**Venerable Antonietta Meo**

Antonietta was raised in an [upper middle class](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_middle_class) household in [Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome) as the younger daughter of Michele and Maria Meo. She was nicknamed "Nennolina." She attended Catholic schools and stood out as an active, [charismatic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charisma) little girl who led her playmates in all their games, even after she became ill, and was popular with them because of her kindness. Her teachers said she was a child like other children, but stood out because of her personal [charm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charisma) and her sense of [humor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humor) and the [joyousness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happiness) of her personality.

She was diagnosed with [osteosarcoma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osteosarcoma), an aggressive form of [bone cancer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bone_cancer), at the age of five after she fell and injured her knee and the injury didn't heal. When her leg had to be amputated, she bore the ordeal "cheerfully." She was fitted with a heavy, [artificial leg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_limb) so she could keep playing with other youngsters. Catholic theologians have called her a ["mystic"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysticism) because the six-year-old wrote "extraordinary" letters to Jesus Christ in the last months of her life that displayed understanding and actions beyond the normal for a child of her age. "Dear baby Jesus, you are holy, you are good," she wrote in one of the letters. "Help me, grant me your [grace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actual_grace) and give me back my leg. If you don't want to, then may your will be done.”

At first she dictated letters to her mother; later she wrote poems and letters herself and left each at the foot of her [crucifix](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifix). In another letter she wrote: "Dear Jesus, I love you very much. I want to abandon myself in your hands. I want to abandon myself in your arms. Do with me what you want. Help me with your [grace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actual_grace). You help me, since without your grace, I am nothing.” She wrote or dictated more than 100 letters to Jesus or to the [Virgin Mary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgin_Mary), describing "holy visions" in many of them. After [Mass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_%28liturgy%29), people sometimes saw her approach the [tabernacle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_tabernacle) and say, "Jesus, come and play with me!”

The child viewed the loss of her leg as a sacrifice to Jesus for the [conversion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_conversion) of [sinners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sin). "I am very happy that Jesus gave me this problem so that I may be his dearest one," she told her father, Michele, after her leg was amputated.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonietta_Meo#cite_note-deaconjohn1987.blogspot.com-5) "[Pain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pain) is like fabric, the stronger it is, the more it's worth," she told her father. She told her spiritual guide: "For an instant I lie down on my wound, so as to offer more pain to Jesus," and told her mother: "When you feel pain, you have to keep quiet and offer it to Jesus for a sinner. Jesus suffered so much for us, but He hadn't committed any sin: He was God. How could we complain, we who are sinners and always offend him?" She was eager to receive the [sacraments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacrament) of the Catholic Church and was [baptized](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism), made her [first confession](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penance), was [confirmed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation) and made her [first communion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_communion) before her death. She also received [extreme unction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extreme_unction), the last rites, in June 1937.

She insisted on writing a last letter to Jesus a few days before her death, even though it was interrupted when she had to vomit. In it, she asked Jesus to take care of everyone she loved, and asked for strength to bear her pain. She finished the letter with the words "Your little girl sends you a lot of kisses." She told her mother when it was time for her to die. "In a few hours, I will die, but I will not suffer anymore, and you shouldn't cry. I should have lived a few days longer, but [Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A9r%C3%A8se_de_Lisieux) said, "it's enough!” After the child's death, her mother had a vision of Antonietta in a [glorified state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glory_%28religion%29) that reassured her that the child was now in [heaven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven). If canonized, Antonietta Meo would be the youngest canonized saint who did not die as a martyr.

Pope Bejedict’s Address to the Youth in 2007:

*"I am pleased that you just mentioned Antonia Meo, a little girl known as "Nennolina". Exactly three days ago, I decreed the recognition of her heroic virtues and I hope that her cause of beatification will soon be successfully concluded. What a shining example this little peer of yours left us! In her very short life - only six and a half years - Nennolina, a Roman child, showed special faith, hope and charity, and likewise the other Christian virtues. Although she was a frail little girl, she managed to give a strong and vigorous Gospel witness and left a deep mark on the diocesan Community of Rome. Nennolina belonged to Catholic Action: today, she would certainly have been enrolled in ACR! Therefore, you can consider her a friend of yours, a model to inspire you. Her life, so simple and at the same time so important, shows that holiness is for all ages: for children and for young people, for adults and for the elderly. Every season of our life can be a good time for deciding to love Jesus seriously and to follow him faithfully. In just a few years, Nennolina reached the peak of Christian perfection that we are all called to scale; she sped down the "highway" that leads to Jesus. Indeed, as you yourselves said, Jesus is the true "road" that leads us to the Father and to his and our definitive home, which is Paradise. You know that Antonia now lives in God and is close to you from Heaven: you feel her present among you, in your groups. Learn to know her and follow her example".*

(Taken from Vatican Website and other saint sources)

1. Antonietta was known for her simplicity, being only six and a half when she passed away. What are ways that you need to simplify your own life and allow the Lord to work more profoundly?

 2. What are some ways in which you can become more youthful in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ?