

Text of the Homily of His Eminence Crescenzo Cardinal Sepe, Archbishop of Naples and celebrant at the Beatification

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Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood
Royal Highnesses of the House of Savoy and the House of Bourbon
Distinguished Authorities
Members of the Association of Culture Conferences Maria Cristina of Savoy
Dear Friends

(He) She gives to the poor
her righteousness endures forever
She stands facing the glory .

So we sang in the responsorial psalm of this Eucharistic liturgy that we celebrate to thank the thrice-holy God who willed to beatify Queen Maria Cristina of Savoy , whose mortal remains are interred in this splendid basilica.

Naples , which received her in November of 1832 , as Queen together with her Husband Ferdinand II of Bourbon , today rejoys because the Church has recognized the heroic nature of her virtues and presents her to the veneration of the faithful as a teacher of the Christian people .

Maria Cristina of Savoy, the Saint Little Queen, as she was acclaimed the court and the Neapolitan people, is a precious gift for the Church of Naples, and for the universal Church . Her life and her works of charity remain for all a treasure to be preserved and imitated even today. She was a woman of extraordinary charity with a special predilection for the poor, the sick , women in distress; a genuine charity embodied in the reality of her time, and as human and Christian promotion of her people. Maria Cristina was the Queen of the poor because she placed

evangelical love at the basis of her simple and sober lifestyle, her commitment to forgiveness and peace in the family and in society, in support youth exposed, even at that time, to dangers of every kind , for the defense of the inalienable rights of the human person , knowing that nothing is foreign to Christ and his Gospel to what is truly human . It is extremely meaningful and touching to read that , at her death , the King was handed the Queen 's treasure, a chest containing all the receipts issued to her spiritual director, Father Terzi, of the innumerable beneficiaries of Maria Cristina .

But the Queen embodied her faith and love of Christ inside her own family, where she was a model wife and mother . As the wise woman of the Gospel , she was counselor to her husband , working for the defense and promotion of the people entrusted to him . On His part, Ferdinand II , in his government work , took on his wife's good wishes, who advised him to moderation and clemency, as in the case of commutation of death sentences to the penalty of imprisonment for conspirators and enemies.

In just three years , the Queen of Naples became a promoter of numerous works of charity and human promotion. Just remember her courageous commitment to restore the colony of S. Leucio for the production of silk and , in Torre del Greco , the craftsmanship of coral in order to restore a rough economy , creating jobs for women and help many poor families economically .

This holiness of life was possible because the Princess of Savoy , who was educated by her parents to faith and Christian piety , learned to read and practice throughout her life the will of God : to obey with humility and responsibility the plan that God had in store for her existence. For some time , she cultivated a secret desire to become a nun and enter a cloistered monastery , certain that God was calling her to religious life. But when she realized , also aided by her spiritual father Giovanni Battista Terzi, that given the socio-political context of her time , the Lord called her

to married life, she agreed with obedience to take the path indicated to her : Now I assure you and repeat that I am very calm - she wrote in May 1831 to the Olivetan - I hope that God will help me and I will always know his holy will Now I'm entirely in the hands of God and for I hope HE will take care of my future.

And the Lord showed acceptance , by granting not only great affection , but the sincere devotion of the Neapolitan people that cheered their “Little Saint Queen”. Since his arrival in the port of Naples , from Genoa , the people came from all other cities of the kingdom, despite the pouring rain, greeting her with very special warmth , perhaps in anticipation of the fame of her beauty and of his goodness that preceded her. In reality the dowry she brought was rich in human and Christian virtues and it marked forever the history of Naples . A few days after her arrival in Naples she wrote to Countess Valvera : “I am enchanted by Naples and from everything I see.” Thus she immediately won the hearts of Naples with her extraordinary charity, taking on of the most varied needs of the poor and needy .

Dear Brothers and Sisters ,

the rite of beatification of Queen Maria Cristina, which we've just celebrated, teaches us that the way of holiness is feasible for all if we let ourselves be guided by the light of the Holy Spirit that animates us from within and transforms us through baptism. We are all called to be saints and we could be if we will comply to the will of God, if we practice charity and putting our lives at the service of others, especially the poor and needy, whom we meet in the course of our lives. Holiness is an actual part of the Church, imbues its history and gives it life even today. How many saints still live among our people today, normal people, humble, hidden , without visible heroism , but who can embody , with simple and concrete gestures, the charity of Christ. Holiness has no boundaries of time, place , social status or

culture.

We ask our Blessed to show us and accompany us through all walks of life, always keeping God in your heart: I believe in God , hope in God, love God were the of the Blessed last words before her death , which occurred on January 31, 1836 , at the age 24 years.

God bless us and

A Maronna c accompagna