



Father Bartolomeo D'Arienzo 1928-2019

Father Bartolomeo D'Arienzo was born in Monopoli on 20 November 1928, to his father Cosimo and his mother Eleonora Schena. He entered the Camillian Province of Sicily and Naples at Acireale (CT) on 17 August 1947. He began his novitiate in Presa (CT) on 6 October 1947. On 7 October 1948, the memorial of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary of Pompei, he made his temporary profession in Aci Sant'Antonio and on 7 October 1951 he made his perpetual profession in Acireale (CT).

On 19 December 1953, at the seminary of Acireale (CT), he was ordained a priest with the prayers and the laying on of hands of His Excellency Msgr. Salvatore Russo, the Bishop of Acireale (CT).

From October 1952 until July 1955 he was sent to the community of Aci Sant'Antonio (NA) as assistant to the postulants at the '*Merce*' of Aci Sant'Antonio (CT) and from July 1955 to August 1958 he was the Director of the Postulants. Although he held the post of Director of Postulants at ACI Sant'Antonio (CT), he was transferred to the Community of the Sacred Heart of the *Istituto Principi* of Piedmont (NA) and there he was a chaplain from August 1958 to the first weeks of August 1960. From August 1960 to March 1961 he was the spiritual director and local financial administrator of the '*Merce*' of Aci Sant'Antonio (CT). Before the end of March 1961 his Superiors made him the chaplain of the leper hospital of Gioia del Colle (BA) and he performed this service until March 1965. In that month he returned again to Naples as chaplain of the Antonio Cardarelli Grand Hospital of that city, which is commonly called by Neapolitans still today the 'Twenty-Third of March', and remained there until July 1965.

From July 1965 until June 1968 he was the Superior of the community at the OASI of Aci Sant'Antonio (CT) before returning to the Antonio Cardarelli Grand Hospital of Naples as



the Superior of the community, a post he held until 1973. He was chaplain there throughout the year 1974.

The next year, in January 1975, he was transferred to Acireale (CT) and on 3 July of the same year he was granted, in response to a request that he himself had made, the right to live with his family for six months (*extra domum religiosam per sex menses*). In May 1977 he was appointed the Superior of the community of Acireale (CT).

On 28 July 1980 he was moved to the community of Santa Ninfa in Palermo and on 22 July 1983 he was elected the Superior of the community. He was confirmed in this post and continued to hold it from 2 June 1986 to 14 July 1989. After his transfer to Reggio he returned to the community of Santa Ninfa in Palermo on 6 October 1990 and this community elected him as their Superior once again on 1 September 1998.

In August 2001 he was moved to the community of Messina and on the day of the Exaltation of the Cross, 14 September 2001, a new journey began for Father Bartolomeo D’Arienzo: he was active in the chaplaincy of the St. Camillus Health Centre, helped the parish priest, Father Pietro Petrosillo, in the Parish of St. Camillus (ME), and animated pastoral care in health.

In 2004, following a decision of the Superiors, he went to the region of Gargano and at the Parish of *Santa Maria della Libera* in Monte Sant’Angelo he began a long service of apostolate. For fifteen years he dedicated himself to helping the faithful as the parish priest of the parish.

Father Bartolomeo D’Arienzo was called by our religious and those who knew and loved him simply ‘Father Bartolo’. A man of a robust presence, those who met him were immediately won over by his spontaneity and the love that he demonstrated in the spirit of St. Camillus.

Inside the communities where he lived he was a joyful religious full of a simple spirituality of the ‘hearth’. Proud of being a Camillian, he loved the Order intensely, and he also loved the Province and the mission that he began while he was in Fasano (BR). It was in March 1977 that the Spirit of the Lord placed in the heart of our religious the ardent wish to go to the homes of the sick, the elderly, the abandoned and the impeded with the parish priest and then return to the faithful of the community. The first experience spread like wildfire and today we are harvesting what he sowed. Today we receive various requests from parish priests for a *Camillian Parish Mission*.



His life was marked and caressed by the enthusiasm of giving a hand to all those who asked for help, and to such a point that during his stay in Palermo, which lasted twenty-one years, he performed the office of Rector of the Church of *Santa Ninfa ai Crociferi*. During these years his apostolate went beyond the homes of the sick and private clinics and he was head of pastoral care in health of the diocesan church, a post to which he was appointed by His Eminence Rev. Salvatore Pappalardo, the Cardinal of Palermo. From 1997 to 2001, again open to the workings of the Holy Spirit, he offered pastoral service in the regional council for diocesan pastoral care in health, being appointed to this post by His Eminence Rev. Salvatore De Giorgi, the President of the CESI.

In the community of *Santa Ninfa ai Crociferi* for fourteen years, he created and developed the School for Formation in Pastoral Care in Health at the Centre of St. Camillus, acting as the director and coordinator of the centre. But also and above all else he dedicated a part of his heart to people who had minor mental handicaps.

His interior life was shaped and illuminated by the Camillian religious, Father Attilio Balbinot, whom Father Bartolo defined as a ‘holy man, always aiming at the good of other people’. The presence of this ‘holy man’ greatly affected his religious and priestly life, and to such an extent that like a good son of St. Camillus, after the experience of the leper hospital in Gioia del Colle (BA), he said with a burning flame in his heart: ‘I would go back on my knees’.

After arriving in the shadow of the Holy Mountain of Gargano where the Archangel St. Michael had once set foot, in the year 2004 His Excellency Domenico Umberto D’Ambrosio, the Archbishop of Manfredonia-Vieste-San Giovanni Rotondo, entrusted the Camillian religious with the Parish of *Santa Maria della Libera*. It was here that for fifteen years Father Bartolo, at an age that would have assured him a well-deserved retirement, girded himself and began to walk the streets of the locality in the spirit, as on a number of times he recounted with divine pride, he had shown during his mission with those suffering from leprosy, or also with the same passion of the first years of his vocation, a young man amongst the young, a servant of God at the service of his parishioners. The locality of Macchia thus became a lit lighthouse that shone in the night, and to such an extent that Father Bartolo began for his parishioners a real culture of Pentecost, where for forty years the procession of Corpus Domini had not taken place, and for twenty years the Procession of *Madonna della Libera* had also not been held. With the Holy Spirit he began formation relating to the liturgy and the catechesis, providing formation to young people, women and children. Local priests and even



the Superior General of the Order, Father Leocir Pessini, went to him for advice or to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Many faithful of Macchia literally learned to pray the holy Rosary, which was said before the Holy Mass once again, and Holy Mass was also once again celebrated every day. Mary accompanied the faithful, and as happened in Cana in Galilee, she led men and women of the town community of Macchia to Jesus when Father Bartolo had a simple statue of Our Lady taken to every house during the month of May. To honour Mary, because of the deep devotion that links the Camillians to the Mother of all of us, the feast day of the patron saint was celebrated once again with a procession.

Beloved of Our Lady, indeed Our Lady as represented by the fine typically Byzantine icon that is venerated in the Cathedral Basilica of Monopoli with the title the ‘Blessed Virgin Mary of Madia’, the patron saint of the town of Monopoli, Father Bartolo turned his eyes to her and aware that every service was prepared for by periods of suffering as a school for life, in her hands he always placed every hope and news that he received, saying: “under your protection Mary I entrust this news so that it rises up to the Father as an offering and thanksgiving and as service to my brothers and sisters”.

On 14 August 2019 his body, weighed down by physical suffering and old age, was admitted to the Santa Maria della Pietà Hospital of Casoria (NA). He was placed in the department of medicine and the diagnosis was: ‘patient with chronic vascular disease’. He was cared for by our doctors, by the nursing staff, by the OSS and in turns by those Camillian religious who were available. On 3 September he was moved to the St. Camillus Health Centre of Messina (ME) for further tests. From the tests that had been done there arrived from the Superior, Father Vincenzo Li Calsi, a rather worrying medical response. Father Bartolomeo D’Arienzo had malign cancer. The doctors decided not to operate because of his state of health and his advanced age.

On 20 November Father Bartolo celebrated his ninety-first birthday and the next day a Holy Mass was celebrated with the novices, at which he received the sacrament of the anointing of the sick. Over the next days he had constant dysentery, he did not have the strength to speak and he was often confused. The doctors of the St. Camillus Health Centre of Messina sought in every way possible to deal with the situation and with professional skill they were near to Father Bartolo. Novices and religious alternated in being near to him so that human proximity would not be absent. Indeed, the novices competed with one another to take care of Father Bartolo.



On 25 November the religious of the Province of Sicily and Naples announced the death of their confrere Father Bartolomeo D'Arienzo at the age of ninety-one. His death took place at the St. Camillus Health Centre of Messina, in the presence of his confreres, the novices and the doctors who looking after him with so much care. Father Bartolo, at two fifteen in the morning, had returned to the House of the Father.

His funeral was held on 26 November at the Parish of St. Camillus in Messina. The ceremony was presided over by the Provincial Superior, Father Rosario Mauriello, with fellow religious and friends of the priesthood.

After the Holy Mass, his coffin was accompanied by his family relatives to Monopoli (BA), the town where he was born. The final adieu took place during the celebration presided over by the parish priest, Aldo Milazzo, his friend and confrere, who had shared with him the finest years of his priestly service at the Parish of St. Anthony in Monopoli, in the presence of members of his family and those who had met him and loved him. His coffin was buried at the cemetery of Monopoli in the chapel for priests. Lastly, on 2 December a suffrage Holy Mass was celebrated at the Parish of *Santa Maria della Libera* in Monte Sant'Angelo.

We thank the Lord for making us the gift of this confrere of ours. From heaven he will continue to love and pray for our Order, for the Province and for the *Camillian Parish Missions*, but above all for vocations, as he always did when he was alive.

The Provincial Superior
Father Rosario Mauriello, M.I.