

Father Giuseppe Barzaghi *1933-2020*



Giuseppe Barzaghi was born on 11 March 1933 in Giussano (MB) to his father Ernesto and his mother Stella Colciago. He entered the seminary of Besana Brianza (MB) on 1 October 1945. On 7 September 1950, after secondary school, he began his novitiate in Verona S. Giuliano, where he made his temporary profession on 8 September 1951. After finishing his studies of classics he began those in theology and made his solemn profession on 8 September 1954 at Verona S. Giuliano. At Mottinello di Rossano Veneto (VI), with the laying on of hands of Msgr. Gerolamo Bortignon, the Bishop of Padua, he was ordained a deacon on 8 December 1958 and a priest on 21 June 1959.

The ministry of Father Giuseppe had a single direction – providing spiritual assistance to the sick in hospitals. On 18 July he was appointed a chaplain at the Hospital of Borgo Trento in Verona. On 21 October 1960 he became a chaplain at the ‘Umberto I’ Civic Hospital of Mestre (VE). On 15 February he became a chaplain at the sanatorium of Sondalo (SO). On 16 January 1978 he began his work as the chaplain of the hospital of Desenzano (BS). On 1 January 1985 he took up his post as chaplain of the ‘L. Sacco’ Hospital of Milan. On 1 October 1986 he became a chaplain at the ‘Umberto I’ Hospital of Mestre (VE). On 1 November 1990 he began his work as a chaplain at the Major Hospital of Cremona. On 1 September 2001 he joined the chaplaincy of the canonically erected community which became a ‘residence’ of the St. Camillus Nursing Home of Cremona. On 1 September he returned as a chaplain to the ‘Umberto I’ Civic Hospital of Mestre (VE); from 25 August 2007 to 20 February 2008 he was in ‘S. Matteo’ Hospital, in Pavia, as a Chaplain. On 1 March 2009 he became the assistant chaplain at the St. Pius X Nursing Home of Milan. On 23 July 2010 he went to the St. Camillus of Milan as assistant for ministry in the sanctuary. He continued with this work until a year and a half ago when he was admitted to the same nursing home because of a deterioration in his health. Indeed, for ten years he had had to have haemodialysis treatment. He died on 10 July 2020 in the early morning.

Father Giuseppe belongs to the ranks of religious who do not shine in leadership but who, precisely for this reason, are precious in an institute. More than locomotives, they are the carriages of the train, who take on all the cargo of the transportation and always say ‘yes’ to every new request, as long as it is in line with what they are able to do. Father Giuseppe had a good character; he was reserved, meek and ready to help, at times with changes of mood but given to humorous observations if the atmosphere was right. He loved to write sonnets for the events of his community, take part in pilgrimages organized by his community and meetings organized by his religious Province. To relax after the routine of his pastoral service, he liked to pay attention to local heritage and gastronomy. He loved classical culture and often voiced quotations in both Greek and Latin. He was faithful to the practices of piety and community life, when these were compatible with the dialysis that he had twice a week at the Fatabenefratelli Hospital.

He was devoted to daily Holy Mass and confessions at the sanctuary of Milan. He loved the confessional and was sought out by priests as well, in the same way as he was ready to hear the confessions of young people of the Gonzaga Institute near the clinic. In Cremona he readily made himself available for the preaching at the triduum of Fr. Rebuschini and

the novena of the Sacred Heart with the 'guards of honour', doing so preparing himself well spiritually and doing what he did with religious conviction. With sick people he was a caring and attentive chaplain, providing pastoral care in a traditional way: daily visits with prayers, a sacrament, spiritual comfort. And this with great scruple: if he had inadvertently neglected a patient, he immediately went back. He was particularly struck by his experience at the sanatorium of Sondalo, which was not without a certain heroism on the part of the fathers when they were called to bless a dying man gasping for air because of virulent hemoptysis. It seemed to him impossible that none of the chaplains ever fell sick...as regards the fourth vow...

May the Lord, the Good Samaritan, welcome him amongst the 'Good Samaritan' sons of St. Camillus!