

OUR FOUNDRESS - BIOGRAPHY

Important dates:

1774 - 1st March - born at Canossa Palace, the second child of five children of Marquis Octavio and Countess Teresa Szluha.

1779 - her father, Marquis Octavio, dies on a mountain excursion.

1781 - her mother, Countess Teresa Szluha, now a widow, leaves the Canossa Palace for a second marriage.

1788 - Magdalene is struck by a serious illness and for many days struggles between life and death.

1791 - she decides to give herself to God and enters a monastery, the only possible form of religious life for women at that time.

1792 - she returns home and, uneasy about her future, tries again in another monastery; she enjoys the monastic life but is tormented by the thought of not doing something for the good of the poor; she realises that the monastery is not for her and once again returns to her family.

1791-1799 - Don Luigi Libera guides her in her spiritual journey, leading her to understand her vocation of being a “discalced in the world”, that is, a contemplative and an apostle.

1808 - 8th May - official beginning of Magdalene’s new enterprise in San Zeno, the poorest district of Verona; she welcomes abandoned girls and cares for them together with some young women (the future Canossian Sisters) who share the same calling to a life dedicated to God through the service of the poor.

OUR FOUNDRESS - BIOGRAPHY

Important dates:

1808-1835 - years of founding the first Canossian Houses in the major cities of Lombardy and Veneto: Verona, Venice, Milan, Bergamo and Trent. These are also the years of her spiritual maturity and the systemic organization of the gift received from God - the writing of the Rules for the Daughters of Charity. However, it is not enough, Magdalene is untiringly thinking of how to involve lay people in the apostolate. She initiates new groups such as the Country Teachers and the internal and external Tertiaries. Above all, she is committed to establishing a male congregation dedicated to the education and formation of children and young boys. Almost by a miracle, the Canossian Sons of Charity had their beginning in 1831! Magdalene never stops writing letters, contacting people of every social class, whether civil or religious, and doing everything possible to bring about the true outcome of Charity.

1835 - 10th April - Magdalene dies quietly, leaving us her unequivocal will: "God has given you a great gift ... see to it that the spirit of the Institute is handed down in all its entirety and perfection ... I entrust to you my beloved poor, do everything so that they may go to heaven ... Do not be frightened at seeing the greatness of the aim proposed ... those who love do not feel the burden ... Goodbye!"

1941 - 7th December – His Holiness Pope Pius XII proclaimed her "Blessed".

1988 - 2nd October - She was officially proclaimed a Saint by His Holiness John Paul II.