



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
Via Latina 22, 00179 Roma



June 4, 2024

Biography of Death Notice N. 5

The Region of Italy recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Mario ROTA**, priest, of the Marianist Community of Valle Amendolea, Condofuri, Italy, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on May 10, 2024, in Condofuri, Italy, at the age of 68 with 48 years of religious profession.

Mario Carlo ROTA was born on September 10, 1955, in Nembro, a foothill town in the Province of Bergamo, to his father Paolo and mother Caterina Salvi. He was the third of five boys and a girl, two others of whom, Leonardo who died from cancer, and Sergio, were religious for some years in the Society of Mary. His was the typical northern Italian family, simple but of great faith and well involved in their parish context, where a son or daughter to be given to the Lord constituted a great honor and a blessing.

These were the years in which the Italian Marianists had a recruiter who visited

the parishes in search of "good boys," to recruit them to the postulate. Mario met Father Alfonso Santorum, a tireless vocational animator, and so in October 1966 he entered the Postulate in Brusasco and then in Pallanza, where in 1974 he graduated from the scientific *liceo* (high school). In September 1974 he entered the Novitiate in Turin. On October 12, 1975, he made his first profession in Pallanza and then moved to the Scholasticate in Rome, where he obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy at the Gregorian University. In the Holy Name of Mary Parish in Rome, location of the Scholasticate, he took part in the activities of the church, gaining experiences that would become a characteristic of his apostolate as a priest: the animation of children and closeness to the elderly and the sick.

After a few years of teaching religion in the Collegio Santa Maria of Pallanza but living in the Postulate community of Villa Chaminade, in 1979 he transferred to Milan to begin the study of theology through 1983. In his diocese of origin, Bergamo, he was ordained a priest on June 18, 1983, by Bishop Giulio Oggioni.

Mario began his parish pastoral activity which would see him work in all the Italian locations where the Society of Mary was present, as parochial vicar or pastor in Rome, Campobasso and Condofuri, with a small parenthesis in the community of Santa Maria of Pallanza as a teacher.

He was a simple parish priest, who was very present among the people, in families, in the town or in the neighborhood. Playing with words he said, "There is nothing simpler than making difficult things simple," and he interpreted well this great ability to translate the complex and make it accessible and above all understandable. His liturgical celebrations were never one-sided but were interactive and full of references to life. His homilies, although simple, were not monologues but had the function of capturing the attention of the little ones, asking them many questions, using anecdotes and also inviting adults to reflect. His longest stay in the community of Amendolea Valley of Condofuri led him to fall in love with that land and its people. His simplicity and his permanent smile allowed him to get closer to others as a father, brother and friend without ever creating distances. He was a shepherd constantly present in the streets and in homes where he always found the doors wide open and a welcome that he appreciated and delighted in, and which he often sought, because he loved meeting, chatting, but also praying.

His smile, fresh, joyful, reassuring, spoke for him. He was a guide and point of reference for an entire generation of children and adolescents who now find themselves adults, fondly remembering the moments spent with him praying and playing in the parish, in the town squares, in the countryside.

There were groups of teenage girls who gathered in church for the Three O'clock Prayer. He had also founded a group in his hometown, made up of his nephews, whom he invited every year to Rome for a friendship meeting with other young people from the parishes.

Attentive and thoughtful with elderly and lonely persons, he walked around the parish stopping to exchange a few words with everyone he met, especially with children and young people; he knew everyone's name, and always made everyone feel important and welcomed.

He paid great attention to vocations and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate have a great debt of gratitude for everything he did with his simple but profound faith, with his priceless availability, with a smile that never failed, even in the most critical moments. It was thanks to him that they met their first Indian sisters.

The illness struck him suddenly and the first tests carried out for inexplicable ailments immediately revealed serious problems due to a pleural carcinoma, which led to his death on May 10, 2024, in less than a month. He left us suddenly and his death leaves a void that will be difficult for the Region of Italy to fill. May he rest in peace.
