

## Maria Scilli's Presence In This Arduous Path

Maria Scilli, in religion Maria Teresa of Jesus was born in Montevarchi on May 15, 1825 and was called by the heavenly Father while in Florence on November 14, 1889.

The love of God is manifested in the description of her experience of profound union with Him in prayer. To grow in the love of God was her ideal and life plan. In one of her prayers, she acclaimed:

*"I love you my God, I love you in my nothingness. I love you in everything, In trouble or in peace; because I do not seek, nor have I ever sought your consolation but only you the God of consolation."*

The Institute was founded during the time of uncertainties in Italy (1854). Maria, despite the arduous path that she had to go through completely dedicated herself to prayer and care of the young and the poor. Mother Maria Teresa Scilli wanted the educational work, because she lived in a period in which access to it was the privilege of a few. She was able to walk in the arduous path and triumph over its challenges because she trusted God. To continue the work started by our Mother Foundress in Quezon City Philippines, Fiore del Carmelo was founded in 2001.

In the present time our apostolate is again challenged because of the pandemic. Figuratively speaking, we are all walking in the arduous path. The sudden shift to virtual education last year due to COVID 19 brought unprecedented challenges to school administrators, faculty, students, and parents. Our administrators at Fiore del Carmelo School had to quickly find alternative learning platforms, teachers had to quickly design and implement virtual learning options, students had to adapt to new ways of education, and parents had to keep up with their children in helping them in the learning process. While many schools closed because of varied reasons, we continued this path following the example of Blessed Maria Teresa Scilli who put herself *"like a wax in the hand of the wax maker and like the gold in the hands of the goldsmith"* asking God to form her whatever pleases Him.

In addition to academic work, we also help our neighbors in need, especially at the beginning of the pandemic when everyone was adjusting. Thank God we had generous people who gave goods that we shared with them. We continue to manifest the example of her admirable charity to the poor and the needy in this present time.

The exercise of the virtues of Maria Teresa Scilli led her thoughts and feelings, at the same time the discretion of keeping her conscience pure was always in the strong sense of God's love that makes her everyday life grows deeper. Blessed Maria Teresa Scilli was always modest in bearing difficulties and did not care the comforts of life knowing that we are all here for only a short period of time. She had a strong will with which she overcame all the obstacles, "

*was a flame in an open-sky, exposed to the thousand winds, which all tried to push me to the ground, and it was grace, I did not bend to any side,"* offering her sufferings for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Sr. Stephanie Gadalquivir, INSC