

FATHER GIANANTONIO DA ROMALLO, born Giacomo Federico Agosti

Penitentiary for the foreign languages of the Milan's Duomo, after 8 September 1943 he strove to save the lives of many Jewish families. He hid the persecuted who asked for his help at the convent of the Capuchins in Viale Piave, providing them false documents and helping them to reach Switzerland clandestinely. On 13 June 1944 he was arrested and taken to the prison of San Vittore, where he was interrogated for a long time by Marshal Koch. He was then transferred to the concentration camp of Bolzano and then deported to Germany: to Flossenbürg, Zwickau and Dachau. During that time, Father Gianantonio and the other priests provided assistance to the numerous typhus patients in the camp. Father Gianantonio returned to Milan after the Liberation. He died in 1967.

The deeds of Father Gianantonio da Romallo are told in the volume "Memoria di sacerdoti «Ribelli per amore» 1943-1945" by Giovanni Barbareschi, published by Ambrosianum, Milan, 1986.

MOTHER LUISA ARLOTTI

Canossian nun and nurse, native of Belluno. She moved to Schio in 1925, where she took service at the "Rossi" kindergarten, later becoming director in 1935. In June 1944, Mother Luisa hosted inside the kindergarten, unbeknownst to her sisters, partisans and wounded soldiers, who managed to escape death, despite the surveillance to which she was subjected and the visits received by the Nazi-fascist authorities.

In particular, the nun hid and cured, together with a doctor and a nurse of the Resistance, two Venetian partisans, who had been wounded near Vicenza during a firefight with the Nazi-Fascists. Later, she also gave shelter to two English pilots, an Austrian soldier who had passed with partisans and a French pilot. The latter betrayed her. Captured by an officer of the Black Brigade and a German officer, Mother Luisa Arlotti was taken prisoner until the Liberation. During her imprisonment she was subjected to strict interrogations in which she did not make any name. The nun's deeds, who died in Poiano in 1988, were narrated by Ugo De Grandis in "*Madre Luisa Arlotti: un angelo in tonaca nera*", a volume published in 2016.

VESNA BOSANAC

Director of the Vukovar's hospital. Vesna Bosanac worked with great humanity during the siege of the city, thus managing - in desperate sanitary conditions - to save the lives of many victims of Serbian bombing. When the city was later conquered, she was interned in the concentration camp of Srijemska Mitrovica. Later, she was released and returned to Vukovar, where she reassumed the management of the hospital. After the end of the war, Vesna Bosanac testified before the International Criminal Court in The Hague at the trials of several Serbian war criminals.

BIAGIO CONTE

A lay missionary from Palermo, he founded there, in 1993, the "Mission of Hope and Charity", in order to give shelter and support to the most needy. During his life, Biagio Conte, who called himself "a useless little servant", chose to defend the interests of migrants, disabled and homeless, sometimes even through hunger strikes and peaceful demonstrations of protest, such as the walking trip from Palermo to Brussels in 2019 in order to talk about migrants' rights with MEPs. The mission of Palermo - assisted since

2003 by a female branch and since 2018 by the mission of Castellammare del Golfo - was visited by Pope Francis in October 2018, when the pontiff had lunch with Father Biagio and the guests of his charity house. Biagio Conte died in January 2023 from colon cancer.

CATERINA GIORDANO

Caterina Giordano and her family hid in Begunda, a hamlet of Borgo San Dalmazzo, near Cuneo, the Polish Jews family Korn. On 24 February 1944 – during the period of clandestinity of the family - Frimeta Amalia Maria Gabriella Korn, daughter of Vigodor Korn, was born. Caterina Giordano pretended to be pregnant to justify the birth of the child and her crying. The Korns managed - with the exception of their father Vigodor, killed by a Muti squad in 1944 - to survive the Shoah.

SISTER MARIA GOGLIA

Sister Vicar of the Roman Institute of the Compassionist Sisters Serve of Mary (via Torlonia, Rome). During the Nazi occupation of Rome, from September 1943 to June 1944, she put in place, along with her sisters, several measures to assist and hide dozens of soldiers who fled the front and Jews who were persecuted (the application form reports the sum of sixty Jewish people). She implemented several strategies to protect refugee Jewish women, such as dressing them in religious attire. She actively collaborated with Delasem to obtain the required documents. She provided also statements of belonging to the Catholic religion in order to save the Jews. A volume about this episode, "*Suor Maria Goglia. Elmetto e soggolo*", written by Davide Fernando Panella, was published in 2022.

MIRABAL SISTERS: Patria, Minerva and Maria Teresa Mirabal

The Mirabal sisters, born in Ojo de Agua in the Dominican Republic, founded the revolutionary movement *14 de Junio*, in order to denounce and oppose the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, one of the most violent and repressive dictatorships in Latin America, which lasted from 1930 to 1961. Both sisters and their husbands were repeatedly imprisoned and subjected to torture.

On 25 November 1960, Patria, Minerva and Maria Teresa Mirabal were brutally tortured and murdered by Dominican police, on Trujillo's orders. They were caught while visiting husbands imprisoned for political activism.

The Dominican people, deeply affected by the incident, decided to intensify the protests against Trujillo. Starting in 1999, the UN decided to honor the sacrifice of the three sisters - whose activism continued thanks to the only surviving sister, Adela - choosing November 25 as the date of the World Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

CREW OF THE TRANSATLANTIC REX

Italian transatlantic launched in Genoa in 1931. During the 1930s, the Rex was a mean of salvation for thousands of European Jews, who sailed from Genoa to reach the United States and escape persecution - thanks also to the expatriation documents provided by the *Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society* of Vienna and the help of the *Jewish Emigrant Assistance Delegation* (during 101 Atlantic trips the REX transported from 20,000 to 50,000 Jewish passengers from Europe to the USA).

The *Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America* also sought to periodically ensure the presence of a rabbi and kosher cook on the ocean liner for Jewish refugees.

ARMINIO WACHSBERGER

Jewish of Istrian origin, son of the chief rabbi of Rijeka. He moved to Rome in 1936, where he was captured during the raids of 16 October 1943. Arminio Wachsberger soon became, thanks to his perfect knowledge of many languages, including German, the interpreter of several Nazi officers: this ability enabled him to survive the Holocaust and to use his position to save lives. He distinguished himself for the rescue of the little Vittorio, two years old, son of his brother-in-law: in a stop during a transport, he took advantage of the momentary distraction of the German soldiers to throw the child in the arms of the doorkeeper of his brother-in-law's house, who hid it suddenly. At the next stop, he saved another child, the son of a family he knew. The child was recognized by his aunt, who asked a non-Jewish woman to approach the truck and ask for "her son" back. Wachsberger convinced the SS to entrust him to the woman, confirming his story. Later, at Auschwitz (where he also acted as an interpreter for Josef Mengele for a period) he saved the lives of several Jews, bribing the guards for medicines and food and bringing comfort to the sick. After the end of the war, he searched for survivors of concentration camps and testified in the trials of those responsible for the Shoah. He returned to Rome in 1949.

His deeds are told in the volume "L'interprete", published by his daughters Clara and Silvia in 2022 with a preface by Anna Foa. His application was proposed by Silvia Alberta Wachsberger.

ZABEL YESSAYAN

Zabel Yessayan, Armenian writer of the twentieth century, committed to the feminist and pacifist movement, spent her life between Constantinople, Paris and the Soviet Union, carrying on the struggle for freedom, women's rights, peaceful coexistence among populations. In 1905 she witnessed the pogrom of 30,000 Armenians perpetrated by the Young Turks in Cilicia, on which she wrote a book that made her one of the most hated intellectuals by the Turkish government.

After having escaped the Armenian genocide perpetrated by the Young Turks in 1915, she was unable to escape Soviet totalitarianism. Her testimony of truth in defending a famous Armenian poet, judged by the People's Court, led to her deportation to Siberia, where she died in a Gulag.