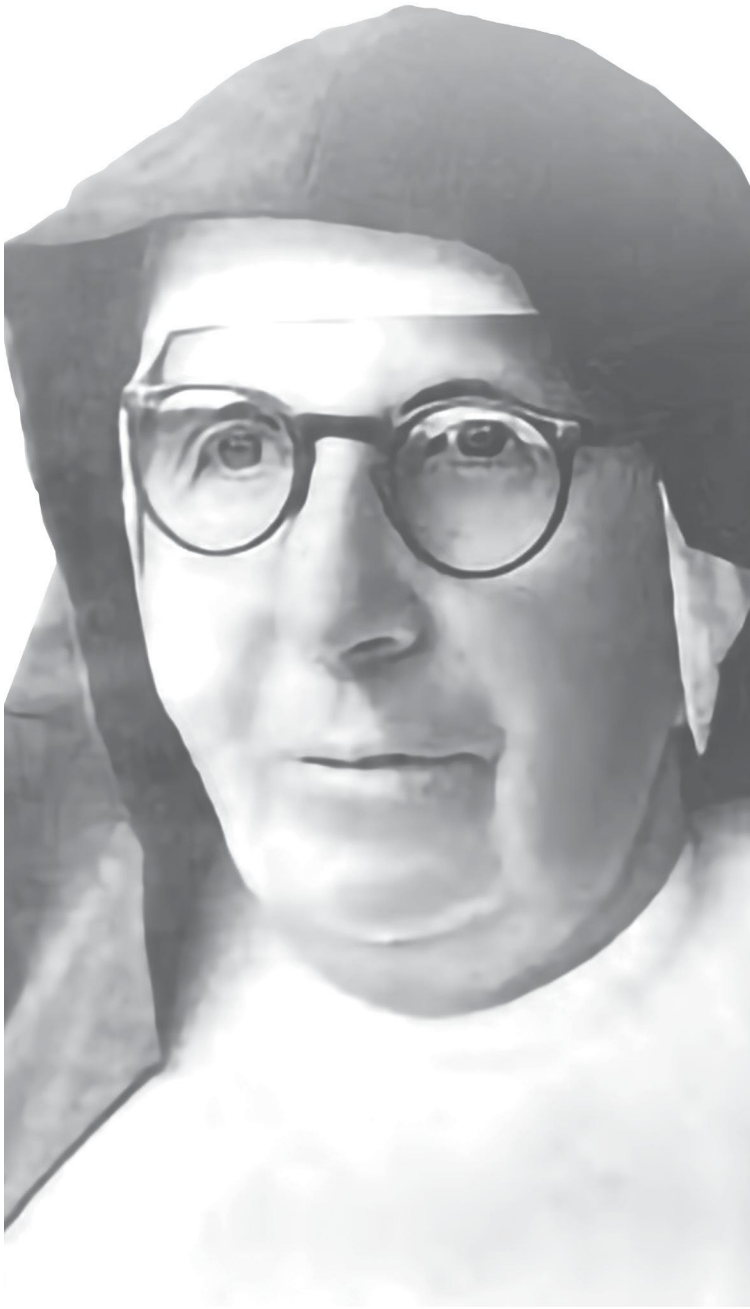
Le **ali** di **suor Troncatti:** dalla **croce** due **braccia** **in volo**



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Un metodo **50**

Credits **53**

Introduction

Welcome to this journey…
not an exhibition, but a path of life,
guided by Maria Troncatti,
step by step through her story,
to come to know her amazing life.
Three key-words will accompany us in our interesting journey:
wings, the cross, arms.

Wings: are the sign of the Angel
met along the way of her human life.
They are the signs of a person who successfully sailed throughout
her life to give herself: from Val Camonica
to the most remote villages of the Amazon rainforest.
Wings are also the emblems of that airplane
which crashed and yet protected, like a precious casket,
her total offering, so that reconciliation
between enemies could take place.

The cross: stands in the middle
and unites north and south, east and west,
heaven and earth, friends and enemies.
It is the sign of God's care,
who makes the sun of His love rise
on the just and on sinners,
giving Himself to all Human beings.
It is the sign of the motivation, of the reason
for which Maria Troncatti offered herself:
before God's love that reaches every person,
one can only do the same.
For You, the Crucified; for Him, crucified.

Arms: are seen as the sign of her love.
Arms that carried the hidden power of the small portable « boteghin »,
the small bag with some medicines
for the healing of sick people she frequently met.
Arms that always showed
the tender, strong and effective presence of Mary Help of Christians.
The Rosary, prayed constantly by Maria Troncatti, held her heart
and arms that never drew back,
arms opened wide as a symbol of wings and cross.

Three colours will guide us

Aqua green: the colour that unites sky and sea,
in which wings can unfold.
Not the deep blue of night, nor the bright blue of day,
but the gentle union of green and blue,
whose transparency veils and reveals the Mystery
dwelling in our life, whose presence was deeply perceived by
our Missionary, every moment of her life.

Blood red: the colour of total self-gift,
but also the colour of the earth
from which the first human being, Adam, was formed.
Earth and blood.
For this is what we are made of:
earth, fragility, weakness,
but also blood,
passion in the offering of our life.
And in her littleness and smallness
Maria Troncatti became a gift,
offered on the cross of her heroic charity.

Ochre yellow:
the seed sown
that decays among the clods of earth
in order to bear much fruit.
Hands that scatter seed into the furrows of life,
in the most different circumstances:
at home, among the sick,
with the sisters, in her Community
between pots and pans or in the garden,
in rainforests or in hospital.
A seed sown without hesitation.
A seed that, once decayed underground,
becomes an abundant grains of wheat
sometimes thirtyfold, sometimes sixtyfold, sometimes a hundredfold—
for the life that won't ever die.

Three Key-words.
Three colours.
Ten stages… one story
A story that speaks throughout the world with images, words, and echoes:
Look. Listen. And… allow yourself to be involved.

1. The Angel of the Origins

It is God's own art,
That brings into the light;
It is God's own art,
the art that kindles
life within hearts.

And Sister Maria
spread its radiance...

1. The Angel of Origins (1883–1904)

1883.02.16
She is born of Giacomo and Maria Rodondi in Còrteno (Bs).

1883.02.17
The white garment of Baptism: beneath a mantle of snow.

1886
The grace of the Spirit: during the Bishop's pastoral visit.

1889
Teacher Buila prepares her for First Communion and introduces her to reading the Salesian Bulletin.

1890/91
At Col d'Aprica, fire catches her clothes and burns her hands and legs.
A Good Samaritan rescues her.

1893
She enters the Association of the Daughters of Mary, founded by the parish priest Fr. Cellerino Testini, who died with a reputation for holiness.
On the mountain pastures she gets lost, and the Angel guards her
as she recalls the Sunday Eucharist.

1898
Desire for consecrated life.

1904
She writes to Fr. Michele Rua, Don Bosco's successor,
and to the Superior General, Sr. Caterina Daghero,
offering her availability for a vocation
despite her father's opposition.

These are the years of Maria's childhood,
adolescence, and young adulthood,
lived within the Custom-made fabric of her family life,
supported by human and spiritual mediations,
and marked by courageous choices made in obedience to God's call.
The smallness of her village,
the simplicity of her family,
the inner stirring of her heart,
all become the soil where her vocational response can blossom.

It all begins in Corteno Golgi,
a small village in Val Camonica among the Brescia mountains,
in a simple family that grafts this fruit of life
onto the fertile tree of the Church
through the grace of Baptism
and the nourishment of Sunday Eucharist.
Thus Maria meets early the guardian angels
who protect her from danger on one side
and open her, through the mediation of the Salesian Bulletin,
to the vast horizon of the salvation of souls.
God brings life into the light
and calls her to become His reflection,
light of the world, nothing less.
A gift and a responsibility that keeps the flame burning.
These are the first glimmers of a vocation.

A word from Sister Maria

Hello, I'm Maria.
How wonderful it is to meet you
and (to) be able to share a piece of my story with you.
A story begun among the mountains,
mountains to which I am deeply attached,
in a small village with an unexpectedly international breath.
But let me begin in order.

I was born on February 16, 1883,
to my mother Maria and my father Giacomo
a father to whom I was very close to,
who cherished me as his favorite.
So much that when the time came for me to leave home,
to join the House of Our Lady
as a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians,
he fainted from the pain of letting me go.
My siblings Caterina, Agnese, Angelina, Lucia,
and my little brother, Giacomo
are the beauty of my beginnings.
As I once wrote to them:
"Even if I lived a hundred years,
it would never be true that I could forget you."

I received Baptism the day after I came into the world.
Snow covered everything that day, pure white everywhere,
yet the cold did not stop my father's steps
as he carried me to that font of grace.

We were a simple family,
living by honest work,
surrounded by the warmth of our home,
by the fraternity of a lively Christian community,
and by the heights of the mountains.
It was in this atmosphere that I grew
and learned what is essential:
I learned the Presence that never abandons,
and a horizon wider than the highest peaks.

My First Communion sealed a friendship
with the One who is a reassuring Presence,
who guards us because, in His eyes and in His heart,
each of us is precious;
who never fails,
not even when night falls,
when storms rage
and I find myself lost with my goats…
And the Angel stays with me…
And Jesus, whom I had received
the previous Sunday in the Eucharist
and carried in my heart, does not leave me.

If the mountains taught my eyes to look upward,
the Salesian Bulletin, which I learned to read,
expanded the horizons of my heart,
speaking to me of distant lands,
of courageous missionaries
who gave everything
to bring the joy of a life that never ends.
And within me began to grow
the desire to set out…

2. The Angel of the Gift

The arms of God
do not hold back;
they give.

And Sister Maria
opened hers,
always...

2. The Angel of the Gift (1905–1908)

1905.10.15
God's call opens the way:
from Còrteno to Nizza Monferrato for formation.
Upon arriving at the formation house, she experiences a deep crisis
that affects her body and her natural cheerfulness.

1906.08.12
She receives the religious habit and enters the novitiate.

1908.09.17
Her Marian *"Here I am"*: First Profession.
She is sent to Rosignano (AL) as a cook, where she contracts
a serious infection in her finger and typhoid fever.

1909.03.17
She is transferred to Nizza Monferrato to receive better care.

1909.03.22
Don Rua heals her,
and she promises to dedicate all her energies to the "infidels."
She returns to Rosignano and is later assigned to Varazze.

The path of formation
is a journey that requires docility
and the embrace of a new way of life.
Everything is completely new:
new customs and new ways of living each day.
It is a time for acquiring an habitu*s* that entails stripping oneself.
It is, in some way, a dying in order to take on the form of Christ.
Thus arise physical suffering and sadness,
yet inseparable from a readiness that withstands every test.
The mediations, whether the kitchen maid or the novice mistress,
can be decisive, as they were for Maria.
Voices of the one Word that confirms the nuptial "yes."

God's call has the measure of the infinite.
But such horizons unsettle the heart,
and in Nizza Monferrato Maria finds herself inside a different measure…
the measure of the divine heart and the heart of the Institute.
These are not our measures…
they are the measures of vocation,
broader, wider.
Measures that, as for all prophets, shake one's foundations
until one surrenders
and recognizes oneself as entirely His, His own,
capable of living only by His strength.
God has arms that always give;
learning this measure is vocation.

A word from Sister Maria

And so I left… a radical tear.
Leaving home…
A completely new path.
They were not the mountain trails I knew…
They were roads, cities, large houses.
A new rhythm of life that turned me upside down like a sock…
And so the tears fell, my face grew sad,
and my body felt the weight of it.
I experienced what the solitude of (the) heart truly is,
only to rediscover the companionship of the One
who does not remain outside… but dwells within the heart,
placing it inside His own, which knows how to console everything.
This was the secret that made my life blossom again,
not the meadows of my mountains in spring,
but my very life…
and then His sun ripened my total "yes."
And in Nizza, in that house of the beginnings,
where Mother Mazzarello had made her home;
where Don Bosco had seen Our Lady
walking along the corridors;
where so many sisters were giving their lives entirely,
I too placed myself within that great family,
becoming a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians,
letting myself be led by that desire for happiness
that God had always held for me
and that my free response could bring to bloom.
And I became Sister Maria.
In that time I discovered the value of mediations:
of my novice mistress, of my superiors,
of those at home who prayed for my vocation.
I discovered that my father Giacomo
was only the reflection of the heavenly Father,
and that I truly was His beloved…
I discovered
that not even the most beautiful bonds of my family could fill a life,
only Jesus could fill the heart, and only He was, and had to be,
the measure for the right decisions.
I discovered that it was not the *Salesian Bulletin*,
but the Holy Spirit who lit within me a fire of love
that I absolutely had to give to others, so that it would not burn out
within the narrow confines of my own limits.
And from there, I set out…

3. The Angel of Trial

God gives a plank
so that on that wood
life may be saved.

And Sister Maria
clung
to that Wood...

3. The Angel of Trial (1909–1918)

1914.12.09
The “Yes” of God and of Sr. Maria: her Perpetual Profession in Varazze.

1915–1918
After completing a nursing course, she serves in the military hospital of Varazze:
learning to care for the wounds of the body in order to heal souls.

1915.06.25
A devastating flood sweeps through the city, the house of the *boschine*,
and the sisters.
Saved from the waters, she promises the Virgin that she will serve the lepers.

1917.11.04
In Corteno, her sister Angelina (married and mother of three) dies.

1918.08.02
In Corteno, her sister Agnese (a Sister of Charity) dies.

1918.11.04
She applies to serve in the missions among the lepers.

1919
She returns to Nizza Monferrato as a nurse
and assistant of the young women of the oratory.

And so the time of “trial” begins.
Maria learns how to live her consecration.
She learns how to be a nurse.
She learns how to read the signs of the “times.”
And it is a time of war, when wounded soldiers must be tended.
It is a time of catastrophe, when the flood carries away death
and she herself risks losing her life.
It is God’s time, calling for complete availability.

Arriving in Varazze as her first assignment
means entering the school of care:
learning to tend both body and heart…
Learning to remain always in God’s presence,
that God whose time is the time of Easter,
the time of offering,
the time in which He remains even when everything seems to collapse.
And the moment comes when Sr. Maria
experiences trial, danger, and death.
Clinging to a piece of wood,
after having offered herself as a missionary… she is saved.
God saves through a piece of wood,
and salvation depends on having embraced it.
Vocation strips away everything
in order to unite to the ALL.
A mystery both shattering and fulfilling.

A word from Sister Maria

My Angel never fails me, even when trial knocks at the door of life…
I had just said my “yes.”
And I found myself in Varazze,
caring, body and soul, for the wounded of the war.
I had to learn the art of caring, discovering that behind every torn flesh
there is a human being, a Christian, a sinner in need of the medicine
of Forgiveness, of Grace, of God’s friendship,
without which the wounds of the body turn into anger, rebellion, sadness.
I learned that true care is learned in the school of God’s time,
time paced by the Easter of Jesus, by His total gift,
where His wounds heal our own.
And so time becomes grace to remain in His healing presence.
Whatever it is filled with,
time becomes strengthening, time of obedience, a blessed time…
Even when time grows dark,
and clouds cover life like a shroud,
and the water, falling from the sky,
is so powerful that the riverbanks burst,
the rivers sweep everything away,
and the house collapses…
so much so that a sister dies
trying to “save” the most precious thing in the house:
Jesus in the Eucharist, kept in the little tabernacle…
And I too was at the brink of death…
Only one anchor saved me, a small piece of wood…
A piece of wood like that Cross reflected across time,
which became, for me, the measure of every moment.
A piece of wood saved me…
a sacred and blessed wood,
a sign of salvation.
And to the Mother of Heaven I “promised”
that if I came out alive,
I would leave for the missions.
Wood and Mother.
Clinging to them is the way out of the waters of death.
And so I learned how to care:
to moor myself and cling
to the total gift of the Cross
and entrust myself to the Mother of Heaven.
And the Angel of trial revealed His power.
And blessing became mission.

4. The Angel of Prophecy

To each one
God gives a land
where the heart
can sprout with goodness.

And to Sister Maria
her furrow was revealed...

4. The Angel of Prophecy (1919–1922)

1922.03.14
Prophecy of Marina Luzzi: destination Ecuador.

1922
A few days after Marina's funeral,
Mother Daghero assigns her to Ecuador:
the missionary "prophecy" is fulfilled.

1922.05.07
Meeting with Mons. Domenico Comin, Apostolic Vicar of Mendez and Gualaquiza.
Farewell from the Vicar General, Mother Enrichetta Sorbone.

1922.08
A brief visit to Còrteno.
A final farewell and a "contagion" of vocation
that touches her cousin Caterina Rodondi,
who will follow her to Nizza and later become a missionary in Ecuador.

Sister Maria returns to the heart of her origins.
It is in this house of Our Lady
that the care she offers to the sick
becomes care for her own vocation.
God loves those who give with joy and listens to the missionary desire,
even when His destinations are not the ones expected.
And Sister Maria receives her missionary sending:
called by a dying girl,
by a straightforward superior,
and by a courageous bishop.
From there, she is ready to set sail.

The motherhouse becomes the house of prophecy.
"*The young shall see visions,*" and a young girl,
on the threshold of death,
speaks in God's name… Maria in Ecuador…
even though she herself wants to go among the lepers.
Vocation means letting oneself be led, leaving everything,
even one's own good plans.
The missionary vocation must have only one piece of luggage:
"*a heart more good than merely just.*"
And with 18 sisters, the horizon of the *Salesian Bulletin*
is contemplated from the deck of the ship leaving Marseille.
God is the promised land within a foretold land…
The Mystery unveils itself step by step.
Called by the echoes of His Word…
Listening to His mediations.

A word from Sister Maria

I had dreamed of the endless spaces of poverty
where I could give myself completely.
I had imagined, back when I was still at home
with my family, reading the *Salesian Bulletin*,
the courageous deeds of missionaries
and their offering of the Gospel.
I had dreamed of being consumed with love for Jesus
and, as He had done, of giving myself like fresh bread
coming out of the fiery oven of His Heart,
to nourish an immense crowd.
And yet I now found myself in an infirmary…
caring for little sick girls,
or in the kitchen peeling potatoes…
or in the garden so that everyone might have food.
Daily life became for me a school of mission.
But in this ordinary rhythm, in the beauty of Nizza,
the unexpected and astonishing call arrived.
I would never have imagined
that a dying girl, poor Marina,
would reveal to me that Ecuador
was to be my destination… my future… my "field"
where I would be called to work.
And one night, before she died,
she told me that it was not the lepers,
whom I longed to care for,
but the Indians who were waiting for me.
The Indians… I wanted to go to the lepers.
"To Ecuador…" she insisted…
And so I begged Jesus to give me:
"*so much love, so much spirit of sacrifice, so much humility,*
that I may be an instrument of good
for those poor souls."
Then the day came when a missionary bishop,
Monsignor Comin, came to meet us,
and to my surprise I was assigned… to Ecuador.
Exactly as Marina had said.

A fifteen-year-old girl became the messenger
who pointed out to me the field of mission.
Yes! That is exactly how it happens in Salesian life,
as Sacred Scripture affirms:
“*Your young shall see visions.”*

It is they who call us in His name.
They who show us the field where we must work.
They who, if we listen, open the path of mission.
Young people called Don Bosco.
And Mary Most Holy showed him and Mother Mazzarello
the field of the little ones.
And I did not hold back.
With the desire to have a big heart,
a mother’s heart, an upright and good heart…
I threw myself in completely,
obeying without hesitation…
And on that 7th of May 1922, we were asked
to have a heart *more good than merely just*.
And so, I departed…

5. The Angel of Ardor

In the Fire of God
fear
becomes ardor.

And Sister Maria
warmed others
with His flame...

5. The Angel of Ardor (1922–1925)

1922.11.09
The beginning of the journey toward the mission.
From Nice to Marseille, where she will embark.

1922.12.25
A stop in Guayaquil.
On horseback to Chunchi:
she opens the *botiquín* and she is called "*madrecita*."

1925.03.18
The fury of the waters destroys everything for 20 km beyond Chunchi.

1925.05.23
Mons. Comin speaks about the mission of Macas
and invites the sisters to follow him.

These are years of intense outward and inward journeying.
Years of steps taken along rugged paths,
requiring an interior pilgrimage,
where one experiences wonder and bewilderment;
fascination and fear;
a desire to be close to the people and a distance imposed by language.
Jungle and rivers, on horseback and on foot; days and nights…
A question rises:
"But where have you brought us, Monsignor?
Where are You leading me, Lord?"
Sister Maria experiences all her weakness, and all His presence.

The journey *to* the mission,
the journey *within* the mission,
the journey *towards* the mission.
Not a play on words, but the reality of this movement.
A journey like this is faced for a great motivation;
a journey like this is faced
by sharing fully the life of those to whom one is sent;
a journey like this is faced for one clear goal:
heaven, for oneself and for all brothers and sisters.
On this journey Sister Maria experiences
poverty and weakness,
strength and courage,
passion and ardor.
God is a burning fire dwelling in the heart…
and cannot be contained.
Prophetic vocation is participation
in His Passion and in His ardor.

A word from Sister Maria

The mission is beautiful but also very challenging.
An endless journey across the sea,
an endless journey through the jungle,
a journey where my feet sank into the mud
and my fine little boots got stuck in the earth
and… remained planted there.
A journey on horseback,
where day and night followed one another… under the open sky.
A journey that is a whole life.
Oh yes! Mission is a going…
which is why my motto was: “Vamos.”
Let’s go! Let’s go where we are called.
Let’s go! Where we can do good.
Let’s go! Where we can meet
those in need of care and… of God.
Never stop, never settle, never fold in on yourself.
The wings opened my arms, and the Cross unfolded.
I felt weak,
but the wind of the Spirit flung my wings wide open.
I felt small, but my arms stretched out
as if Jesus were lending me His,
lifting me with Him onto the cross of self-gift.
I felt fragile,
but my hands opened, giving what I had received.
Courage grew along the journey…
We celebrated the Eucharist in the jungle with Monsignor;
we crossed rivers and the frightening Upano
that could have swept us away;
we met the Kivari and the Colonists, at first distrustful,
and to all, without distinction, we brought
a smile, availability, care, together with Jesus and Mary.
It is They who opened the doors for us
with Their sweetness,
They who gave us courage
to face the hardships,
They who transformed
Kivari and Colonists into friends and Christians…

I struggled to speak their language,
I mixed a little dialectal Italian,
some Spanish, and some of their idiom.
Sometimes I even created a language of my own
and invented words,
but they understood, because it was the language of the heart,
the language of gratuitous love.
And gift needs no translation.
Vocabulary, grammar, syntax,
I learned them gradually, standing before Jesus in the Eucharist,
who, in every latitude and longitude of the world,
speaks only one word: *"I am always with you."*
Hidden in that divine Bread;
hidden in the face of the smallest;
hidden yet present…
Jesus transformed wolves into lambs
and lambs into… angels…
giving me wings to fly from one place to another.
Wings and hands.
Wings and hands that form the arms of the Cross.
And so, nailed with Him,
I never stopped walking.
Ready to set out
to the highest point of the flight.

6. The Angel of the Forest

God had
a Mother,
so that His children
would not remain orphans.

And Sister Maria
loved as a daughter
and as a mother...

6. The Angel of the Forest (1925 –1930)

1925.10.26
Departure for the forest with the provincial, Mother Caterina Mioletti,
Sr Domenica Barale, and Sr Carlota Nieto.

1925
A 10-day stop in Mendez, where Sister Maria Troncatti had to perform surgery on the daughter of the Cacique who had been shot:
"If you heal her, we will love you; otherwise, we will kill you."
(These are The Cacique's words)

1925.12.01
Departure resumes.

1925.12.04
Arrival in Macas: welcomed by the Immaculate during the days of Her feast, whose image had been enthroned on November 29.
She opens, in the school of Mercedes Navarette, a home for the Kivarette.
The first contact begins with the Shuar world and the harsh law of the forest.

1927
Mons. Comin sends her to Guayaquil for a nursing course.

1929.10.06
Her father Giacomo dies in Corteno.

The forest became home for Sr Maria,
and she herself became “a home” for the inhabitants of the forest,
either Kivari or Colonists.
It was a time in which she became ‘care’ itself:
her nursing skill turning into limitless availability,
into courageous intervention,
into ardent faith and charity.
There were no schedules,
no distances,
no excuses
when someone was in need.
It was also the time of deep communion,
with her community, with the missionaries, with anyone,
so long as “home” could be built.

The forest is not romantic; it is a “dark wood,”
and it brings back to life the childhood fears of little Maria…
one either flees, or one prays.
Sr Maria lifts her gaze through the branches,
meets her Lord,
and hears the cry of those who plead for help:
“*Come.”*
The cry of those in physical pain,
the cry of those who have never been taught,
the cry of those tormented by the enemy of souls.
And Sr Maria does not hold back.
She cannot stop.
Urget nos… “*The love of Christ urges us on*.”
Only dedication can answer the cry
of the body,
of education,
of salvation.
God is Mother, and He cares for every one of His children.
And Sr Maria, His daughter, becomes a mother in turn.
Called to bear fruit.
A generative vocation.

A word from Sister Maria

You cannot even imagine what the journey into the forest was like.
I told you about it in a letter.
Not to complain, but to recount
the beauty of an adventure made of self-giving.
A mother, when she brings a child into the world,
no longer remembers the pain of childbirth.
A mother, when she sees the good of her child,
does not measure the cost of her fatigue.
A mother, when the horizon of her children is eternity,
is ready to enter into the sacrifice of the Son… of God.
No hardship ever stopped me, because:
the desire for good that burned in my heart
was the fire of His love;
the protection of the Guardian Angel
was the feeling I was never alone;
the strength of the Virgin Mother's presence, always sustained me.
There was a constant cry, going from the ears to the heart:
"Come";
"come and stay beside us";
"come and heal us";
"come and take these newborns who will otherwise die";
"come!"
And be a mother to us you, the "daughter" of the One
who never fails to help;
you, daughter of the One you have learned to invoke,
you, daughter of the One who is the Mother of the only God.
Daughter and Mother.
Maria.
The same name.
The same care.
The same presence.
Come and remain among us.
In the forest, among the huts, in our barren courtyards.
Come and be a presence that does not abandon.
A Preventive System inspired by the Spirit.
A Preventive System learned from the Son of God.
A Preventive System given by the Father.
A gift of God, of Don Bosco, and of Mother Mazzarello.
And among the poor,
I became both daughter and mother.

7. The Angel of God

Beneath the wings of God
the snare
of Evil
is defeated.

And Sister Maria
led her children
there...

7. The Angel of God (1930–1939)

1930
She ventures beyond the fearsome Upano River, risking drowning.
She is saved several times by Mary Help of Christians.
She touches with her own hands the destructive force of the devil
and the opposition of the settlers.
The first slanders arise, accusing her of exploiting and selling the *kivarette*.
Mission in Sevilla Don Bosco for catechesis,
which she will continue for all the years she is in Macas (6 km).

1930.12
First Christian marriage among the Kivari.

1932
The new mission in Sucúa is opened as a branch of Macas,
and she travels there periodically (23 km).

1933
Deadly epidemics spread.
A meeting between the Shuar and the settlers takes place in Sucúa:
it is the long-desired celebration.

1934.02.04
Appointed director of the college in Guayaquil—
almost a displacement compared to her mission among the "savages."

1938.01.16
Fire destroys the mission in Macas.

1938.07.27
She leaves the direction of the college.

1938.08.27
She becomes director in Macas.

1939
An infection in her leg accompanied by high fevers.

Sister Maria enters ever more deeply into the forest,
among the “indigenous,”
into the very heart of the human being.
It is during these years that she discovers that
“the heart of man is an abyss” (Ps 63).
She comes to know the depths of evil:
the sorcerers and the customs of death that kill infants,
that reject those who fail, that eliminate the enemy.
And she receives the newborns, the rejected, the enemies,
not with the power of spells
but with the strength of the Angels, of the Immaculate,
of the Holy of Holies.
And thus the torrential Upano is no longer feared.

The Angel reveals himself victorious against the ancient serpent,
against the weapons of sorcerers of every age,
against the evil that kills.
The angel Sister Maria spreads her wings
by kneeling and fingering the weapon of victory
the rosary.
And the Angel of God and the angel Sister Maria live in the same house;
they are at home in the huts of a people once dispersed,
who gradually become the “People of God,”
beloved children, Christians.
God is the Victor, and under His crucified wings
all may find a safe dwelling place.
Vocation is a call to battle.

A word from Sister Maria

Terrifying things…
I had heard talk of the ancient serpent…
But now I met him many times along the way,
hidden among the leaves and in the hearts of men.
The ancient serpent wants to strangle God's children,
he wants to stop every work of good,
he wants only death…of the body and of the spirit…
I had to fight not with weapons of iron,
but with my fingers, sliding over worn rosary beads,
pronouncing the Blessed Names
and leading my children
under the wings of God's Mercy,
who forgives and heals everything.
In front of the mystery of evil
and of the greatness of God,
I have always felt small, so very small…
I had nothing, nothing at all, to boast of,
only to bless, to bless
the One who was walking with me hand in hand.
And the Immaculate led me there,
on my knees before the One who can do all things,
in the littleness of His presence made Bread.
The Immaculate crushed the head of the ancient serpent.
The Immaculate made me feel at home…
even in a poor hut
with those daughters freed from the enemy.
The sorcerer and the enemy.
The little girls saved.
And in the middle, the Immaculate.
Nothing else was lacking.
I was happy.

8. The Angel of Presence

God is present
in His dwelling.

And the dwelling
of Sister Maria
was beside her God.

8. The Angel of Presence (1940–1949)

1940–1941
Viral epidemics require Sister Maria to give prolonged assistance to the sick, in almost total isolation.

1941–42
War breaks out between Ecuador and Peru. Even the mission felt the echo of division. The only solution is to renew the entrustment of the whole population to the Virgin Most Pure.

1942–1943
Years of trial due to the scarcity of food, leading to the idea of closing the two boarding homes.

1942.01
While preparing for the feast of Don Bosco, the mission is in danger because of the approaching Peruvian troops. Sister Maria is urged to flee, but she remains before her Lord.

1942.07
There is talk of closing the mission of Macas in favor of Sevilla Don Bosco. Sister Maria opposes this proposal. Every day, food for the two boarding homes is carried from Sevilla Don Bosco to Macas, crossing the Upano River.

1943.10.03
The boys of the Salesians are transferred to Sevilla Don Bosco after a confrère is drown during a food transport. The sisters remain still eight months more, which for Sister Maria were a true martyrdom.

1944.07.28
The girls' school is transferred to Sevilla Don Bosco.

1944.10.07
A new missionary community of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians is founded in Sucúa.

1946.11.09
Death of her mother, Maria Rodondi.

1948
Sister Maria becomes the community leader, and the community is canonically erected.

1948.09.27
The airfield in the forest is inaugurated, and Sister Maria boards the airplane.

From Macas to Sucúa is an uphill path…
A path where one meets division, struggle, war.
Everything can collapse, one can face hunger,
or touch with one's hands the violence of death.
But love is faithful, and the fidelity of Sister Maria
becomes a steadfast presence for those consumed by fear,
who flee, defend themselves, or kill.
God's victory does not exempt one from battle.
The temptation is to run away, but Maria Troncatti chooses to remain.
To remain like her Lord present in the Eucharist.
To remain with her Lord present in her brothers and sisters…
including the "poorest."
Everything may be threatened,
but when one is certain of the divine and Marian presence,
courage blossoms.
And the good of souls prevails.
This is true happiness.
God is the Preventive System.
He is present.
He assists.
He is faithful.
We are called to remain… beside others.
A Salesian vocation.

A word from Sister Maria

I felt a pain that tore me apart inside when I saw war, hatred, division.
It tears the body to see Your children fighting.
It tears the soul to see those you have educated wounding one another.
It rends the heart of God to see the enemy slip in…
and divide.
This is what the enemy of souls does.
But Jesus desires that all may be one,
that all scattered sheep may find a home,
and that no one be lost.
And so, after so much work caring for the sick,
after so many journeys to bring the Gospel of charity,
after so many labors to build the hospital, at the summit of the mountain
I could not allow my children to kill one another.
I listened to everyone with patience.
When I could no longer run through the forest,
or from one hut to another,
or through the corridors of the hospital…
I offered myself.
I offered myself so that peace might dwell in this land.
I offered myself so that reconciliation could take place.
I offered myself so that all souls…
might be saved.
The offering of myself rose spontaneously from my heart.
I spoke of it with my confessor, and when he gave me his blessing,
I surrendered myself as a victim,
as the price of ransom,
as a lamb in the footsteps of Jesus,
the spotless Lamb, and of Mary,
the blessed little Lamb,
who did not suffer the martyrdom of the flesh but that of the heart.
I learned it from Jesus:
"It is better that one should die for the good of all."
I learned it in the school of the Eucharist:
"This is my body, offered as a sacrifice for you."
I learned it from Jesus, who was pure gift *to the very end.*
And I was heard.
I did it with joy, as my whole life has been,
because *"only the one who gives with joy truly loves…"*
And it is a joy to love until the very last breath.
I assure you of that.
I learned it from Don Bosco and from Mother Mazzarello.

9. The Angel of “Home”

The Heart of God
is the home of humankind.

And Sister Maria
filled it
with hearts...

9. The Angel of “Home” (1950–1959)

1950
A home for everyone: construction of the Pius XII Hospital begins.

1953
She is appointed director of the hospital.

1954.11
Regular hospital activity begins.

1955
A severe measles epidemic, Sr Maria is infected and her health is deeply affected.

1956.09.10
Due to a lack of fuel, the airplane carrying Sr Maria risks crashing.

1957.05
Visit of Don Ziggiotti, Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

1959
A smallpox epidemic causes the death of many young people in the boarding school.

If the forest had been her “home,”
and Sr Maria had lived in it for years,
now the time comes to build a hospital,
a “home” for all the inhabitants of the forest.
An undertaking that seems disproportionate,
without resources, impossible.
But Sr Maria sees far ahead,
sure of the help of Providence.
Her service as a nurse is no longer enough:
it is necessary to form nurses.
To train others so that the mission may continue.
To build so that those with no resources
may be welcomed.
It is a new kind of economy.
And then… to stand on the threshold,
allowing others, now responsible, to act.
To sit on the bench to listen to everyone.
To believe that “*the Lord is always at work*” (Jn 5:17)
even when human strength fails.

“*So that no one may be lost*” (Jn 3:16).
It is the Gospel that calls.
It is the face of a man, a woman, a child… that calls.
And the house is no longer enough.
Mary Most Holy made a home
for the Son of God.
Sr Maria made a home
for the children of humankind.
And everyone felt at home.
Christian sharing, Marian welcome,
learned through the morning Way of the Cross
and the Rosary.
The first act of care for all:
help them feel at home.
No longer *“strangers or guests…*
but members of the household of God” (Eph 2:19).
God is home, sanctuary, hospital.
When one arrives there, rest is assured.
To feel at home—this is the confirmation of a vocation.

A word from Sister Maria

I asked myself so many times
where the human heart could find peace, home, rest.
Too many had no dwelling.
Too many carried an anxious heart.
Too many could not be cared for,
could not find a place to rest again,
a place to meet Jesus and Mary.
And so my own heart, too, was restless…
“Let us make a home, let us build a hospital;
let us not turn anyone away.”
I asked. I begged. I dreamed…
To find a Home that welcomes
it is the rest every person longs for.
To always find someone
who goes before you and awaits for you,
that is the Rest of every child.
To find, for all eternity,
Someone who intercedes for you,
that is to taste the fullness of joy.
It is to be recognized, to be considered important,
to feel oneself as a “child.”
And so at dawn, I spent my mornings
walking the “way of gift,”
gazing at Him
as He climbed the summit of sacrifice,
the total offering of Himself, unto His final consummation.
And I learned to give myself in the same way.
I learned how to welcome,
how to listen to, how to pour myself out in love.
I looked to the immolated Lamb
so that I might become a little lamb offered
on the altar of every encounter.
He who allowed Himself to be confronted by Pilate
kept me from fearing encounters with strong and harsh men.
He who allowed the weight of the Cross to be placed upon Him
kept me from avoiding the weight
of the sufferings of those I could reach.
He who allowed Himself to be approached
by the women who wept
allowed my shoulders to gather the tears
of so many different sorrows.

He who allowed Himself to be helped by the Cyrenian
made me able to ask for help, to involve others,
to share the passion that burned within my heart.
He who allowed Himself to be nailed upon the Cross
bound me to the stories of all people,
without letting me turn my face away.
He who gave His Mother to us
gave me permission to offer His Mother to every person.
He, Jesus Christ, fulfilling His work,
gave me the Spirit who taught me that
there is no “retirement” for those who love;
on the contrary it becomes the only true sign
and measure of “divine” life.

10. The Angel of Reconciliation

Love
is the name of God,
and it is written in blood.

And red
are the wings
of Sister Maria...

10. The Angel of Reconciliation (1960–69)

1961.02.26
Inauguration of the hospital (wing) ward dedicated to maternity.

1961
To defend the rights of the forest people, the idea arises
of a Provincial Federation of Shuar Centers.

1962
A school for girls:
nursing courses and formation for marriage and family life.

1963.05.10
An earthquake causes the church of Sucúa to collapse,
and Sr Maria is saved miraculously.

1964.10.22
Approval of the Provincial Statute of the Federation of Shuar Centers.

1969.07.04
Signs of hostility and open threats against the mission and missionaries
in Sucúa: the fire of hatred destroys the Salesian mission.
After numerous attempts at reconciliation, Sr Maria offers herself
as a victim for peace. It is the fullness of her vocation.

1969.08.05
During the feast of the Purissima, the acceptance
of her victim-offering is made manifest to Sr Maria.

1969.08.25
Sr Maria, the sole victim of the airplane crash.
She falls from the sky like a fruitful seed into the furrows of the earth.

2008.08.11
The Church declares her Venerable and calls to prayer.

2012.11.24
The Church recognizes her as *BLESSED* and calls to her intercession (Macas).

2025.10.19
The Church raises her to *SAINTHOOD* and calls to imitation (Rome).

It is the time of the “end”.
Not of extinguishing, but of fulfillment.
And those who follow in positions of authority
do not always understand those who came before them,
the work accomplished, the sacrifices made.
But this does not turn into resentment.
Sister Maria dwells in peace, that peace which, drawn from the Heart of Jesus,
her daughterly heart longs to give to those who are on the verge of slaughtering one another.
Hatred can be uprooted only by an offering.
And “our Madrecita” unites herself to the Eucharistic offering,
and eternal life is born.

From Sucúa to Quito it is necessary to *fly over*.
To *sister-fly* is to live as sisters… with wings tinted blood-red:
it is to fly above criticisms, recriminations, and being set aside.
To *sister-fly* is to live with wings dyed in blood, courageously,
without weighing pros and cons when the matter is self-gift.
To *sister-fly* is to lean on the wings, red with blood,
that God has stretched out in Jesus;
it is to look at things from above, as God does;
it is to see, feel, and suffer as God does
when hatred blinds, when anger cries out,
when suffering is inflicted.
Only total gratuity is the medicine that heals.
Only the Eucharistic sacrifice calms hearts.
Only the offering of oneself can restore peace.
And so the Eucharistic school became a vital offering,
a reparative, pacifying, reconciling offering.
Vocation is a continual *flying-over*:
to live as brothers and sisters
in the blood-red offering of oneself.

A word from Sister Maria

The color I loved most was blood-red.
A vibrant color, the color of life.
My wings? They carried this color.
And I flew over the tensions
in the various communities.
I flew over those who did not share the work I had done
or the way I had done it.
I flew over them, tinting my wings red.
Because communion is built by *sister-flying*.
A word composed of "flying" as sisters.
This is how you build
a home, a mission, reconciliation.
I even flew over my fears.
Fears that, as a child,
made me tremble at everything.
Fears I later had to face in illness,
in separation, in the flood, in the forest,
in the risk of falling from the sky with the plane.
Fears I transformed
by hiding in the only refuge that gives true safety,
the tabernacle, for there you never feel alone.
And so it was:
when war advanced,
when death spread its mantle
over fighting peoples,
when hatred seemed to prevail,
I ran to the One who made me strong,
who placed me as Angel of Reconciliation.
And I stretched my blood-red wings over the wings of the airplane.
And the offering was accepted.
Reconciliation was accomplished.
Because by *flying over* diversity and opposition,
we recognize all of us "only" human beings.
To *fly over* is to cover ancient wounds
with the wings of mercy.
To *fly over* is to cover rivalries
with the wings of gift.

To *fly over* is to rise high on the wings of God
and find, while helping others to find, HIM in everything and everyone.
And doing so I understood, as I climbed into the airplane,
that I needed to cross my arms into a Cross,
offering my hands for the peace of my brothers.
In that moment, the mystery of my life
was reaching its fulfillment.
What, then, is fullness?
What, then, is fulfillment for you?
What is happiness?
If not to give oneself, here and now, without measure.
Like God.
And I departed for heaven,
so that now heaven might dwell upon the earth.

A Method…

Augusto, 18 or 19 years old, lay on a straw mattress set on two planks of wood.
— *Where does it hurt, Augusto?*
— *Everywhere, Mother Maria.*
— *When did the accident happen?*
— *Fifteen, twenty days ago?*
I don't remember. I don't know how many days I walked.
Maria Troncatti examined him.
The left side of his ribcage had six or seven broken ribs,
from the chest or epigastrium down to the false ribs.
The spine was cracked at the last two cervical vertebrae or the first dorsal ones.
The intestines had shifted into the abdomen.
The missionary asked her:
— *Will you treat him, Mother Maria?*
— *Your Reverence, how am I to treat him in such a condition? With what?*
Seeing the moist eyes of the director,
she too, ready to weep, exclaimed:
— *Let me go to the Chapel. Mary Help of Christians will inspire me.*
Don Bosco had been beatified less than two months earlier.
In the beautiful church of Méndez, the image of the Founder
stood on a side altar, with two candles burning beside it.
Sister Maria spent so long in prayer
that another Sister, Sr. Iglesias, went to look for her…
A new morning dawned.
Throughout the entire Mass, Maria Troncatti prayed for Augusto.
Leaving the church later, she held her small prayer book
with deep devotion. (Then) They all went to have breakfast.
Entering the sickroom and closing the door,
Maria, la madrecita, said:
— *Augusto, for your internal organs I have nothing to give you but a purgative. So drink.*

The young man drank, supported by Sr Maria,
who had slipped an arm around his shoulders.
— *And now the medicines. Take off your shirt.*
Let's begin with the ribs.
Sister Troncatti's face seemed to shine:
simple and serene, she called heaven to the rescue.
She took from her book an image of Mary Help of Christians…
— *Augusto, kiss her. This is the medicine.*
She touched the broken ribs with her fingertips
and placed the image over them.
Then she bandaged him tightly from the chest
down past the pit of his stomach.
Her lips moved constantly in countless 'Hail Marys'.
Augusto too was praying.
— *And now here is the medicine for the spine.*
She drew the image of Don Bosco from the book and had him kiss it.
— *Turn over.*
She applied the smiling figure of the newly beatified Founder
to his back and bandaged him from the neck downward.
— *Do not move until I tell you to.*
For four days she cared for him completely, in bed,
forcing him into total stillness.
On the fifth day she said:
— *Try to sit up without help.*
Augusto sat up effortlessly.
— *Try to get out of bed.*
Augusto placed his feet on the ground.
He stood upright, took a few steps.
The director, who had been observing everything, was astonished.
— *How do you feel?*
— *Well, Mother Maria.*
— *Go back to bed.*
On the sixth day he was cured:
no more intestinal pain.
He felt the urge to take off the bandages, to run.
On the seventh day, Sr Maria unwrapped him.
She had him kiss the two images
and placed them back into her book.
— *Walk. Lift your arms. Bend down.*
— *But I feel perfectly well, Madrecita.*
— *Go bathe in the Paute. You swim like a fish, don't you?*
Augusto was fresh and strong again, like an athlete.

(From D. Grassiano, Selva Patria del cuore, 1971)

The story of Augusto and the story of Maria
A meeting that becomes the synthesis of a whole method of life.
A method of friendship.
A method through which the Mystery of God may be fulfilled and realized.
The trauma is immense
like the traumas life places before us.
The uncertainty that makes us tremble
before pain, poverty, ignorance.
But there is a consultation that opens the door to hope.
It is the Encyclopedia that knows everything
and the Specialist who never fails:
the One who is always present in the tabernacle.
Physician of body and soul,
assisted by well-trained helpers:
Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco.
It was to this team of experts
that Maria Troncatti entrusted herself:
going to their school,
placing cases in their hands,
asking for extraordinary interventions.
Here is the cure.
Here is the method.
Maria Troncatti, like an older sister,
reveals her secret to you:
to face the flight of life,
you need strength that comes only from the Cross
with arms wide open in self-gift.

Maria lived through encounters…
beginning with ONE ENCOUNTER, one friendship.
Maria lived through friendships…
beginning with her Friendship with Mary and with Saint John Bosco.
And with this team of healers,
our Sister healed bodies and souls.
From Them she learned a method.
From Them she heard a voice calling her, which
(Called) she answered with her whole self.
With fear turned into courage.
With fragility transformed into strength.
With hands opened like the Cross, she took flight.
This is the simple holiness of GOD and of the Mary.