



Sr Liduina Meneguzzi (1901-1941)

"The message that the Blessed Liduina Meneguzzi nowadays brings to the Church and to the world is that of hope and love. A kind of hope which redeems men both from their selfishness and from aberrant forms of violence. A kind of love which is an urge to solidarity, to sharing out and to service, following the example of Christ who came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life to save all of us". (cfr Decree on the Heroicness of the Virtues)

Elisa Angela Meneguzzi (the future Sister Liduina) is born on September 12, 1901 in Giarre, near Abano Terme, Padova district. She comes from a very humble family of farmers who are anyway very rich in honesty and faith: values which the little child learns soon.

She demonstrates a vivid spirit of praying: everyday she attends to the Saint Mass, even she has to walk for two kilometres.

She frequents catechism and later on, she herself becomes a catechist. In the evenings, at home she prays with her family and she's happy to speak about God to her brothers and sisters.

When she is just fourteen she takes service by well-off families and by some hotels in Abano, a well known thermal resort, so she can support her family. Everybody loves and appreciates her for her mild and willing personality.

She desires to dedicate all her life to Lord and so on March 5, 1926 she enters in the Sisters Congregation of Saint Francesco of Sales who have their Motherhouse in Padova.

Here she realizes her ideal of total offering to God and she continues to spread the treasures of her great heart. She carries out with love her precious deed in Santa Croce boarding school: she works as a servant in charge of linen, as a sacristan, as a nurse and among the girls of Santa Croce who consider her as a good friend who is able to listen to them, to help them in resolving their troubles through wise advice.

Among them she leaves indelible feeling of tenderness, of encouraging serenity and of a well-trying patience.

In 1937 she finally realizes the great dream which from ever she keeps in her heart: to leave for the mission lands and to bring love and faith in Christ to the many brothers who don't know Him.

Her Superiors send her to Dire-Dawa in Ethiopia as a missionary.

At Dire Dawa there are people with different origins, religions and habits and for this reason it is considered a cosmopolitan town.

Here in such a mosaic of races and religions, the humble sister dedicates herself with fervour to her missionary deed.

She hasn't got a deep theological culture, but a strong inner charge which is nourished by a deep contact with Lord. She acts as a nurse in the Parini Civil Hospital which, after the outbreak of the Second World War, becomes a military hospital. Liduina is a true "charity angel" to the injured



soldiers who

arrive at the hospital. She nurses their physical aches with tenderness and tireless devotion. She sees in every suffering brother the image of Christ.

Soon her name is known by everybody and everyone looks for her and invokes her as a blessing.

Natives call her "Sister Gudda" (Great). When the bombings raged on the city and on the hospital, only a cry comes out from everybody's mouth "Help, Sister Liduina!".

And she, careless of the risks, carries the wounded to the shelters and she immediately runs to help others. She bends over the dying to suggest an act of contrition and with her inseparable ampoule of holy water she baptizes the dying children.

Her gift is not only for the Italians, the Christians but also for whites and blacks, for Catholics and Coptics, for Muslims and Pagans. Behaving like that, she follows her true ecumenical spirit. She especially loves to speak about the goodness of Father God and about the beautiful heaven which God has prepared for all of us, his sons.

The natives who are almost all Muslims are fascinated by her and feel a new attraction towards the Catholic religion.

She is given the appellation of "ecumenical flame" as she effects one of the most recommended aspects of Ecumenism much time before the Second Vatican Council.

God's souls anticipate events, they are like brightening lighthouses which point out the right direction even in the thickest darkness.

Meanwhile an incurable disease undermines her health. She accepts her illness peacefully. She suffers and she loses strength but she courageously performs her precious act of love among the injured till her last days.

At the end she undergoes to a delicate and difficult surgical operation. It seems that it has gone well but there are some complications and an intestinal paralysis led her to death on December 1941.

Sister Liduina holily dies at the age of forty, wholly abandoned to God's willingness and offering her life for the peace in the world.

A doctor who was there says "I've never seen someone dying with such joy and bliss". According to the soldiers who claim her like one of their family, she is buried in the graveyard of Dire-Dawa, in their reserved area.

Twenty years later, on July 1961, her body is brought to Padova in a chapel of the Motherhouse and here devotees and friends come to greet her and to invoke her intercession to God.