

Almighty and Merciful God,
I come to you with unending trust:
glorify your servant Fr. Mariano
and through his intercession
obtain for me the grace
for which I now in earnest ask
while looking with love on all those
who turn to you with a sincere heart.

ENGLISH

Venerable
**FATHER
MARIANO
OF TURIN**



Venerable
FATHER MARIANO
OF TURIN

edited by Giancarlo Fiorini

Roman Province of Friars Minor Capuchin
Rome 2009

INTRODUCTION

On 15th March 2008 Pope Benedict XVI declared Father Mariano of Torino “Venerable”. Thus acknowledging his virtuous heroism, in other words his holy life.

Father Mariano was the most popular Italian priest in the 60’s due to the fact that for 17 years he spoke to the Italian people from the television screen of the RAI, (national television station). He used simple and engaging language while addressing human and religious themes on successful weekly programmes such as: *Father Mariano’s post*, *In the family* and *Who is Jesus?*

Before entering the Capuchin order at the age of 34, Paolo Roasenda had been a Greek and Latin teacher for more than ten years in various Italian secondary schools. He was extremely appreciated at a national level due to commentaries on Horace and Cicero. At the same time he remained a clear and coherent witness of his faith at a particularly delicate time for the church and state in Italy.

Since childhood he had been a member of the Catholic Association (*Azione Cattolica*) taking an active part in many initiatives while being in charge at a high level. He also wrote hundreds of articles for various magazines aimed at the youth of the Catholic Association, inviting them in a calm and engaging way to discover the beauty of their faith and live according to its demands.

He considered himself “a friend of Jesus who looks for friends **for** Jesus”. Therefore he paid enormous attention to his prayer life and daily meditation, preferring the Gospels and *The Imitation of Christ*. Jesus was the greatest love in his life and he looked at everything through the eyes of faith. Always acting with spiritual motivation, he undertook all things with consistent faith. “My only desire, which burns my very flesh uncontrollably, is to completely do God’s will, without the imposition of obstacles by mankind”.

From this point his intent path towards sainthood began, a state which he considered a duty and a possibility for all.

CONTENTS

- 3 Introduction
- 5 Father Mariano, *Franciscan and priest...*
- 21 Biographical notes
- 24 Further Reading

Front cover – Fr. Mariano and Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception: oil on canvass (160x220 cm.) by Maestro Michele Gianfrancesco

Back cover – Professor Paolo Roasenda: oil on canvass (30x40 cm.) by Maestro Michele Gianfrancesco

Page 20 – Bronze bust of Fr. Mariano (59x38x62 cm.) in memory of the centenary of his birth, created by the sculptor Serafin Santibáñez.

Translated into English by Joanne Kavanagh

Vice Postulazione padre Mariano da Torino
Via Veneto 27 – 00187 Rome - Italy

Tel. 39 06 4747713 – Fax 39 06 4874142
E-mail: padremarianovp@libero.it
Internet: www.padremarianodatorino.com

It consisted of “living the will of God to perfection. For it is the love of God and the love of ones neighbour which are the wings we use to fly towards sainthood”. (1937)

He constantly repeated that the apostolate is the duty of every Christian because “life IS being an apostle, only he who gives, really lives. We are all in some way responsible for the souls which providence places in our paths”. (1937)

For the love of Jesus and following his apostolic belief, he insisted that his own behaviour be consistent with the needs and demands of his faith and of Christian morality. This he did without entering into crisis or compromise but with sacrifice and joy.

When it became clear that God was calling him to the consecrated life, he didn’t hesitate for a moment. He was encouraged in an extraordinary way by the intervention of Our Lady and by the promise of an apostolate above and beyond the norm.

As a Capuchin friar he continued in his work towards sainthood and his conviction towards an apostolic way of life. He began his missionary work by undertaking various types of jobs before dedicating himself totally to “the word of the Lord” in its many forms, in particular through the television.

He lived simply but with such heroic faithfulness towards doing the will of God and exceptional love for Jesus, Our Lady and all humanity.

The following pages (including images and subtitles chosen by the editor) contain his autobiography which first appeared in *Why I become a priest*: an inquiry into late vocations, a book he wrote which was edited by a friend of his, the servant of God don Giovanni Barra, and published in January 1955, right at the start of his mission on television. This fact would mark his very existence and leave a lasting memory for millions of Italians thanks to his very original greeting “peace and goodwill to all”.

G. F.

Rome, 22nd May 2008

Father Mariano of Turin

FRANCISCAN AND PRIEST THANKS TO OUR LADY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Prologue

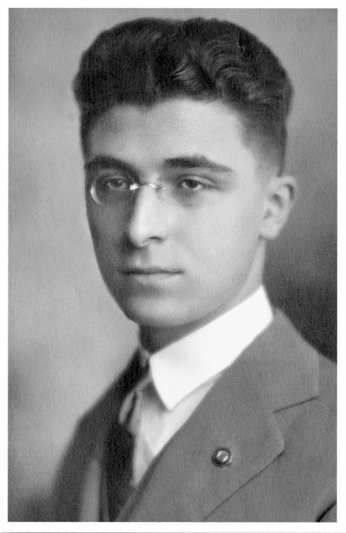
Perhaps the reader of these pages won’t be interested, but he who has written them is obliged to make a preliminary statement. I read a lot but write very little. I have never even kept a diary. However, I do read very willingly and not just books on the doctrine of the church or well known novels, but autobiographies, even though they hold little literary value.

The following are the pages that I have written. I hope that they will be of some benefit to those who appreciate a living testimony. My reason for writing is to testify once again – I can never do it often enough – and to acknowledge how Our Lady bestowed upon me such an undeserved grace, which she obtained from Our Lord, a grace which has become the very joy of my existence – my vocation as a Franciscan and Priest.

My city

I was born on 22nd May 1906. Therefore, as I write I am 48 years old (it would be more precise to say that I am more than 48). When I was 34, if anyone had said to me that one day I would be a priest I would have smiled and shook my head. At twenty years of age I had already declared to a dear friend who was a priest “No, I will never be a priest”.





Priests? Although I respected them I felt no attraction to such a life. What happened in my soul, that one day I would deeply desire that very life – the priesthood. If Our Lord in his mercy welcomes me one day into Paradise, I’m sure that it will be Our Lady who fills my soul with such sweet amazement showing me the way in which she lead my soul, indeed obliged it to go, before I could clearly see the will of God.

I was born in Turin, the city of the most Blessed Sacrament, of the Consolata, of don Bosco and of *Cottolengo*. I was born into a practicing Catholic family but had to build my spiritual world with great difficulty and midst misery and the constant need of mercy from Our Lord.

School years

I went to state schools, from primary, secondary through to university. In primary I was even suspended from lessons for a few days for taking part in a stone throwing, albeit friendly, encounter right in front of the school building. I therefore spent sixteen years within the Italian public school system of thirty years ago. A not altogether Christian environment. What is school like today? I don’t know. At that time, alongside studious and decent friends, there were also those who were lazy and rotten and morally corrupt – at that age already corrupting others from their desks. I found myself with some exemplary Christian teachers, and with others shoddy and areligious. What’s more we also had to put up with the masons who, with great pleasure, attacked the very foundation of our faith. Faith that was already so weak and rare in those days and to which the Italian schools gave no religious education after elementary school. Therefore there was ample oppor-

tunity for heated discussions with the philosophy professor on the miracles in Lourdes (Only if a missing arm or leg instantly reappeared would he believe in such occurrences). We also discussed his belief that there was such a “false” esteem of women by the church. How could this be, he said, considering the problem of prostitution?

Did those discussions do any good? Did they awaken any spark of faith in he whose faith was almost quenched? I don’t know, but this I remember well; it was enough that one of us stood up in class as a “*defensor fidei*” answering the teacher politely, in order to obtain encouragement and support: *ipso facto*, both from those far from the faith and others who purely respected humanity, everyone was on the same side just so we could contradict the teacher.

The group of “Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception”

It was during the Trento and Trieste years, the time of the city of Fiume [an Italian city now part of Slovenia], the years of *Dannunzio* and of the fascist marches in Rome. The most heard word in the lecture halls in the midst of unending applause certainly wasn’t “God” but the homeland (I’ve always thought that the only way to create a lack of love for ones native land was to pronounce it constantly). There existed (or perhaps still exists) a predominant sacred breeze of free opinion, which prevented the true formation of the youth – that of the interior life. There was a lot of education but little good upbringing. It was certainly a blessing from Our Lady how in those years I was able to conserve - actually - was able to increase my faith. At that time I was lucky enough to be part of a Christian youth group, the group of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, founded by the Jesuit fathers in Turin for young students in state schools. It was managed by the untiring Father Pesso, now well on in his years. At that time I couldn’t possibly have appreciated such an incredible gift from God: now I do. I’m quite convinced today that without

those religion lessons, conducted with such skill, in the midst of football and tennis games, and adapted to our absolute needs by priests who dedicated themselves to pastoral work, I, like so many others would have been lost. It was just the guidance I needed and gave me the opportunity to come into contact with other model youths while playing games, acting or doing charity work. I was able to form special friendships. In the group I gained great strength which enabled me to face the difficulties of life. So much so that today I'm still very grateful to them.

University and Graduation

I was very attracted to the idea of teaching and that's why, without hesitation, I chose to study literature at university. Out of all the teachers, Gaetano De Sanctis, who taught ancient history, stood out due to his moral convictions and deep culture. Although I had no particular capability for historic research, I chose him as my tutor. From his lessons we learned vital information. I still remember the delight of my daily contact with him, how that admirable researcher of ancient history transmitted an enthusiasm for study to us twenty year olds. I graduated, took part in a state exam to teach, and at the age of twenty-one found myself teaching Greek and Latin in a secondary school in Tolmino. Today I ask myself: in order to teach, is it enough to graduate, to be accepted into a school? I don't think so. It's a big mistake on the part of the ministry for education (at that time... and now?) not to offer the opportunity of supervised teaching practice to young inexperienced teachers. How many pedagogic mistakes are made by well-meaning but inexperienced teachers!

Greek and Latin professor

My route after Tolmino was: Pinerolo, Alatri and Rome. For twelve years with unending enthusiasm and gradually acquired competence, I endeavoured to teach Livio and Cicerone, Horace and Virgil, Homer, Eschilo and Plato

to thousands of young students. I must say however with similar frankness that the world of the classics, although rich (who would deny it) and immensely valuable, seemed to me (the more I delved into it) so much above and distant from the Christian world, that I began to feel frequently uneasy. "Why – I asked myself – can't the whole truth, which was revealed to mankind by God, take the place of such a partial truth (full of so many errors)? A truth which mankind has searched for even before the coming of Christ.



Every so often I tried to convey how I felt to my fellow scholars, or indeed within the school or through my writings (published by "Credere": a weekly magazine for the students of the *Azione Cattolica*) and through commentaries on the classics for secondary schools. I gathered many observations and collected various material in order to revise the Greek and Latin pre-Christian world from the point of view of a Christian in the nineteen hundreds. I did all this in the true spirit of a Christian studios while fulfilling a particular spiritual need. In two scholastic commentaries (edited by S.E.I.) I tried to convey my thoughts and points of view about the *Epistole* of Horace and the second book of *Musculature* by Cicerone.

Very modest attempts but attempts which clearly reveal my feelings - to bring everything to Christ while obviously

respecting he who didn't know Christ yet. I wasn't however completely satisfied with this scholastic and extra curriculum work. I still enjoyed school but it didn't fulfil an ever increasing need. That of being an apostle.

The fire of the apostolate

Such magic words! How was this “fire” lit within me? (I can't find a more adapt word considering that Jesus himself used it). I really couldn't say. Perhaps through books? Being in contact with true apostles? The press, conventions, congresses, week long study groups. Yes, a bit of everything but above all a mysterious grace. I remember my secondary school years, - white silk tie flowing on my chest - did I not also take part in so many semi-secret up-to-date meetings. At that time it was common to stroll through the crowded streets of Turin looking for discussions with opponents or at the very least some anti-clerical posters which we could tear up or cover with “long live the Pope!” Actions whose effects on the world were debatable but which kept the fire of the apostolate alive in us.

Later though, much later, I understood that the real apostolate, which is uplifting, is but one, and it is silent: it is that of example, first of all as a man (student, worker, father of a family) then as a Christian. At that time I still believed in the value of demonstrations in public squares and of shouting “long live the pope”. Woe if the apostolate become materialistic! Heaven forbid that the *Azione Cattolica* become a bureaucratic mechanism and does more good through condemning than through showing example.

L'Azione Cattolica

I really adored the *Azione Cattolica* (and still do even though I don't dedicate any of my time to it). That badge in my button-hole acted as a shield more that once against evil and reminded me of good. I loved it for the great treasure that it bestowed upon me: its apostolic passion. In those days we often complained, seeing as the only thing

fascism left us free to do was to concentrate on our souls. When I think about it now however, not being able to do otherwise was a providential limitation. I think that the apostolic efficiency of this great lay organization, that is to say, lay people who desire to work together with priests to expand God's Kingdom, must do so under the guidance of the priest. The *Azione Cattolica* is supported by the continuous control of its superiors so that it can direct all its work towards itself alone. Despite all the constant problems through the ages it is important not to lose sight of the only essential problem – that for which the association exists – the problem of eternity.

We should never worry about numbers, membership cards or subscriptions, it's impossible to reduce the problems of the apostolate down to mere numbers. The apostolate is ferment; there will always be but a few. A few good people are better than millions of mediocre people.

Virginity, marriage, priesthood

A lay person who gives up the idea of having a family, and still participates in the real world dedicating himself to the apostolate, is certainly an excellent idea and much applauded by the church. Of course, with family life it's not possible to continue to be as dedicated to the apostolate as one who is celibate. More than virginity itself, chastity chosen for virtuous reasons is better than marriage. If there isn't an extremely special vocation – and it is quite rare - the soul who wants to be an apostle should preferably choose one of the more traditional choices: either the family or the priesthood.

There is a sentence which seems to be slightly heretical when it's not clear – a sentence heard very often – a lay person can do more than a priest. The opposite is true. A holy priest can do far more than a lay person in his apos-



tolic work. This is because by its nature and because of divine intervention, the area of the apostolate is offered principally to priests. I say this of course with the deepest admiration for those dear exceptional souls who remain lay people dedicated to the apostolate. I'm writing this only to convey my state of mind at that time.

The Mysterious Hand

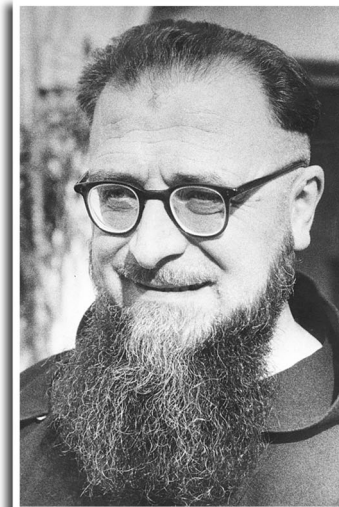
What therefore could I have done? My soul searched ... to follow the common route? To build a family in order to prove that being an apostle means bringing up a Christian family? For some time in fact I directed my life towards just that. It was then that, once again and in a most decisive way, Our Lady intervened. At the very moment that I seemed to be heading more and more in the direction of family life, Our Lady, who I had constantly called upon for help, bestowed a physical sensation upon me which caused me to stop in my tracks and turn around – against my will. I perceived an intolerable distaste for worldly life. At the same time I felt an extraordinary pull towards the priesthood. A road I had always veered away from. And yet it was



just so; one day in the September of 1940 (the war already in action) in the secret of my heart I decided to enter the religious life and become a priest. Where would I go? Which order would I choose? These questions didn't interest me. I was just concerned with my decision. I never once looked back. Fourteen years later, I can, thank God, say that I have never had a moment of regret. Instead, I have received an ever increasing sense of peace and security. I felt that Our Lady had poured that decision into my heart and so I was convinced

that I could achieve everything with Her blessed help.

But at my age? I was already 34 and my work was my life - teaching at that time in the Mamiani secondary school in Rome. I was concerned about my bad health and thoughtful of the wonderful affection shown to me at school. I felt it necessary to painfully cut off all ties with my dear parents (already elderly) and with my dear sister with whom I had always had such a strong relationship. Only the Lord knows how much I had to fight to abandon these appealing family ties.



I searched, I found, I was welcomed

But where would I go? On whose door would I knock? For years I had been familiar with the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the Salesians and the Josephites. I also had friendships with the Redemptorists and some missionary priests. I knew the Capuchins by name, having approached them occasionally in the past but I must admit they didn't seem particularly pleasant at all. That said, for the previous couple of years I had been part of the third order Franciscans. I was third order in theory only, as I rarely followed the basic rule of the the Franciscans; that which permits one to live in the 'real' world while following the true Franciscan spirit.

The wondrous thing is this; at the same time I made my decision, I also decided to become a Capuchin friar. Who were the Capuchins? Where would I find them? Would they welcome me? Waiting for a friend one day in his hall, I looked through a box of books for something to read. I happened to find a book on the life of Ignatius of Laconi. Taking it and not bothering to wait for my friend, I went home. I read about the amazing life of that young illiterate lay brother. That book sealed my certainty: I would

become a Capuchin. I searched, I found and I was welcomed. Today I am a Capuchin friar.

From the novitiate to the priesthood

My time spent in the novitiate in Fiuggi went by in an instant: I found it easier compared to how it had been described to me. It was believed, however, that my sudden arrival had something to do with being a war spy. Blessed be the Capuchin lifestyle which simplifies many things: no need for razors, socks, hats! I felt perfectly at ease and discovered ... perhaps I was a born to be a Capuchin.

After the novitiate I studied philosophy for some months as it was a new subject for me. An essential step in order to begin theology. I attended the *Angelicum* university in Rome for five years and deeply appreciated lessons given by great “maestros”. At the beginning of third year, having already reached the canonic age, I was given permission to be ordained a priest.

The Priest

Since 29th July 1945 I have had the privilege and the indescribable joy of celebrating the Holy Mass. *Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?* I know well that I will never be worthy of celebrating Mass. Other more saintly Christians than I – from St. Francis of Assisi to chancellor Dollfus - didn’t feel worthy and I know that there is no greater honour than consecrating the Body of Christ. It’s true that I can absolve sins – the first time that I heard a confession I was extremely emotional. It seemed that I had the weight of the whole world on my shoulders. I can baptise, unite in holy matrimony, anoint the sick and dying with Holy oils but even if I managed to convert the whole world to Christianity, I couldn’t do anything greater than celebrate Mass. The Mass is everything. Even the liturgy of the word, to which my superiors wanted me to dedicate myself for years, is nothing compared to that Mass which I can celebrate every day. My words as a priest can -

so long as they don’t betray or hide the words of Jesus – bring enlightenment to many souls. Now, thanks to the television and radio even to millions of souls. However, it is only my priestly actions on the alter, although through my own fault often lacking tenderness, which bestows on those souls the great benefit of the resurrection.



The Holy Mass

It isn’t the divine word of Jesus which saves the world from sin but His death on the cross, mysteriously renewed during every Mass. It’s worth any sacrifice all through life to be able to celebrate Mass. I believe that a priest should simplify his life directing it around the Mass. His true apostolate is to make the Mass known and loved by all people and to have it daily transform his life into the Mass itself. When I was a lay person I was afraid of priests who raced through mass just to do something else; nowadays I pity them. I am deeply convinced that the spiritual thermometer of a parish is a strip of supernatural mercury: the mercy and love with which the priests of the parish celebrate Mass. The spiritual rebirth of a Christian community must start here with a greater knowledge and a more lively participation, at least on Sundays and holy days, of all the faithful in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

I took the name “Mariano”

I always try to bring the liturgy of the word down to two concepts: Mary and Jesus. This I do both on the altar and in the theatre, on radio and on television. I took the name Mariano to honour (at least in some way) She to whom I owe so much. I reflect with great joy how every time someone says my poor name, in some way it recalls Her. I repeatedly ask the dear mother of my soul, to teach me not to ‘preach’ but to ‘talk’ about Jesus.

Have we greatly complicated the whole role of the apostolate? How is it possible that in order to do some good it’s necessary to use so much technique, so much paper, so many materials? I don’t want to believe it. God is so simple. It’s enough to become a man among men just as He became a man amongst us. Perhaps our words are less effective because they are bound with too much silk: they are no longer purely evangelistic.



The Missions and “Gospel weeks”

Talk about Jesus, and only Him, to souls. During the people’s missions, which my brothers and I have conducted for many years with the aid of the press, microphones and even cinema, we insist on talking about one theme only: Jesus and the crucified Jesus. People get tired of everything – even of the greatest orator. You can never get tired of hearing the story of Jesus, yesterday, today, throughout the centuries. In Him there is everything.

For this reason, during the people’s missions I try to create a “Gospel week” with one aim alone: to introduce the Gospel to every Christian home, to have it placed in a privileged position and read by the whole family. (Today only 33% of families possess the Gospel). All the novenas, the triduum and the great exaltation of saints put together, aren’t worth the personal knowledge of the Gospel by all Christians. Preachers pass by, the Gospel remains. I hope to discover, before I die, that the “Gospel week” exists in every Italian city. It is the most fundamental, simple, low cost and effective form of the apostolate.

Talking about Jesus

I hear many people saying that they don’t like preachers. On the other hand as much as we delude ourselves looking at the crowds on Sundays and Holy days, churches are deserted by 70% of the population. One who has preached knows that even during the missions the homilies are frequented by only 30% of parishioners. Whose fault is it? It’s common to preach for hours but this is not convenient for someone who lives in the real world and has family and work commitments. Why don’t we preach after dinner when people are more or less free to attend if they want? Why do we preach so rarely in the open air, in the stadiums, in the parks, to whoever doesn’t want to come to church. Why, above all, are there so few homilies on the adorable person that is Jesus. Christianity isn’t so much a doctrine (although it is the highest, as it divine) as a

person: the essence of Christianity is the person Jesus Christ. Preaching lacks the “essentials”, it isn’t very “Christian” because Jesus as a person isn’t talked about. It is necessary to “talk”, not “preach”. I believe that Jesus spoke in a gentle way instead of preaching in a loud and ineffective voice frequently used by too many ministers of God.

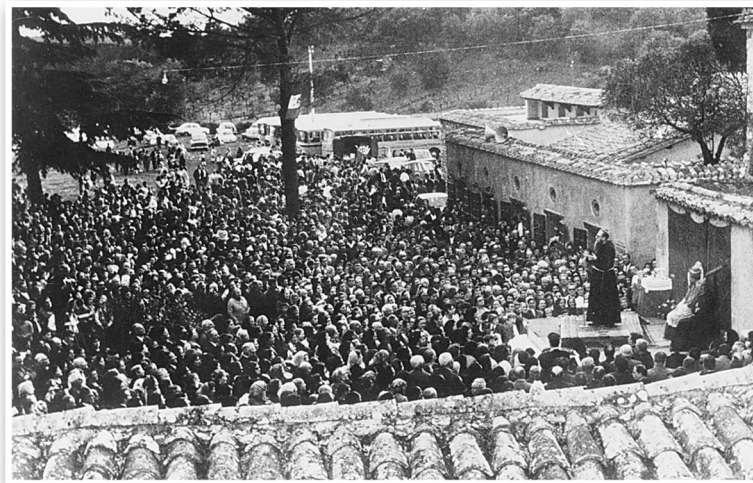
Along with the explanation of the Gospel it is also necessary to insist on explaining the Mass so that everyone can understand it more - and understand it better. Instead of useless homilies and memorials for local celebrations in honour of patron saints, it would be much better to explain catechism to adults, (not during Mass of course). It isn’t evil in itself which is bad: it’s not doing good works well which permits evil to grow. There is only one way to fight evil: do good works, but do them well.

These personal thoughts stem from ten years of life as a priest. Convictions which come from understanding the mentality of mankind today through personal experience. If I suffer, it is because I see just how much priestly energy is wasted and made useless by not being well directed.

Laughing to myself

If I may, I’d like to tell you about an impression I have: sometimes priests don’t really “understand” today’s world. There lacks a real understanding, a warm intimacy, between he the apostle and mankind today. This is something which doesn’t come from magazines or weekly journals but from fervent prayer and personal closeness to God. It’s clear that a person who “preaches” doesn’t manage to draw souls closer: his reasoning is scholastic, theoretic and not attentive to the real state of souls today. Is it that we enter the seminaries and novitiates too early? I don’t know. (Certainly I would have liked to have done military service which is also compulsory for priests). Does a priest live more for ecclesiastic literature than personal experience? Three years of being a hospital chaplain offered me – at a mature age – more experience than all the books on moral issues. I believe that the unbeatable modal of being a true

apostle is the Curate of Ars, who only left Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament in order to visit his parishioners - one by one. I think that every priest responsible for souls should systematically dedicate a certain amount of uninterrupted time each day to visiting the faithful, instead of spending their time in the parish office.



I thank providence that I was already a mature age when I first heard the call. I don’t know if I would have really appreciated such a grace as the priesthood at an earlier age. Life experiences have stood me well. When I hear people say: “Father, you understand us...” I want to answer “its not thanks to me, it’s a gift from... experience”. When they write to me: “It is said, Father, that you have lived in the real world...”, I laugh to myself and thank providence.

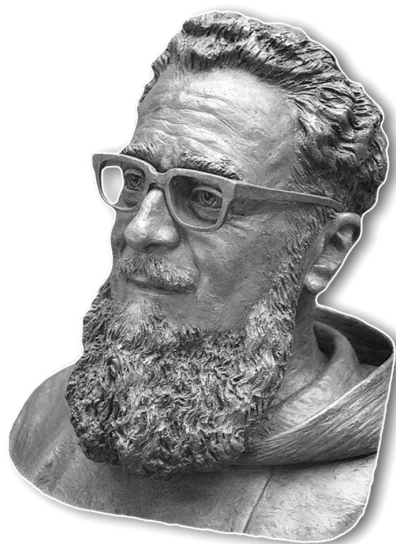
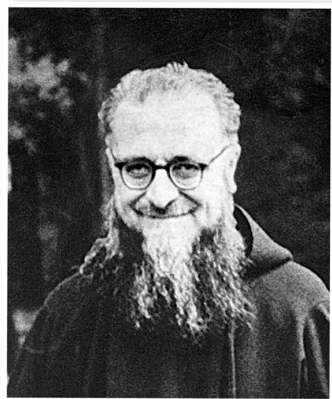
The maternal hand of Mary

My road has been easy - it would be a lie to say otherwise. Perhaps the Lord is saving more difficult challenges for me in the future because he still considers me to be weak and inexperienced for serious trials. Up to now I have always had the delicate maternal hand of Mary guiding my way. Obstacles? I’ve had many and still come across

them continuously. Not so much in the convent with the variety of personalities of the friars, or in the world and its ongoing subtle temptations but in my own ever renewing selfishness. That new man, which the head of the novitiates told to put on the Franciscan habit (I was in trousers and shirt sleeves at the time) isn't born yet. I'm still at the entrance to the novitiate: the trial period.

If only I were a better person ...

Every day I find one more grey hair and am more convinced that the one true obstacle to good, the good that the Lord works through me as a priest, is me, myself. My hateful self. What about mankind? I'm indeed sure that all mankind, yellow, red, black or white are more to be pitied than blamed. People would improve if I managed to improve myself. Therefore, I ask whoever reads this booklet to say a "Hail Mary" for my poor soul. Let us not ever separate ourselves from Mary: the cause of all our problems is not believing enough in the great love which Our Mother, the Immaculate Conception, has for us.



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Paolo Roasenda (1906 – 1940)

1906, 22nd May: Paolo Roasenda is born in a house near Emanuele Filiberto square in Turin. Son of Giovanni Battista and Angela Rustichelli. Two days later he's baptised.

1912, 12th April: makes his First Holy Communion; 2nd June receives the sacrament of confirmation; five years later joins "*Azione Cattolica*" in the group of "Blessed Amedeo of Savoia".

1915 – 1923: attends secondary school "Cavour".

1923, 1st November: applies to study literature at the university of Turin; graduates on 14th December 1927 having done a thesis on the early years of Constantine's rule.

1928, 10th September: after a state exam, teaches Greek and Latin language in a secondary school in Tolmino and then in Pinerolo (1929-34), in Alatri (1934-35) and in Rome (1935-40).

1933, 9th April: already a member of the third order Franciscan, on Easter Sunday joins the "*Missionari della Regalità di Cristo*" and is a member till 1938.

1937, 23rd November: the Cardinal and Vicario of Rome, Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani, nominates him as president of the roman youth group of the "*Azione Cattolica*" for three years.

1940, 28th December: enters the novitiate of the Capuchin convent in Fiuggi.

Father Mariano of Turin (1941 – 1972)

- 1941, 11th January: puts on the Capuchin novice habit.
- 1942, 12th January: takes temporary vows (for 3 years) and is sent to the Capuchin convent in Alatri for a short philosophy course.
- 1942, 18th September: transfers to the convent in Rome on Via Veneto; applies to study theology at the “Angelicum” university, on 30th November 1949 graduates *magna cum laude* with a thesis on “the essence and value of humility within the spiritual life”.
- 1945, 29th July: ordained a priest in the Roman church of Santa Maria in Campitelli, Having made his solemn profession the preceding 11th February.
- 1945-46: chaplain in the prison “Regina Coeli” and then in the psychiatric hospital “Santa Maria della Pietà” in Rome.
- 1946-47: teaches religion in the secondary school “Terenzio Mamiani” in Rome.
- 1947-1950: chaplain in the hospital “Santo Spirito in Sassia”. At the same time dedicates himself to conferences, spiritual retreats, and local homilies. His “Gospel weeks” are active during this period.
- 1950-1954: makes 22 speeches on Vatican radio and 17 on Italian radio.
- 1955, 30 January: the first Sunday transmission of “Father Mariano’s post”. Later in 1958 “In the family and in 1959 “Who is Jesus” are added.
- 1965, 21st March: the programme “Radiocorriere TV” is broadcast with answers on various themes, always connected with religion.

- 1972, 7th March: last television appearance.
- 1972, 27th March: dies in the state of grace due to cancer of the liver and is buried in the cemetery of Saint Lorenzo in Verano in the area reserved for Capuchin Friars.
- 1985, 16th February: his mortal remains are moved to the church of the Immaculate Conception in Via Veneto.
- 1988, 5th July: he is inscribed on the list of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal to begin the diocesan process for the cause of canonization. The closure of the diocesan process takes place on 11th March. On 22nd March 1991 the Congregation for the Causes of Saints recognized its juridical validity.
- 1996, 29th June: the Proposer of the Cause, Father Ambrogio Eszer o.p., signs the “Positio” of the servant of God, Father Mariano of Turin.
- 2006, 29th September: during a Special Meeting, the promoter of the faith and eight theological Consultants of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, made a unanimous positive decision to recognize the heroic virtues of the servant of God.
- 2008, 19th February: The *Ordinaria* of Cardinals and Bishops of the Congregation recognize the *excellencia vitae* of the servant of God in his heroic virtues.
- 2008, 15th March: Pope Benedict XVI, acknowledging his heroic virtues, declared Father Mariano Venerable.

FURTHER READING

Paolo Roasenda, *Assoluto e Relativo. Scritti spirituali per i giovani*, a cura di R. Cordovani, Roma 2007, pp. 550.

Paolo Roasenda, *Mondo classico e coscienza cristiana. Saggi di letteratura*, a cura di R. Cordovani, Roma 2009, pp. 536.

Giancarlo Fiorini, *Pace e bene a tutti. Quel primo frate in TV*, Ed. San Paolo, Milano 2006, pp. 240.

Giancarlo Fiorini (a cura), *Padre Mariano da Torino nel Centenario della nascita*, Roma 2007, pp. 414.

Il Vangelo in onda, DVD della Nova-T di Torino (2006), 120'.

The first "Venerable" person on T.V., DVD by Carlo and Paola De Biase (2008), English-Italian, 100 mins.

