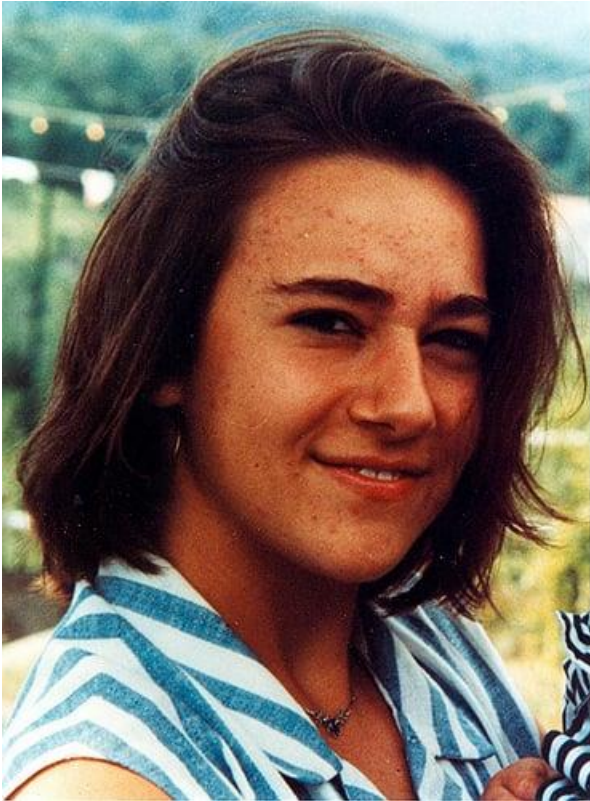


Blessed Chiara Luce Badano



Blessed Chiara Luce Badano was a young Italian teenager who was beatified in 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI. She was chosen by the bishops as one of the patrons for the 2018 Synod on Youth.

Chiara was born on October 29, 1971 in a small town in northern Italy, to Ruggero and Maria Teresa Badano, who had longed to have a child for many, many years. Chiara was a loving and exuberant child, and, despite her headstrong and sometimes defiant temperament, had a close relationship with them. When she was nine, Chiara attended her first meeting of the Focolare Movement. Focolare is a lay ecclesial movement established in Italy by Chiara Lubich, intended to promote

ecumenical and global unity on a local level and to build peace through developing relationships. Chiara enjoyed not only strong friendships and community through Focolare, but was particularly attracted to the image of Christ that the group promoted. She began to foster a strong love for Jesus throughout her involvement with Focolare. Chiara developed a profound spirituality through Focolare that caused her high school classmates to teasingly call her "Sister."

Chiara was a supremely ordinary teenager: she loved sports, such as tennis and swimming. She loved hiking, and she loved listening to pop music and dancing with friends. When she was sixteen, Chiara went to Rome on a summer trip with the Focolare community. On that trip, she met the founder of Focolare, Chiara Lubich, and they began a correspondence. Chiara was full of fire for her faith and her love for Christ burned radiantly in her heart. Chiara Lubich gave Chiara a new nickname, "Chiara Luce," meaning "clear light."

Later that summer, Chiara felt a sting in her shoulder when she was playing tennis. At first, she thought it was simply fatigue or tendinitis. But, as the pain persisted, Chiara underwent a series of tests and discovered she had a rare form of bone cancer. When she entered treatment for the cancer, Chiara refused all morphine. She wanted to have

a lucid mind to understand what was happening to her. Chiara embraced her sufferings as an opportunity to offer up her life more radically for Christ. For the next two years, Chiara underwent difficult chemotherapy and slowly prepared herself for death as operations failed to slow down her cancer and as she eventually lost both hope of remission and the ability to walk.

Chiara offered up everything—her disappearing hair, her pain, and her sadness at leaving her parents—to Christ. In the hospital, as she prepared for an operation, Chiara described her heart as "filled with an immense joy and all fear left me. In that moment, I understood that if we're always ready for everything, God sends us many signs of his love." Chiara continued to be a bright light of faith and joy for the doctors, for fellow patients, for her friends, and for her devastated parents.

Chiara died after receiving the sacraments, surrounded by the prayers of her families and friends, on October 7, 1990. Chiara's great love for others spilled over into their great love for her—thousands of people attended Chiara's funeral, effectively shutting down her small hometown of Sassello. Chiara was declared a blessed on September 25, 2010, in Rome, and her feast day has been celebrated on October 29 since then. Chiara Luce is a beautiful witness to the joy that living with and for God brings to the human spirit, and how that joy, if fully embraced, can completely transform even the darkest of circumstances.

Blessed Chiara Badano, joyful witness to holiness and great lover of God—pray for us!

Source: <https://faith.nd.edu/s/1210/faith/interior.aspx?sid=1210&gid=609&pgid=43117>