

from her writings...

«Suffering is not enough;
we need to suffer well.
To suffer well it is necessary
to suffer with dignity,
love, sweetness and fortitude.
Facing the cross...
The true religious
Answers always with a smile».

Thoughts, before 1923.

«Charity is a fire
which expands while burning.
I will suffer, work and pray
To attract souls to Jesus».

Memento, 1923-1926.

«The apostle...
is a vase overflowing with holiness and love...
and, while overflowing,
it pours love and holiness
into souls to gain them for God».

Spiritual Exercises, Brescia, March 1945.

from her writings...

«How good You are, Lord Jesus!
I humble myself in front of You.
I, such unworthy object of Your Love!
Only in eternity will I be able to thank You
in a worthy way.
Meanwhile, I take on the hearts of all people.
I offer them to You so that You may transform
them and they may praise You...
For this same reason I would like to give voice
and heart to all creatures.
Again I offer You, O Lord,
my exile to honour yours.
I offer it to You for all the purposes
which are known only to You...
purposes which are surely good, though at the
moment I do not understand anything.
I offer it to You for the peace of these poor,
torn and bloody world.
I offer it to You, with my heartfelt prayers,
For my brothers and sisters who are prisoners
and have been deported, to a worse exile.
O Lord and merciful Father,
Support and comfort them...
and forgive those who do them so much harm.
"They do not know what they do"».

Spiritual Exercises,
Grumello del Monte, 8-14 October 1944.

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BLESSED ENRICHETTA ALFIERI

Sister of Charity
of Saint Jeanne-Antide Thouret
(23rd February 1891 – 23rd November 1951)



and, always, she smiles



Sister Enrichetta with some of the prisoners
in a corridor of the prison San Vittore.

a simple life

Maria Angela Domenica is born in Borgo Vercelli, on 23rd February 1891, in a very devout Christian family.

On 20th December 1911, she joins the Sisters of Charity of Saint Jeanne-Antide Thouret.

She was 28 years old when a serious illness made her bedridden for four years with great physical and moral pain.

On 25th February 1923, a few months after participating, on a stretcher, to her first pilgrimage to Lourdes, she is miraculously healed through the intercession of Our Lady.

Completely recovered she took up again her ministry and she is sent to the Prison San Vittore, in Milan. There she began an intense service of human promotion and evangelisation, which she continues until the day of her death on 23rd November 1951.

Her mission among the prisoners is marked by a courageous and creative charity manifested especially during the tragic years of the Resistance (1943-1945), when she was also arrested and imprisoned.

Called the Mum and the Angel of San Vittore, with her smile she brings the light and warmth of God's Love to all those she met inside and outside the prison.

Pope Benedict XVI declared Sister Enrichetta Venerable Servant of God, on 19th December 2010 and Blessed on 2nd April 2011.



Sister Enrichetta before the grotto Of Our Lady of Lourdes, in the courtyard of San Vittore.

a smile speaking to everyone's heart

A shining smile, an intense look, a delicate and reserved presence: this is Sister Enrichetta. A woman with a deep inner life, with a soul steadily rooted in her faith.

Her mission, in the prison is not to watch people but to look after them and help them to recover themselves in this awful environment. Gifted with a noble heart she always stood by the side of the weak, being sure that the greatness of a soul goes beyond the expiation of one's fault. She believes that each prisoner had the possibility to recover his/her deepest humanity.

Sister Enrichetta never looked for the limelight rather she tried to efface herself. For years she hid in the darkness of the prison, trying to give all the help and love she could to those in need. She deeply believed that the true intolerable hell is the lack of love. Everyone remembers her look, deep and reassuring: a look able to create empathy, a look full of charity. For her listening is fundamental, listening in order to be able to enter into the world of the other.

Her measured and essential words speak to people and to their hearts. Although most of the time silence is the best word.

In 1943, when the Nazis transform the prison into a concentration camp, the Mum of San Vittore continues her work, not obeying their orders, but listening to her conscience as an Italian and as a Catholic, defending justice and freedom.

In those years, together with the sisters of her community, Sister Enrichetta was at the service of all: political prisoners, common criminals, and Jews condemned to the concentration camps or sentenced to death. Her activity causes her arrest and imprisonment before being taken to an internment camp.

In 1945, at the end of the war, Italy is freed, but the prison San Vittore remains the same: a place peopled by suffering and miserable prisoners. Sister Enrichetta continued to serve them generously and untiringly until the end of her life.