



Message for the death of Adriana Mascagni

Dearest friends,

after a long life entirely spent singing of the mystery of the human heart and the wonders of the Lord, the Father has called our dearest Adriana Mascagni to himself.

Her name will remain forever linked to a song about which Fr. Giussani thus spoke: “It is very significant that the first song that happened among us [...] should already express the whole dimension of the question—in other words the reason—that moves us; and on the other hand, has already given the answer. Try to think of the hymn of our movement, of those words written by Maretta Campi, with the music of Adriana Mascagni: ‘If our voice is a voice that no longer has a reason, then it is the poor voice of a man who does not exist.’ But ‘it must cry out and implore that the breath of life may not end.’ [...] it must also ‘sing because there is life.’ This is the immense reason, that cannot be compared with any other word. ‘The whole of life asks for eternity.’ When we get up in the morning for a frenetic day, a tiresome day, or for a day free from particular engagements, ‘it must sing because there is life; the whole of life asks for eternity.’ The whole of life asks for eternity. Try to think of forty years in which the whole of life has asked for eternity! ‘It cannot die, it cannot end, this voice of ours that asks love for life.’ This is why ‘it is not the poor voice of a man who does not exist: our voice sings with a reason’” (*To Give One’s Life for the Work of Another*, McGill-Queen’s University Press 2022, pp. 123-124).

What had happened to that 15-16-year-old girl? She had had a particular encounter that revolutionized her life. When she was studying at the Vittoria Colonna Institute in Milan, Fr. Giussani was her religion teacher, whom she recalled thus, “It was tough because I had no use for religion; it was tough but, at the same time, a singular experience. Since I was a rebel, I always came at least a half an hour late because I was angry with the world. As time went on, I started coming to class early. I always had my hand up to fight with him but that was a sign of my desire.” One day Giussani brought a record by Père Duval to school: “Since I love music, he really touched my heart and moved me” (*The Life of Luigi Giussani*, McGill-Queen’s University Press 2018, pp. 193-194).

Her story is a testimony to what Pope Francis spoke about on October 15: “Fr. Giussani attracted, convinced, converted hearts because he transmitted to others what he carried within him after that fundamental experience of his: the passion for humanity and the passion for Christ as the fulfillment of man. Many young people followed him.”

Today we can say of her what the Pope said of Fr. Giussani: “He had intuited—not only with the mind but with the heart—that Christ is the unifying centre of all reality, he is the answer to all human questions, he is the fulfillment of every desire for happiness, goodness, love, and eternity present in the human heart. The wonder and fascination of this first encounter with Christ never abandoned him” (Francis, *Audience with Communion and Liberation*, October 15, 2022).

Faithful to the story generated by that first encounter, Adriana immediately saw the great gift that the Lord had given her and that Giussani had “caught” flourish: a unique voice, thanks to which she



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gave us songs that express the sentiments of our hearts in a way that none of us would be able to: *Povera voce, Al mattino, Il mio volto, Grazie, Signore, Non son sincera...*

Over time she educated entire generations of young people (even directing the GS choir for years) and then adults in singing, which for Fr. Giussani was fundamental to living the faith: “No expression of human sentiment is greater than music. Who would not be moved by a string concert? How can you remain untouched by the colors of a piano sonata? Nothing seems better than that. Yet, when I listen to the human voice... I do not know if it happens to you too, but the human voice is even better than music, and you cannot go beyond that. Really, there is no service to the community comparable to singing. [...] Five minutes before the first mass of the movement, song in the movement was born. The beginning of song in the movement is the beginning of the movement. There is no difference. The movement is born and we sing. Like a child with its mother. One belongs and singing resounds” (*Un caffè in compagnia*, Rizzoli, Milano 2004, pp. 135ff). Adriana testified to us what belonging to Christ in the life of the movement can generate in those who live it with simplicity; and for this we now say thank you.

Let us not hide her legacy under rocks, for it is given to us for more. “The very first song of the movement [...] is, crashingly, our response to this nostalgia that crowds the human heart. It is still sharp–sharp, decisive–and as yet not fully bloomed” (*Certi di alcune grandi cose. 1979-1981*, Bur, Milano 2007, p. 54). So let us ask the Mystery for the same willingness of heart as Adriana, so that the response that made our friend great may bloom more and more in us as well.

Entrusting her to the mercy of the risen Christ, we are certain that the Lord will have immediately placed Adriana in the front row of the heavenly choir, where she can continue to sing in the company of Fr. Giussani.

Davide Prospero

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Milan, December 22, 2022