

BLESSED MARIA TRONCATTI, *virgin*

She was born at Corteno Golgi (Brescia, Italy) on February 16, 1883. She was fascinated by the missionary ideal from adolescence and this sustained her in the development of her religious vocation. She made her religious profession in the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in 1908, and served in Italy for some years. In 1922 she left for Ecuador, from which, by her own free choice, she never returned. In the forest she evangelised through her care for the sick, and she was the «*madrecita buena*» («good little mother») for all, both the native Shuar and the colonists. She proclaimed and witnessed the love of the Father to all, along with the protection of Mary Help of Christians. She died at Sucúa on August 25, 1969 as a result of the crash of the small airplane on which she was travelling.

From the Common of virgins, or of holy women: those who worked for the underprivileged, with psalms of the day from the psalter.

Office of Readings

SECOND READING

From the Encyclical *Redemptoris missio* of Blessed John Paul II, pope.
(nn. 42, 69-70, 88: AAS 83[1991] 289, 317-318, 335)

To live the mystery of Christ as testimony of Spiritual maternity

The missionary, who, despite all his or her human limitations and defects, lives a simple life, taking Christ as the model, is a sign of God and of transcendent realities. But everyone in the Church, striving to imitate the Divine Master, can and must bear this kind of witness; in many cases it is the only possible way of being a missionary. The evangelical witness which the world finds most appealing is that of concern for people, and of charity toward the poor, the weak and those who suffer. The complete generosity underlying this attitude and these actions stands in marked contrast to human selfishness. It raises precise questions which lead to God and to the Gospel. A commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion is also a witness to the Gospel when it is a sign of concern for persons and is directed toward integral human development.

The Church needs to make known the great gospel values of which she is the bearer. No one witnesses more effectively to these values than those who profess the consecrated life in chastity, poverty and obedience, in a total gift of self to God and in complete readiness to serve humanity and society after the example of Christ.

In the religious missionary the virginity for the sake of the kingdom is transformed into a motherhood in the spirit that is rich and fruitful. It is precisely the mission *ad gentes* that offers them vast scope for «the gift of self with love in a total and undivided manner». The example and activity of women who through virginity are consecrated to love of God and neighbor, especially the very poor, are an indispensable evangelical sign among those peoples and cultures where women still have far to go on the way toward human promotion and liberation.

An essential characteristic of missionary spirituality is intimate communion with Christ. We cannot understand or carry out the mission unless we refer it to Christ as the one who was sent to evangelize. St. Paul describes Christ's

attitude: «Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross» (*Phil 2:5-8*). The mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption is thus described as a total self-emptying which leads Christ to experience fully the human condition and to accept totally the Father's plan. This is an emptying of self which is permeated by love and expresses love. The mission follows this same path and leads to the foot of the cross. The missionary is required to «renounce himself and everything that up to this point he considered as his own, and to make himself everything to everyone». This he does by a poverty which sets him free for the Gospel, overcoming attachment to the people and things about him, so that he may become a brother to those to whom he is sent and thus bring them Christ the Savior. This is the goal of missionary spirituality: «To the weak I became weak; I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the Gospel» (*1 Cor 9:22-23*). It is precisely because he is «sent» that the missionary experiences the consoling presence of Christ, who is with him at every moment of life — «Do not be afraid, for I am with you» (*Acts 18:9-10*) — and who awaits him in the heart of every person.

RESPONSORIAL

1 Cor 9:22

R/. To the weak I became weak, * I have become all things to all, that I might save some at any cost.

V/. The Lord has sent me to the poor.

R/. I have become all things to all, that I might save some at any cost.

PRAYER

Merciful Father, who through the power of the Holy Spirit stirred up in the Virgin Blessed Maria Troncatti a maternal charity to announce Christ to the nations, grant, through her intercession, that we might be instruments of reconciliation and peace, so that all may glorify your holy name. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.