

## MAESTRA THECLA



I never had the privilege of knowing Maestra Thecla personally, but I've come to appreciate and love her through the testimonies of many sisters who have shared their experiences of her with me. One testimony remains etched in my heart—that of

Sr. Antonietta Martini who passed away in 2003. Sr. Antonietta had met Maestra Thecla while discerning her future vocation. I'd like to share her written account here:

"I still vividly recall my first encounter with her as a twenty-year-old girl, carrying within me the restless longing to respond to my vocation in life. She looked at me with a gaze so profound. There wasn't a hint of selfish satisfaction in her expression, as if gaining another member for her Institute was her priority. Instead, her eyes radiated deep gratitude. She spoke with a tone of quiet confidence, the kind that springs from a life rooted in faith: *'It is a great gift, you know, to belong entirely to the Lord, to give your whole life to making Him known. It brings immense joy.'*

"She looked at me again, then embraced me and kissed my forehead. To this day, I recall that embrace when I think of my decision to enter religious life. It was as if, in that moment, she imparted something of herself—a life-giving connection that opened my heart to the horizons of God. It inspired me to embrace a service that encompasses the entire world."

For me, these words beautifully capture what fascinates me about Maestra Thecla: her simplicity, her attentiveness, her welcoming spirit toward everyone God placed in her path, her practical wisdom, and her ability to get to the heart of things. All of this came from a heart overflowing with God, a deep passion for the Gospel, and a fervent desire for everyone to know the Lord and the transformative power of His love.

I aspire to her strong, determined, and passionate faith—a faith that gave her the courage to face life's inevitable difficulties,

especially when the Lord called her to embark on uncharted paths. Her faith made her a trailblazer, a woman ahead of her time, unafraid to embrace the emerging mass media. She inspired generations of young sisters to take bold risks and explore new, more effective ways of spreading the Gospel.

I also deeply admire her humility—a virtue that made her truly great. She demonstrated profound docility, continually listening to God's will and recognizing that everything she achieved was purely the fruit of His grace, providence, and love. As she often quoted these words drawn from St. Paul: *"By myself, I can do nothing. With God, I can do everything!"*

The Superiors have entrusted me with the task of assisting, alongside the Pauline Family's postulator, in the process of her beatification. Many graces have been reported, some of which were considered potential miracles. However, none have yet met the Church's criteria for a miracle. Let us continue to pray and spread awareness of her life, which remains an extraordinary gift to the world even today.



Those who come to know Mother Thecla are captivated by her example. May many more people encounter her through her biographies and, above all, through our lives as her spiritual daughters. She continues to carry us in her heart.

*Annunciata Bestetti, fsp*