



Sister Maria Troncatti Missionary Mother Artisan of Peace and Reconciliation

FACT SHEET 9

The Marian dimension in the life of Sister Maria Troncatti

Introduction

Saint Maria Troncatti (1883-1969), FMA missionary, showed extraordinary devotion to Mary Immaculate, which shaped her entire spiritual life and missionary work. Her deep connection with the Virgin Mary began early when, at the age of fourteen, she enthusiastically joined the association of the Daughters of Mary in her hometown of Corteno Golgi.

During her mission in Ecuador, Sister Maria constantly turned to Mary for guidance and protection, often invoking the *Purissima* [Mary Most Pure] during dangerous situations and even obtaining miraculous healings through Mary's intercession. The rosary was her favorite prayer. She made recitation of the rosary at dawn a sacred duty. She spent her days "sowing Hail Mary's" and living in constant conversation with Jesus and Mary. Her deep Marian devotion was not a private matter, but one she actively shared with all those she met, since she taught others to "love the Virgin very much" and to trust in Mary's maternal care during times of tribulation.



WORD OF GOD

Just as Mary remained courageous at the foot of the cross, suffering with her Son but always faithful to her mission, so Sister Maria Troncatti lived this same spirit in the Amazon rainforest. Mary became the mother of the Church taking care of the beloved disciple; in the same way, Sister Maria cared for the indigenous peoples as a spiritual mother. Just as Mary became Mother of the Church at the foot of the cross, Sister Maria was a "mother" to the indigenous communities, so much so that she was called *madrecita buena* [good mother]. Her life shows us that true Marian devotion is not only prayer, but means being close to every suffering, expressing the same motherhood of Mary for the Church, and trusting completely in God even in the most difficult situations.

From the Gospel according to John (19:25-27)

At the foot of the cross were Jesus' mother, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother near the disciple whom he loved, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son." And to the disciple, he said, "This is your mother." And from that moment on, the disciple took her into his home.



[Link to video](#)



FROM THE BIOGRAPHY OF SISTER MARIA TRONCATTI

This episode shows how Sister Maria Troncatti was a woman of great faith who entrusted herself completely to God and to the Virgin Mary. Faced with an impossible situation—having to operate with simple instruments under the threat of death—she did not rely solely on her medical knowledge but prayed and asked for the help of the Virgin Mary. The success of the operation, which she called "a miracle," shows how much her faith guided her apostolic commitment. This dramatic moment changed her missionary life. The natives began to respect and protect her, and her reputation as a healer guided by God was consolidated forever.

Life or death in the "operating room"

That day, along with the few permanent inhabitants of the small *pueblo* [town], there were many other people present. About eighty of them had come from the jungle. They were not smiling. They were determined and armed with arrows, knives, blowguns, and even (a sign of refined civilization) rifles and carbines. They demanded a miracle; otherwise, they would summarily execute anyone who disregarded their... very just demands. Their leader was called Juank.

In the previous days, there had been a fierce battle between groups or tribes. A young girl had been shot. No one at the mission felt able to perform the operation she needed to remove the devastating bullet from her body, so infection had begun. They had waited for the "physical mother"- the few people at the mission hoping for her skill, the others for some kind of challenge.

The chief said to Sister Maria: " You *curing*... you bullet *removing*.. If you not *healing*, you to Macas not going. If you not saving, we all death *giving*."

Must we really say that Sister Maria felt she was truly "*giving*" death? She understood that these were not just words. It was a "trial by fire," a "judgment of God."

As witnesses affirm, in that place there were no "good" natives, those who had joyfully welcomed the Sisters at the river crossing, and "bad" natives, or at least distrustful ones, who were waiting for them at the mission. There was only one type of native: people capable of absolute loyalty, but also of total opposition. They felt a pressing need to defend their freedom above all else.

Those strange women who arrived in the jungle from who knows what other world had to undergo a test the brooked no appeal, beyond which there could only be death if they failed. The commitment they asked of Sister Maria was a formidable step. It was necessary to demonstrate that she was coming to the jungle to serve and not to oppress and command: not even with those paternalistic attitudes typical of those who feel superior and have everything to teach.

There was no middle ground. They intended to set "precise conditions for safe passage, in the absence of which there would be no 'deferral' or forced repatriation, but only summary execution."

Si la curas te hemos de querer; y si muere te hemos que matar (If you cure her, we will love you; and if she dies, we will have to kill you.) "A significant gesture says that the same fate (love or death) is reserved for the other members of the group."

A dozen warriors filed into the room; they stood statue-like with their backs to the wall, their eyes fixed on the newcomer.

At a sign from Juank, the wounded girl entered, pushed by her mother. They laid her on the table.

Sister Maria was trembling all over; she remained there, her eyes fixed on the ground. Monsignor Comin said, "Courage, Sister Maria! We must proceed."



She had already done something similar about ten years earlier, in Varazze, during the war. However, in those circumstances, at least the essentials were available. Here, there was only a small bottle of tincture of iodine.

Would the Virgin Mary remember that she was also a licensed surgeon?

Sister Maria asked for boiling water and some clean cloths; she took a folding pen knife from her large pocket. She was able to wash herself up to the elbows with some providential soap and wrapped herself in a kind of sheet. The thirteen-year-old girl had a high fever that did not bode well.

While Sister Maria dipped the pen knife in boiling water, the missionaries and Sisters withdrew to pray.

The witch doctor had already worked his magic on the sick girl, and who knows, perhaps some of his concoctions might have even aggravated the infection...

The swelling on the girl's arm was ugly and threatening. Sister Maria disinfected it with tincture of iodine, while the Kivaros looked at each other and wondered, "Why is she painting it black?" Then, with a deep invocation to the Lord, her hand, no longer trembling, made the incision.

Along with the ugly pus, the bullet came out, just like a new gunshot, and fell to the floor with a thud.

The father, triumphant, picked it up and with the others improvised a dance that meant everything, including a declaration of friendship.

While disinfecting and bandaging the arm, Sister Maria smiled lovingly at the little girl, who had endured everything without even a complaint.

Outside the hut, the Sisters who were preparing a mattress of leaves saw the warriors passing by. The chief said, "We now helping... All passing..."

It was a night of vigil for Sister Maria. She stayed beside the girl who had undergone surgery and was suffering in the grip of a high fever. Sister Maria lay down on the mattress and then got up to comfort the sick girl. She prayed and listened. In the forest, the tom-tom resounded, or, to put it in the Kivaro way, the *tuntui*, a large hollow wooden drum, engraved in various ways. It was struck with a mallet, with strong or weak blows, frequent or spaced out, interspersed with pauses, forming an elaborate alphabet, to mark festivals and ceremonies and to convey messages over long distances.⁴

Of course, Sister Maria could not understand, but that night the message said something like this: "A healer greater than any witch doctor has arrived. Free passage to her forever. To her and to those who walk with her."

In the oft-quoted letter to her family, Sister Maria wrote: "A girl had been shot, and since Father Corbellini had told them that I was a 'doctor,' they wanted me to remove the bullet. Imagine: without the necessary tools, only a pocketknife I kept in my pocket. Our Lady helped me: I saw a miracle; I was able to extract the bullet that was near her heart..."

(COLLINO Maria, *La grazia di un si tutto donato Maria Troncatti Missionaria nella foresta amazzonica*, Elledici. Rome, 2012, 113-116)



FOR REFLECTION

1. Sister Maria wondered if "*Our Lady would remember that she was also a licensed surgeon.*" How do you turn to Mary in moments when your abilities seem insufficient for the challenges you face?
2. Sister Maria attributed the success of the operation entirely to Our Lady, calling it "a miracle" rather than taking personal credit. How can you better recognize and thank Mary's intercession in your daily life, especially in moments of success or accomplishment?



3. When Sister Maria's hands stopped shaking after her "deep invocation to the Lord," she demonstrated how prayer transforms fear into courage. How can you deepen your devotion to Mary so that, like Sister Maria, you can remain calm and trust in God's will during the most threatening moments of life?
4. Sister Maria's willingness to risk her life to heal others reflected the spirit of service and sacrifice of Mary of Nazareth herself. In what ways can you imitate Mary's "fiat" by saying "yes" to difficult acts of service, even when they seem beyond your capabilities?



FOR PRAYER

Let us conclude this moment with this official prayer to Saint Mary Troncatti.

Merciful Father,
through the work of the Holy Spirit,
you inspired in Saint Maria Troncatti,
Daughter of Mary Help of Christians and intrepid missionary,
a maternal charity for young people and the poor,
grant us, through her intercession, the grace we ask of you
and the gift of being, like her, artisans of reconciliation and peace.
Through Christ, our Lord.
Amen