

**SISTER BENIGNA CONSOLATA FERRERO,  
A PROFESSED CHOIR NUN OF THE ORDER  
OF THE VISITATION, B. V. M., COMO,  
ITALY; OR "THE TENDERNESSES OF THE  
LOVE OF JESUS FOR A LITTLE SOUL"**

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Sister Benigna Consolata Ferrero, a Professed Choir Nun of the Order of the Visitation, B. V. M., Como, Italy; Or "The Tendernesses of the Love of Jesus for a Little Soul" by Benigna Consolata Ferrero & Mary Paulina Finn

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**BENIGNA CONSOLATA FERRERO & MARY PAULINA FINN**

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Benigna Consolata  
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**Order of the Visitation, B. V. M.  
COMO, ITALY**

OR

**"THE TENDERNESSES OF  
THE LOVE OF JESUS  
FOR A LITTLE SOUL."**

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A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND VIRTUES

OF OUR DEAR SISTER

**Benigna Consolata Ferrero**

DECEASED IN OUR MONASTERY OF THE VISITATION, B. V. M.

of COMO, LOMBARDY,

SEPTEMBER 1, 1916, AGED 31 YEARS AND 25 DAYS:

OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION, 6 YEARS, 9 MONTHS AND 7 DAYS,

OF THE RANK OF CHOIR SISTERS

*Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord:  
and shalt teach him out of thy law.—Ps. XCIII. 12.*

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TRANSLATED FROM THE

**Community Circular of Como**

BY

M. S. PINE.

## FOREWORD.

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In the life of Sister Benigna Consolata Ferrero, the saintly Visitandine of Como, Italy, we have a model of pure, beautiful childhood, maidenhood, and later, of extraordinary sanctity in the religious life. From her early years we witness a condescending familiarity on the part of Jesus Christ that would challenge our faith had He not said, "My delights are to be with the children of men;" had He not annihilated Himself even to the death of the Cross for each individual soul; had He not, in giving us His Sacred Heart as a new pledge of His tenderness, *uttered His heart-rending cry of love for souls and His ineffable longing for their love in return.*

The heavenly descents of the God-Man toward His creatures should not surprise us. Yet at every page of this wonderful story of "The Delicacies and Tendernesses of the Love of Jesus for a Little Soul" we are awed into silence, transported, as it were, into a celestial atmosphere, where, like Mary, we are at the feet of Jesus listening to His Gospel of sanctity.

And these pages present to us the amazing spectacle, in our own degenerate days, of a maiden who at twelve years could immolate herself as a victim of love to God, ready to suffer all privations, all tortures of mind and body, yea, to be the sport of the powers of hell, even, if she might but console the Heart of the Redeemer of the world by helping to win it back to Him—this world gone so far astray.

To what sublime heights of mystical knowledge Jesus uplifted her soul! And to corresponding depths of humiliation He lowered her! He summoned her to ever-varying modes of sacrifice, opened to her deserts of temptation where, plunged in a desolation of heart that became more intense, and yet more desirable, as divine love grew more seraphic, Sister Benigna Consolata became ravished with suffering, and sought only to share the very agonies of the Crucified.

To renounce nature at every moment, at every breath of life, was not enough; creatures must lend their aid, and in a thousand ways lacerating to the sensitive heart, help on the great work of sanctifica-



tion; nay, the powers of darkness will be permitted to approach and assault her spirit, still in its baptismal innocence, and with terrors unspeakable, invading even her wasted physical frame, will strive to wrest her from the Heart of her Divine Spouse.

Yet did not Jesus Himself, after the glorious apparition of the Spirit-Dove in the opened Heavens, and the Voice of His Heavenly Father proclaiming His Divine Mission, suffer the temptations of His fiendish enemy? Did He not allow Him even a transient possession of His Sacred Person? So shall we wonder or tremble or be scandalized when, with His "Little Secretary, the Apostle of His Mercy," we pass from the fragrant airs of Paradise—her Solemn Profession with Love—to the deadly atmosphere of the enemy of all good, to her last struggle with her satanic lifelong foe?

In these Colloquies we are matriculating in a truly Divine School. The mystical life of union with God and the sure, safe and speedy means of reaching it, are taught us in the very terms of simplicity with which Jesus spoke to His disciples when He walked the roadsides or sat on the mountain slopes of Judea. And the rays of His Mercy stream from every page for the most grievous sinners who will come trusting to Him as to a divine Brother.

Our Lord is glorifying in a marvellous manner Sister Benigna Consolata, whose interior life with Jesus on earth was so secret, so hidden, so guarded even from the dear Sisters who were her daily companions, that only after her blessed death was the stupendous revelation given them by the Mother Superior who had so ably guided her and by the Ecclesiastical Superiors whose direction had ever been marked by supernatural light and prudence. Jesus had willed this profound secrecy. "Only after your death shall your writings be known," He repeatedly promised her.

This Life tells us that we have saints with us always. The Past is shining with its aureoles, as multitudinous as the stars of heaven. But the Present, too, is weaving aureoles, and gloriously, from the rays of sanctity spread over the world—in the hearts of little ones, in hearts growing seraphic in the shadow of the Tabernacle, in hearts, armed with weapons forged on Calvary, now fighting the enemies of Christ—the world and the flesh—and defying the great arch-enemy with the Cross which conquered him.

*Is one of these aureoles yours?*

M. S. PINE.

# SISTER BENIGNA CONSOLATA FERRERO

THE "LITTLE SECRETARY OF JESUS"

(1885-1916)

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*Only the actions of the Just  
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.*

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## I

### BIRTH OF MARIA CONSOLATA;

### HER CHILDHOOD AND EARLY

### YOUTH.

It is with feelings of indescribable emotion that we undertake to write the incomparable life of our angelic Sister Benigna Consolata. To our great regret, we can give only an imperfect idea of the beauty of this privileged soul so tenderly beloved by the Divine Master, who in His intimate and continual colloquies with His little spouse, named her familiarly the Benjamin of His Heart. Ever docile in listening to the divine voice, her eyes constantly fixed on the Heart of her God, so good, so tender, so merciful, our beloved Sister attained, in a very short time, to the highest perfection, so that the Divine Spouse, looking upon her with complacency, could say to her: "Thy heart is a garden inclosed to Me, a Paradise in which I take my delights."

Our dear Sister was born in Turin on August 6, 1885, the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, of distinguished and very pious parents,—Signor Sebastiano Ferrero and Signora Carolina Pansa. On the following day, the Feast of St. Gaetano, she received the grace of Baptism, with the names Maria, Consolata, Rosalia, Theresa, Philomena and Gaetano. Her god-father, Ignatius Barbesio, was a fervent Catholic, as well as her god-mother, Signora Rosalia Bertagna, a pious widow.

If the happy birth of the sweet infant gave joy to the family, the Angels on high must have contemplated with pleasure her who had already been named their sister. The beautiful name of Maria

Consolata was, as it were, a happy presage of what she was to become later—the sweet consoler of the Heart of Jesus. We doubt not that Our Lord Himself suggested the names He wished for His future spouse.

Signora Ferrero, to her great regret, was obliged to intrust her dear treasure to a nurse in the vicinity of Turin. Suffering made no delay in marking our little one with its seal; her nourishment was insufficient to preserve health, and she declined from day to day. Fortunately, her mother perceived it; in great distress yet placing all her confidence in God, she repaired, full of faith, to the Church of St. Dalmazzo, and kneeling before the altar of Our Lady of Loretto, prayed fervently for assistance and counsel from the Immaculate Virgin. She who was never invoked in vain showed as usual her power and goodness; and the sweet babe, transferred to the care of another nurse, soon regained strength and health.

When Maria was fourteen months old, Signora Ferrero took her home and lavished upon her all the care and attention of her maternal loving heart. She beheld this pure Lily, which already captivated the eyes of Jesus, grow and flourish daily. The pious and vigilant mother rarely left her little Maria, and then only to intrust her to her own sister, Signora Rosalia, or to a servant of tried fidelity.

Having attained the age of five years, Maria began to attend the common school. The first year she went alone. Afterward her younger sister Adeline became her faithful companion. The latter, deprived of the maternal caresses, fell into a kind of agony on arriving at school, shedding such a deluge of tears that no one could calm or console her but Maria, whose sweet and tender words overflowed from a heart full of affection and compassion.

Three years later Signora Ferrero, desiring to secure for her children a good education and have them worthily prepared for their First Communion, placed them in the boarding-school of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Thenceforward Adeline became more and more the object of the care and tenderness of her elder sister; for the Academy being at some distance from her home, the little girls were entered as half-boarders. "Maria Consolata," said Adeline, "divined my little trials, and knew how to cheer away my melancholy; indeed she watched over me with all the kindness of my dear mamma."

We know nothing of the first meeting of the Eucharistic Jesus with the privileged child of His Heart. But how can we doubt