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**Venerable
Mother Mary
Joseph of Jesus CP
Elizabeth Prout**
**Foundress of the Sisters
of the Cross and Passion**

Sr. Dominic Savio Hamer

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Elizabeth Prout was born in Shrewsbury, England on 2 September 1820 and baptised a fortnight later at her mother's behest in St Julian's Anglican church, where the vicar was noted for his care for the poor. By 1841 the family had moved to Stone, Staffordshire near Aston Hall, where Blessed Dominic Barberi arrived in 1842. Elizabeth was one of the many people who became Catholics after listening to his sermons. Next she encountered Venerable Father Ignatius Spencer, assisting him in the Baptism of a baby in the Stone workhouse. Then she met Father Gaudentius Rossi and on his recommendation entered the convent of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus in Northampton.

In fact, by God's grace, it was a Passionist road she was taking, which began when she became ill and had to leave the convent. Her mother nursed her back to health but was quick to show her displeasure when Elizabeth continued to be a Catholic. Elizabeth therefore went to Manchester to earn her living by teaching in St Chad's school but expected

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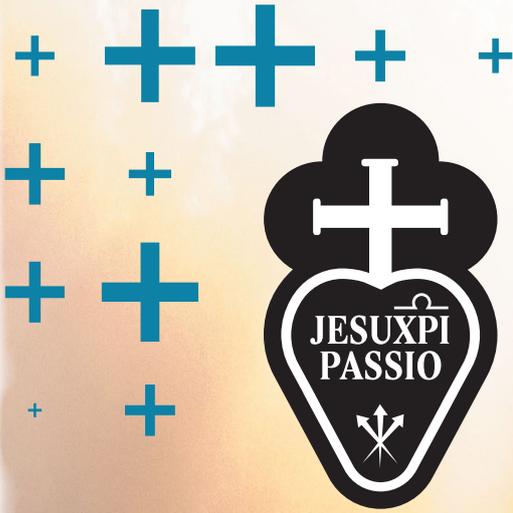
Lord's Passion; the Rosary hanging from a leather girdle round the waist; and over the heart the Cross, the Heart and the Nails of the Passionist Sign, only the letters 'JMJ' (Jesus, Mary and Joseph) differing from the 'IXP' of the Passionist Sign of St Paul of the Cross. After Pope Pius IX on 13 June 1863 gave Papal Approbation to the Rule as revised by her and Ignatius, Bishop Turner on 17 August 1863 canonically established her Congregation. In his presence and that of Venerable Ignatius on 23 October 1863 Elizabeth Prout, Mother Mary Joseph of Jesus, was unanimously elected as first Mother General of her Congregation.

Her apostolate, imbued with her Passionist spirituality, had been tremendous. She had safeguarded Catholic spirituality and education for the poor and the lower middle class in schools in Manchester, Levenshulme and Ashton-Under-Lyne in the Diocese of Salford and in Sutton, Parr, Blackbrook and Peasley Cross in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. She had also initiated the opening of a Home for Catholic mill girls. For her Sisters she had maintained a strong contemplative ethos, including the daily recitation of the Little Office of Our Lady. She had made consecrated religious life with choir observance available to working-class women.

to leave soon for a convent in Belgium. As she received word to go, however, Father Gaudentius and Father Robert Croskell, parish priest of St Chad's, asked her to co-operate with them in founding a new religious order for women who could not pay the dowry required by the established orders. Elizabeth agreed, abandoning herself to the Will of God, which involved, as time would tell, the difficulties of training Father Gaudentius Rossi's mainly unsuitable candidates, of teaching in one poverty-stricken school after another and of wrestling with her own delicate health. But she was serving Christ amongst the poor; she was founding a religious order for the poor; and it was a Passionist venture.

Spiritually she had a great friend and mentor in Venerable Ignatius and a faithful supporter in William Turner, first Bishop of Salford. After Gaudentius was sent to North America in 1855, Ignatius took his place with the Sisters and, on the recommendation of the Holy See, was able to work with Elizabeth, Mother Mary Joseph of Jesus as she then was, in transforming his Rule into a truly Passionist Rule. She and her Sisters were already wearing recognisably Passionist dress: the veil and religious habit black as a sign of the 'Memory' of Our

Elizabeth Prout died as Father Ignatius gave her a Final Absolution on 11 January 1864. In the following June he brought the Passionist Father General to see her Sisters in Sutton. Immediately recognising their Passionist spirituality, he suggested that their Congregation should be aggregated to the Passionist Congregation. This had to be approved by the Passionist General Chapter, of course, and by the Holy See. For a time warfare in Italy delayed it but on 9 November 1874 the Sisters were given the full Passionist Sign, with 'IXP' replacing 'JMJ' and on 15 November 1874 Venerable Elizabeth Prout's Sisters became *the Sisters of the Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*.



**Teresa Gallifa:
a valiant YES
to life.**

Servants of the Passion.

Sr. María José Ameigeiras



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Defending life was the vocation, the ideal and the dream, which gave birth to the work of venerable Mother Teresa Gallifa y Palmarola (20 June 1850 – 17 March 1907). Teresa was an exemplary daughter, a model wife, a selfless mother, a courageous widow and a religious in love with her crucified Lord.

In the strongly Catholic Catalonia region of Spain, her mother taught her to follow the ways of God and to be a Christian who matured throughout her life. At the age of seventeen her prayer was courageous and persevering-- *“My God, by your Passion, let me know what you want from me. I only want to do your will.”*

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It is inspiring to observe the story of the invitations that God offered Teresa throughout her life and how she responded generously in all situations. At the age of nineteen, with the help of her mother, a priest and personal prayer, she clearly discerned her vocation and mission to the married life. She married the young Manuel Benito Codolosa and together they had seven children.

Their home was a school of prudence, tenderness, patience, and prayer. With perseverance, Teresa encouraged her husband to change his difficult character and become a good and kind man. God subjected her to trials that culminated in poverty, sickness, and death. One after another she lost five of her children at very young ages, but, to Teresa's joy, they were all baptized. Later, while caring for a family that was afflicted with typhus, she became ill and infected her husband, who after a long convalescence failed to fully recover and died, leaving her a widow at the age of thirty-two, with two small children.

Consequently, Gallifa had to emigrate to the Spanish city of Vich. In the first months she lived by begging for alms. Later she worked taking care of children until, in Barcelona, she obtained the title

of midwife, a profession that she exercised with great success in the cities of Manlleu and Vich.

Her favorite prayer, *"My God, by your Passion, let me know what you want from me. I only want to do your will"*, became the moving force of her life and work. Praying this prayer and gazing at Christ Crucified, she asked for light to discern her vocation and the courage to care for her only living son and to do the work she was called to do. Every day and especially in all the painful events of her life Teresa prayed--*"Thy will be done."*

She then began to care for children in need and, little by little, her new family would be composed of the poor and marginalized and, especially unmarried young mothers who were the object of social criticism.

Truly the love of Christ Crucified gave her the strength to commit herself to this difficult task, without sufficient financial means and with great opposition, even from within the Church. Her great interest in caring for children and all those who came into contact with her led her to found an association that in time, would be called the CONGREGATION of the SERVANTS OF THE PASSION.



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Teresa, a strong woman, unwavering in her faith and selfless in love, is a witness for all Christians who can and must be present in the world at the service of the humblest and of the voiceless.

More than a hundred years have passed since this woman, moved by the Spirit of God, sowed the seemingly insignificant seed of a Work that she was born to promote, that developed over time, but which responded to the pressing needs of the moment, i.e. the life and rights of every human person, beginning with the right to be born and become a child of God.

It was a Work that began, like the things of God, in the simplest and most natural way, i.e. when Mother Teresa, instead of a monument, placed in the center of her heart the first abandoned woman who was expecting a child and who no one even wanted to look at. Thus, little by little, she was making a missionary maxim a reality with an evangelical air: *"I would go anywhere to save a soul! A life!"*

These are women who would dedicate themselves to meditating on Christ in the first Station of the Way of the Cross and seeing in Christ condemned to death those who are most unjustly condemned, i.e. in those who have not yet been born.

As a model of merciful action, Teresa Gallifa took our Lady of the Visitation as an example of love, humility, and generous service. The Servants of the Passion ask her every day to intercede *"that we be bearers of God like you."*

On 17 March 1907, Mother Teresa died in Barcelona, after a long and painful illness that did not prevent her from creating several associations of midwives, and of young people and adults that evangelized in the social environment of that time. Her remains currently rest in the chapel of the Generalate in Barcelona. In 1972, in Barcelona, the process of the Beatification and Canonization of Mother Teresa Gallifa y Palmarola began and on June 25, 1996, His Holiness St. John Paul II declared her Venerable, recognizing the heroism of her theological and cardinal virtues in the various states of her life.

