

Blessed Maria Raffaella Cimatti  
(Santina Cimatti)

born 6 June 1861, Celle di Faenza, Italy  
died 23 June, 1945m Alatri, Italy

At the age of eighty-three, while nursing wounded soldiers, Raffaella Cimatti personally intervened to keep a German general from bombing the city of Alari.

She was born into a poor, but devout family and baptized Santina. Only two of her brothers survived and both became missionary priests. It was so obvious that Santina was destined for the religious life, that her pastor allowed her to receive the sacrament of Confirmation when she was only seven, but Santina delayed entering a convent while she looked after her brothers and widowed mother. Finally, at the advanced age of twenty-eight, she was admitted to the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy, taking the name Maria Rafaella and training as a nurse and pharmacist's assistant. In 1928 Raffaella became superior at Alari, a post she held until she retired from leadership in 1940. She intended to devote her retirement years to prayer, but World War II intervened. As casualties mounted, Raffaella volunteered to attend to the wounded soldiers. It is said that when she was not looking after a patient, they were holding a rosary. Consoled by her care, the soldiers called her Mamma.

When Rafaella learned that the Nazi General Albert Kesserling intended to bomb Alatri to block the advance of the Allies, she confronted him at his headquarters and asked him to reconsider. Impressed by her courage and sincere concern, the general spared Alatri. Today her order has foundations all over the world, including assisted living homes in the United States. They commemorate Raffaella on 23 June.

**The Genius of Raffaella Cimatti:**

Inspired by God's infinite mercy, Raffaella devoted her life to the suffering of others. She was always ready to listen and accept those who came to her seeking advice or comfort.

**Reflection:**

*"Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."*

Luke 6.38