



Bl. Chiara Badano

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1971–1990 • Italy

The young Chiara was pretty and fun and embraced life with laughter. For eleven years, her parents had prayed to have a child, and Chiara was their biggest blessing. When she was little, her dream was to be a flight attendant and see all the wonderful things in this world. Everything in life brought her joy, and she loved to play tennis, hike, swim, dance, and spend time with her friends.

At nine years old, Chiara joined a group called *Focolare*, which is a movement dedicated to bringing people together in Jesus' love. Her heart was filled with love for the suffering and forsaken Jesus, and she wanted to be His bride. Chiara's joy-filled face shined so bright with the love of Jesus that the founder of the Focolare movement gave Chiara the nickname of Luce, which means "light" in Italian.

When Chiara was sixteen, a terrible pain shot through her shoulder as she was playing tennis. At first, she thought nothing of it, but when the pain did not go away, she went to the doctor's office. Chiara had a rare form of bone cancer. When she found out, Chiara said, "It's for you, Jesus; if you want it, I want it, too."

From then on, Chiara met all her suffering with joy because she could offer it to Jesus. When other patients at the hospital were sad, Chiara would take them on walks to make them feel better, even though every step was painful to her. Her friends would visit her in the hospital to comfort her, only to find that it was she who brought them comfort. A local bishop heard about Chiara and went to visit her. He was amazed at her deep brown eyes, which were like deep pools of light. He asked her where her light came from. She answered simply, "I try to love Jesus as much as I can."

During her illness, Chiara comforted her mother. When she was eighteen and knew she would die soon, Chiara asked her mother to help her prepare for her funeral. Chiara called her funeral her wedding, because when she died, she would be united to Jesus forever. She would wear a white dress with a pink waist, and she said she did not want people crying, but singing at her funeral. "When you're getting me ready, Mum," Chiara said, "you have to keep saying to yourself, 'Chiara Luce is now seeing Jesus.'" After she received the sacraments, her final words were, "Ciao, Mum, be happy, because I am," and she went to heaven to be united with Jesus forever. Bl. Chiara Badano, help me shine the light of Christ for others!