

Strienna Natalizia *2023*



The high privilege of serving Christ in the poor.

*«Our cared for children, innocent, are the apple
of our eyes and God's dearest treasures».*

These words of Don Orione stand ideally on the entrance of the Little Cottolengo of Montalban in the Philippines. They are lived words, inscribed in truth in the charismatic heart of consecrated men and women, lay people, employees and volunteers, who carry out a concrete apostolate of charity intended to give home and family, also name and surname, to those who have found themselves in a condition of fragility or even abandonment.

It happened, years ago, with Don Antonio Ruggeri, our religious, who thus used to recall a particular event in his life: *«Don Orione took three days to prepare me for the tragic news of my father's death. To my sad cry, he held me close to his heart and kissed me on the forehead whispering to me: "Courage son: from this moment I will be your father!"»*.

In Cottolengo, the paternity of Don Orione continues to offer many children welcome and care for the weak life in the Philippines. One example is Giuseppe Orione, so named by our religious, abandoned without documents in front of the Cottolengo on the evening of October 20th, 2008. Still today he continues to enchant with the serenity of his face and his affability. Never again abandoned; he is not a guest of our Cottolengo, but a resident, a real son of Don Orione whose surname he also took. And with the surname Orione others are still there. Each with his own story, generally dramatic, but filled

with charity and light at the Cottolengo. From Don Orione they receive everything, really everything - and if they do not have it - even the family name.

In Christmas 2023 we want to remember the Founder in the light of his fatherhood, to all, also to us, Sons of Divine Providence, called today to be the living continuators of his fatherhood and to put into practice his warning as inheritance: *«You see how many poor children are left orphans, give them the hand, be you the fathers to the orphans. We have had the high privilege of serving Christ in the poor, because in the poor there is the image of Christ, who said: Whatever you do to the least of these, I will keep as done to me».*

May the most fervent wishes for a Holy Christmas and a New Year filled with God's paternal love, from the General Council reach all of you, brothers, sisters, benefactors, friends of the Little Work of Divine Providence.

Francisco Vieira
Don Walter Gropello
Paulo Teixeira
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