

Saint Vincenza Gerosa

(Caterina Gerosa)

Born 29 October 1784, Louvere, Bergamo, Italy

Died 29 July 1847, Louvere, Bergamo, Italy

Vincenza was twenty years older than Bartolomea Capitanio, but she recognised that her young friend was a creative genius. She gladly let Bartolomea take the lead when they co-founded the Sisters of Charity of Louvere. A year later, when Bartolomea died suddenly at the age of twenty-six, no one was more surprised than Vincenza that she kept their institute going on her own.

Baptised Caterina, she was raised in a large extended family that was financially comfortable but seething with conflicts. Her father was squeezed out of the family business, and after his death, her mother was forced out of their house, leaving seventeen year old Caterina behind. Caterina devoted herself to charity. She welcomed many needy people into her home and had a gift for sensing what someone needed without having to ask. Caterina and Bartolomea became close friends through their charitable activities. Bartolomea formed the plan for an institute to instruct the young and care for the sick, and on 21 November 1832, the feast of the Presentation of the Child Mary, Caterina and Bartolomea founded it. Caterina took the name Vincenza in honour of the great patron of charity, Vincent de Paul. Today their order Vincenza Gerosa, and informally as the Sisters of the Child Mary. They are active in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Vincenza Gerosa is commemorated on 28 June.

The Genius of Vincenza Gerosa:

Three years after Bartolomea's death, an epidemic swept through the city of Louvere. Vincenza told her Sisters: *"The Lord presents himself to us in a variety of ways. Now he has come to visit us as a cholera victim."* She did not order the Sisters to nurse them, but she took the lead and they followed.

Reflection:

"Do nothing of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] for everyone for those of others."

Philippians 2.3-4

From Gallick, Sarah, [The Big Book of Women Saints](#), p. 194