



“As we have been united in the profession of faith, so let us keep ourselves united in suffrage and intercession.”

(Fr. Alberione)

At 7,15 today (local time), 26 May 2011, in the infirmary of the Community of the Motherhouse of Alba, the Divine Master has called our brother Disciple to his eternal reward.

BR. MARIO CELESTINO RIZZO

94 years, 79 of Pauline life, 73 of religious profession

Brother Celestino came from Apuglia, where he was born on 3 March 1917, in Alesano (Lecce). He enters the Congregation in Alba on 12 February 1932, presented by his parish priest who had read about the young institution founded by Fr. Alberione in *Vita Pastorale*. He spends in Alba the first years of his formation, committed in the composing department, in the porter's desk and in the flatbed machines. He makes his first profession in Rome on 7 April 1938, at the end of the year of novitiate and his perpetual profession on 20 March 1944 in Alba at the height of the war. In Alba will be the community where brother Celestino will commit all his “holy activities” for the rest of his long life: still with the flatbed machines (until 1955), in the binding department (1955-1972) and, from 1972 until he has been able, in the shipping of *Famiglia Cristiana*.

Together with a life that is apparently “poor” of external events goes together an intense interior life, already noted by the parish priest who presented him, barely a fourteen-year old, with these words: «I have at hand an estimable subject with a religious vocation. I have thought of his institution that does so much good using the press... The young man is enthusiastic, he would like to leave at once, but it's necessary to have patience. You'll see how good he is and what a vocation!» And the enviable arriving point of 79 years of Pauline life has given proof of this. He was quite happy to testify to the love for the gift he has received as called to be a Disciple of the Divine Master, a testimony expressed in several circumstances even through words and through writing. In order to make known the vocation of the disciple, he had edited a collection of the writings of the Founder, titled *Il cuore di don Alberione per i Discepoli del Divin Maestro* (The heart of Fr. Alberione for the Disciples of the Divine Master); also in recent years, he did all he could to gather material useful for this purpose.

On the occasion of his 50 years of religious life, he wrote thus in 1988 on the columns of *Gazzetta d'Alba*: «They often ask me: why have you made yourself a religious? I must say that it is not possible to explain it entirely. For certain things you only have an intuition, without succeeding to clarify them completely, even for yourself. I know, however, that at a given moment of my life Christ has said to me what he has repeated to so many in the course of history: “Come you and follow me!” Christ was calling me to serve him as a religious in his mystical vineyard, that is, in the wonderful Pauline Family of Fr. James Alberione.» His consecration in the “difficult way of evangelization in social communications” was inspired clearly by his love for the Eucharist, by his devotion to the Virgin and by the apostolic model of saint Paul. On the occasion of the celebrations in his town of birth, he had the joy of the presence of Mons. Tonino Bello. The bishop

remembered with emotion that he turned, at the start of his theological studies, to brother Celestino, of whom he was a friend, to receive a Bible, since his family was not very well to do. He praised highly on that occasion the unstoppable course of the Word of God thanks to the press and to diffusion, concluding: «We must praise the Lord who accomplishes his “exploits” through generous souls, through common folk, through the poor and the saints... It is not the “exploit” of brother Celestino, it is “exploit” of God, the manifestation of God through his servants.» These are prophetic words that encourage us to «rekindle the gift» received (1Tim 1,6) with faith and hope working through love (1Cor 13,13; Gal 5,6).

We entrust this our brother who has reached the end of his course to the merciful hands of the Father and to the kind face of the Master who awaits his faithful servants, asking him to intercede for the needs of the Congregation and in particular for vocations to the Disciples of the Divine Master.

Rome, 26 May 2011

Fr. Vincenzo Vitale

**The Superiors of Circumscription are to inform their communities for the prescribed suffrages.
(Const. 65 and 65.1)**