramontin MI
Superior General



A beacon of hope amid crises in Myanmar

By Fr. Aris Miranda MI

On March 28, 2025, a devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck Myanmar, displacing approximately 3.5 million people. The disaster exacerbated an already dire humanitarian situation, as ongoing hostilities between Myanmar's armed forces, the military junta, and various non-state resistance groups continue to cause displacement and increase security risks. Since the end of May, the intensification of the conflict has forced more than 110,000 additional people to flee their homes. Flooding and landslides caused by the monsoon have further worsened conditions, affecting at least 35,500 people.

From July 7 to 10, CADIS International, CADIS Thailand, the Archdiocese of Chanthaburi Social Action, and Caritas Thailand conducted a joint needs assessment in villages in the Archdiocese of Mandalay, near the epicenter of the

earthquake in Sagaing. The team was welcomed at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport by Archbishop Marco Tin Win of Mandalay and Father Augustine, the diocese's financial administrator, who accompanied them to Mandalay. The president of the Thai-Burmese Business Council also joined the delegation.

Coordination of relief efforts

Immediately after the earthquake, CADIS, the Social Action of the Diocese of Chiang Mai, and Caritas Thailand launched three relief missions. Between April and May, CADIS Thailand distributed basic necessities, including food, non-food items, and survival kits, to over 600 families in Gotule (Umee, Tagay, Imtu), Mae Jae, and Roi Koh. The kits included instant noodles, canned food, cooking oil, basic medicines, and rice. The relief operations were made possible thanks to the collective efforts of the Camillian communities,



The 600 internally displaced families had not only survived the earthquake, but were also victims of the ongoing civil conflict. Restrictions imposed by the army and security risks greatly complicated relief operations, especially in areas affected by natural and man-made disasters.

which contributed human, material, and financial resources.

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On the ground in Mandalay

The assessment team traveled to Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city, and visited the Chanthagone refugee camp, which is hosting 600 displaced persons from Sagaing, Mandalay, and Kachin. The Catholic Church in Mandalay has opened its facilities to accommodate the displaced, although many facilities, including schools, training centers, churches, and perimeter fences, were destroyed by the earthquake.

The camp is home to people of different faiths and cultures, including Catholics, Buddhists, and Muslims, with a majority of women and children. Reconstruction efforts are underway, supported by donor organizations, which are prioritizing the rebuilding of schools, training centers, and security infrastructure. While children continue their education through alternative programs, the lack of recognition by the government forces them to take exams in public schools, where they often suffer social isolation.

Nuns and volunteers provide psychological and

psychosocial assistance, while a basic medical clinic operates on site, despite scarce resources.

The team also visited the clergy house, the cathedral, St. Francis Xavier Parish, and the clinic, all of which were severely damaged. Services continue outdoors, but with limited capacity. Movement restrictions imposed by the military have further hampered access to patients from surrounding villages.

In Amarapura, on the border between Mandalay and Sagaing along the Irrawaddy River, other IDPs are temporarily sheltered in Buddhist temples and public spaces. In collaboration with Buddhist authorities and the Mandalay Emergency Rescue Team (MERT), the archdiocese is providing essential aid. On the day of the visit, MERT distributed cash assistance to over 100 families. While some IDPs remain in monasteries, many have returned home. MERT is also preparing temporary shelters for flood victims during the monsoon season, from June to August.

A nation in crisis

The political climate in Myanmar continues to exacerbate the crisis. International humanitarian organizations face restrictions or outright bans, and Burmese migrants abroad struggle to send aid home. The government discourages migration and enforces conscription laws, forcing even young adults to join the military.

On the third day of the mission, the team



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visited several of the 18 parishes destroyed by the earthquake. In St. Michael's Parish in Mandalay, 25 families are still living in temporary shelters. Survivors expressed fear and a sense of abandonment, pointing out that the government has pressured many to return home to give the illusion of normality.

In St. Joseph's parish in Lafon, historically a center for Chinese Catholics, the church suffered only minor damage and remains operational. In contrast, St. Vincent de Paul's parish in Zawgyi, a Catholic town known for dairy production, was destroyed and cleanup operations have just begun.

Action Plan

Following the assessment, several action plans have been proposed including:

1. Caritas Thailand and the Diocese of Chanthaburi will launch a missionary appeal to support the reconstruction of 18 parish churches currently unusable.
2. CADIS Thailand, DISAC7, and CADIS International will continue their relief efforts in the Diocese of Mandalay.

3. CADIS, in collaboration with *Missione Calcutta* (Italy), will implement an emergency relief program for schoolchildren in the archdiocese's boarding schools.
4. CADIS International is developing a psychosocial support program to train internally displaced persons as first responders, addressing the severe shortage of mental health professionals in the country.

As St. Camillus de Lellis said, "Where there are sick people, there must be Camillians." In the face of complex emergencies such as those in Myanmar, strategic planning and collaborative commitment are essential. CADIS welcomes this challenge not only as a crisis, but as an opportunity to share the gifts received from God, so that others may live with dignity and hope.





Camillians at the Youth Festival 2025

The Medjugorje Youth Festival is a unique opportunity for an annual spiritual retreat for families, young people, and also for the consecrated men and women who accompany them.

By Fr. Alfredo M. Tortorella, MI

The 36th Youth Festival (Mladifest) took place in Medjugorje, from August 4 to 8, with the theme of a verse from Psalm 122, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” We Camillians were also present with a small delegation consisting of myself, Fr. Salvatore Barbagallo – my confrere from the Monaldi Community in Naples – and Sr. Annie and Sr. Giselle of the Daughters of St. Camillus. In Medjugorje, we also met Fr. Zygmunt, a missionary in Georgia, and two other Polish Daughters of St. Camillus.

We left Naples with 54 pilgrims, including 22 young people between the ages of 14 and 35. There was also Emmanuel, a 17-year-old paraplegic with an immense joy for life and for celebrating, entrusted to our care by his parents. Emmanuel made our presence at the Festival even more Camillian.

The Medjugorje Youth Festival is a unique opportunity for an annual spiritual retreat for families, young people, but also for the consecrated men and women who accompany them. Alongside the beautiful songs and dances performed at certain moments to awaken us from the fatigue and heat of August, the Festival offers daily moments of intense listening to catechesis and testimonies: powerful themes concerning Christianity in our time, being Church, but also stories of life, change, and conversion so similar to that which took place in 1575 to our Saint Camillus de Lellis. In an interview with *Radio Maria Italia*, I reiterated precisely this: the presence of the Camillians at the Festival is a duty, since our Founder was a young man not unlike today’s young people, sometimes empty because they were wounded, searching for meaning, but



guided by the Spirit toward holiness.

Camillian spirituality is also necessarily Marian: a young man in our group, Carlo, who volunteers at Monaldi and is discerning his vocation in our Province, said in another interview that Camillus' words about caring for the sick with a mother's heart (words he fell in love with and made his own) find an extraordinary echo in Medjugorje: Mary, the Mother, offers a presence and a message of tenderness, leads to Jesus, and cares for the wounds of the souls. Mary, in Medjugorje, is silently and effectively Camillian!

The young people in attendance received

blessings from the Bishop of Mostar, Monsignor Palic, other bishops, and the Apostolic Visitor Monsignor Aldo Cavalli, who at the end of each Festival gives the young people a missionary mandate to be light in the darkness of this world. Pope Leo XIV himself, through Monsignor Cavalli, sent a message of encouragement and closeness to those in attendance.

Let us go with Mary to the house of the Lord! For us Camillians, this "house" is the heart of every wounded and suffering person. We return there with greater vigor and maternal tenderness!



Feast of St. Camillus 2025

Significant events for the Camillians in Indonesia

By Fr. Luigi Galvani MI

This year, which also marks the 450th anniversary of St. Camillus' conversion, the Feast offered the Indonesian Delegation a precious opportunity to give thanks to the Lord for the abundant blessings received and to renew their commitment to building a future rich in new vocations, ready to serve "with more heart in their hands."

The celebration of the feast of St. Camillus de Lellis was a moment of particular joy and historical significance for the Camillian community in Indonesia. The event, divided into several stages, brought together all the brothers of the Delegation, together with

numerous family members and guests, in an atmosphere of fraternity, gratitude, and renewed missionary zeal.

The program included moments of great significance, such as the perpetual profession of four young confreres accompanied by their

ordination to the diaconate, the admission to the novitiate of eleven young men – including two young Filipino candidates – the first profession of ten novices, including one Pakistani and one religious from East Timor, and the renewal of vows by twenty-one young professed confreres, including two



Pakistanis.

The presence of the local bishop, Monsignor Edwaldus Sedu, the Provincial Superior, Father Evan Villanueva, the Philippine Provincial Councilor, Father Angel Grisostomo, and numerous confreres from the Delegation made the occasion even more solemn. The atmosphere of unity and sharing bore witness to the vitality of St. Camillus' spiritual heritage and the strength of a charism that continues to flourish in Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world.

Fr. Angel's message during his homily was particularly inspiring: "Do not be afraid to let yourselves be molded, like St. Camillus who allowed himself to be transformed by the Lord. Imitate his courage in carrying the cross and serving those who suffer."

These moments of grace are the fruit of the missionary work begun in Indonesia in 2009. In just over fifteen years, the Delegation has made a concrete contribution to vocation promotion, formation, missionary expansion in Pakistan and East Timor, and care for the sick, both through hospital and parish pastoral care and through social and charitable initiatives in favor of the most needy families. Of particular importance were

projects to free the mentally ill from chains and inhumane forms of confinement.

It is encouraging to see how the charism of St. Camillus, centered on compassionate love for the sick, continues to attract many young Indonesians who wish to consecrate their lives to the "holy service of charity" indicated by our founder. In this

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Jubilee of the Camillian Mission in Uganda

By Papa Tadeo

The Camillian mission in Uganda celebrated a significant milestone: twenty-five years since its foundation in 200, on the initiative of the then Anglo-Irish province, under the guidance of Father Tom O'Connor and Father Tom Smith.

The anniversary was not only a tribute to history and the founders, but also a renewed commitment to the original mission: to offer compassionate service to the sick and most vulnerable, following the example and inspiration of St. Camillus de Lellis. The theme of the jubilee year, "In the footsteps of St. Camillus," guided the celebrations, stimulating a moment of reflection on the gifts received over time and on the need to renew fidelity to the charism of the Order.

During the jubilee year, the mission promoted numerous spiritual and charitable initiatives, including novenas, retreats, charity collections, pilgrimages, and the construction of homes for

families in need in the communities of Masaka, Jinja, and Fort Portal. These activities were supported by fundraising campaigns at both the local and international levels. The year was also marked by important historical memory projects: the writing of the history of the Mission, the editing of a volume on the life and legacy of the late Father Richard, and the publication of a commemorative magazine.

The closing celebration took place on July 19, 2025, at St. Camillus Seminary in Kimaka, Jinja. The solemn Mass was presided over by Father Anthony Kunnel, Provincial Superior of the Indian Province, and concelebrated by Monsignor Paul Musana, Vicar General of the Diocese of Jinja, together with pioneer missionary Father Tom Smith. Over a thousand people attended the event, including members of the Order from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, the United States, and Ireland. Among the distinguished guests were



Brother Paul Kabore, General Councillor for the Missions, Brother John O'Brien, Superior Delegate of the Irish Delegation, and numerous Camillian confreres who have served as missionaries in Uganda.

After the Eucharistic celebration, the program included thanksgiving, a presentation on the history of the mission, and cultural entertainment provided by local schools, highlighting the value and transformative impact of the Camillian work in the country.

Over the past 25 years, the mission has grown significantly, consolidating its presence with communities in Jinja, Masaka, and a residence in Fort Portal, which have become reference points for ministry and formation. Today, the mission has nine perpetually professed members, eleven temporarily professed members, seventeen

philosophy students, and seven aspirants. The missionary work has also taken the form of charitable works, such as the construction of homes for families in serious difficulty, and a constant commitment to pastoral care through seminars and clinical pastoral education programs. The education of children from disadvantaged backgrounds remains a priority, while the St. Camillus Health Center and the St. Camillus Medical Center in Misoli continue to offer quality and compassionate medical care.

The jubilee was therefore a time of deep gratitude, renewed dedication, and vision for the future. The Camillian mission in Uganda looks ahead with the intention of continuing and expanding the "new school of charity," embodying the Gospel of Mercy through total and selfless service to the sick.





Inauguration of the “Cathedral” of St. Camillus in Rodi Kopany (Kenya)

By **Fr. Paolo Guarise MI**

“Cathedral”: this is how the Bishop of Homa Bay, Monsignor Michael Odiwa, described it with a smile and a hint of pride on the day of its inauguration. It is not, in the legal sense, a true cathedral, but a new and imposing parish church dedicated to St. Camillus de Lellis, patron saint of the sick and healthcare workers. However, the name conveys the idea well: its majestic structure, visible from afar along the road leading to Homa Bay, inspires admiration and respect.

The parish of Rodi Kopany, about ten kilometers from Homa Bay—whose name in the local language means “Bay of Fever”—is located in a rapidly

growing town. In 2017, the then diocesan bishop, Monsignor Philip Anyolo (now Archbishop of Nairobi), entrusted the small parish of St. John the Baptist to the Camillians, hoping for the construction of a larger church to accommodate the growing number of faithful. Eight years later, the promise has been fulfilled: the new church, “a little bigger” as the bishop described it, now stands next to the modest original chapel, still visible on the right side of the new building.

The choice of the inauguration day could not have been more significant: July 14, the liturgical feast of St. Camillus, in the context of the Camillian Jubilee

Year. During the celebration, the parish priest, Fr. Aloice Ochar, recounted the history of the construction with simplicity and gratitude: it all began with the digging of the foundations by volunteers and altar boys and the leveling of the ground with the help of a friend with mechanical equipment. The funds to continue came exclusively from parishioners, who for years contributed generously through their “widow’s mite,” also offering free labor. Despite moments of discouragement, trust in Providence never faltered and allowed the work to be completed.



Despite moments of discouragement, trust in Providence never wavered and allowed the work to be completed.



A particularly significant episode concerns the relic of St. Camillus, which was necessary for the consecration of the altar. After more than a year of fruitless requests and only ten days before the inauguration, it seemed impossible to find it. Then, almost as a sign, a small but authentic relic arrived, sealed with wax and bearing the Latin inscription *Ex ossibus Sancti Camilli de Lellis*. The moment when the bishop

placed it on the altar and anointed it with consecrated oil aroused deep emotion in those present.

The celebration was attended by a large number of faithful, priests, religious, and Camillians, including Fr. Dominic Mwanzia, Extraordinary Administrator of the Delegation of Kenya, and Bro. Bonaventura Muswi, Superior of the Tabaka community. At the end, Fr. Dominic expressed his gratitude

to the bishop and the parish priest for their commitment and dedication.

Anyone traveling between Tabaka and Karungu is invited to stop at Rodi Kopany: the “Cathedral” of St. Camillus is not only a place of worship but also an oasis of spiritual refreshment, a concrete sign of the faith and perseverance of a community united in the name of St. Camillus.



Hope does not disappoint

By **Fr. Isaac Okello MI**

“Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5).

In the context of the Jubilee of Hope, we Camillians in Uganda, in our silver jubilee year, can joyfully testify that hope truly does not disappoint. The Lord has been generous to our mission, giving us two new priests: Fr. Gyaviira Matovu Charles, and Fr. Tiigo Mathias. Both were ordained, together with other candidates, on August 2, 2025, by His Excellency Bishop Serverus Jjumba, Bishop of the Diocese of Masaka, in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Sorrows in Kitovu. It was a moment of grace and profound hope for the Ugandan mission, in the presence of thousands of faithful who came to share this significant stage in the life of our confreres and our community.

In his homily, Bishop Jjumba brought the greetings and exhortation of Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala to the new priests: “Be children of God and servants of the people of God.” He invited the assembly to invoke the Holy Spirit upon the candidates, reminding them that they were not receiving a spirit of fear, but of strength, the Spirit who gives the courage to proclaim Christ with frankness. He urged them not to let anything obscure the Cross of Christ in their ministry, to glory only in it, and to carry it faithfully.

The bishop also urged them to be men of prayer, to proceed with confidence, to walk with a clear conscience and determination, proclaiming a message of peace. He encouraged them to live the spirit of synodality, collaborating with the faithful, religious, clergy, and civil authorities; not to put themselves at the center, but to serve; to sanctify the people of God through prayer and the administration of the sacraments; and to make the sacrifice of Calvary present every day through the celebration of the Eucharist.

On August 3, the Camillian family gathered again for Masses of thanksgiving. Fr. Gyaviira Matovu Charles celebrated at the family home in the village of Mbirizi, a sub-parish of Kitanga, Catholic parish of St. Jude Bukoto, in the diocese of Masaka. Fr. Tiigo Mathias celebrated in his home parish, St. Joseph of Kinoni, a jubilee parish, also in the diocese of Masaka.

With gratitude, we thank the mission, the province, the Order, and the entire Church for supporting and accompanying our confreres on their journey of vocation. We extend our most sincere wishes to Fr. Gyaviira and Fr. Tiigo for their priestly ministry, assuring them of our prayers, support, and fraternal affection.

Fr. Cesare Ghilardi [1939 – 2025]

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

On October 26, 1951, he entered the house in Imperia as an aspirant, where he attended middle school and high school.

On September 30, 1956, he entered the novitiate at the house of “Stella Maris” in Borghetto Santo Spirito, where on October 6, 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 December 8, 1962, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. He received the Order of Deacons on July 4, 1965, and the Order of Priests on September 4, 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 the hospital in Genoa, replacing 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 removed. 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 test himself 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 a leave of absence 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), while also starting a program to welcome marginalized people in some areas of the religious house of

Santa Croce.

In 1996, until 2016, he was hired as chaplain at the Galliera Hospital in Genoa. This was a period in which he was particularly valued by the diocese, which appointed him Archbishop 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 his religious province: in May 1998, he was appointed 1st Provincial Councilor, and in the summer of 2001, Superior of the house in Genoa. In

June 2007, he was appointed Provincial Councilor for the Ministry and also Provincial Treasurer. In July 2010, he was appointed Treasurer of the "San Camillo" (Righi) nursing home 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 left largely empty and entrusted to the Madian Community of Turin, where he was placed.

He died suddenly of illness on July 24, 2025, while on vacation in Sardinia.



Mary, Mother of Jesus, faithful in her acceptance of the Word, in her cooperation in his work, especially in her concern for the suffering, presents herself to us as a model of the spiritual life and of service to others. She assists us with her maternal love” (C 68).

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