

The story of the mothers of Lu:

"The little village of Lu, northern Italy, with only a few thousand inhabitants, is in a rural area 90 kilometres east of Turin. It would still be unknown to this day if, in the year 1881, the family others of Lu had not made a decision that had "serious consequences". The deepest desire of many of these mothers was for one of their sons to become a priest or for a daughter to place her life completely in God's service.



Eucharistic Adoration

Under the direction of their parish priest, Msgr. Alessandro Canora, they gathered every Tuesday for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, asking the Lord for vocations. They received Holy Communion on the first Sunday of every month with the same intention. After Mass, all the mothers prayed a particular prayer together imploring for vocations to the priesthood.

Through the trusting prayer of these mothers and the openness of the other parents, an atmosphere of deep joy and Christian piety developed in the families, making it much easier for the children to recognize their vocations."



This picture is indeed unique in the annals of the Catholic Church. From 1 to 4 September 1946, the majority of the 323 priests and religious met in their village of Lu for a reunion which attracted world-wide attention.

*"Did the Lord not say, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt 22:14)? In other words, **many** are called, but only a **few** respond to that call. No one expected that God would hear the prayers of these mothers in such an astounding way. From the tiny village of Lu came 323 vocations!: 152 priests (diocesan and religious), and 171 nuns belonging to 41 different congregations. As many as three or four vocations came from some of these families.*



Blessed Philip Rinaldi

The most famous example is the Rinaldi family, from whom God called seven children. Two daughters became Salesian sisters, both of whom were sent to San Domingo as courageous, pioneer missionaries. Five sons became priests, all joining the Salesians. The most well-known of the Rinaldi brothers is Blessed Philip Rinaldi, who became the third successor of St. John Bosco as Superior General of the Salesians. Pope John Paul II beatified him on 29 April 1990. In fact, many of the vocations from this small town became Salesians.



St John Bosco

It is certainly not a coincidence, since St. John Bosco visited Lu four times during his life. The saint attended the first Mass of his spiritual son, Fr. Philip Rinaldi in this village where he was born. Philip always fondly recalled the faith of the families of Lu:

"A faith that made our fathers and mothers say, 'The Lord gave us our children, and so if He calls them, we can't say no.'"

Fr. Luigi Borghina and Fr. Pietro Rota lived the spirituality of Don Bosco so faithfully that the former was called the “Brazilian Don Bosco” and the latter the “Don Bosco of Valtellina”. Pope John XXIII once said the following about another vocation from Lu, His Excellency, Evasion Colli, Archbishop of Parma: “He should have become pope, not me. He had everything it takes to become a great pope.”

Every ten years, the priests and sisters born in Lu come together from all around the world. Fr. Mario Meda, the long-serving parish priest of Lu, explained that this reunion is a true celebration, a feast of thanksgiving to God who has done such great things for Lu.”

The prayer that the mothers of Lu prayed was short, simple, and deep:

*“O God, grant that one of my sons may become a priest!
I myself want to live as a good Christian
and want to guide my children always to do what is right,
so that I may receive the grace, O God, to be allowed to give you a holy priest! Amen.”*