



The feast that Cascia dedicates to Saint Rita is particularly complex and purely celebratory moments alternate with wide spaces for reflection and a liturgy which now has centuries of history. This is the case of "Thursday in Santa Rita," a special devotion was born almost three hundred years ago and never interrupted for 15 Thursday before the feast of May 22, take place at different times of the day, faith meetings in preparation for the feast. The religious part of the novena see for each day the towns of the Nera Valley, which organize specific crowded pilgrimages. In short, in the name of Rita, adhering to the message of peace that the Holy launched in sec. XV, there is a wide mobilization, and for the occasion they fall all those details parochialism, almost physiological among the nations of the valley. This genuine need for brotherhood is also manifested with the partnership that, annually, Cascia entertains with a different Italian or European city: for a good part of the year occur periodic meetings with the twin city events are organized, each carried out, all to create strong ties between the two urban realities. For 2013, the "Twinning of Faith", sees the city of roses combined with the Romanian city of Ramnicu Valcea, in which in 2006 was built a greek orthodox church dedicated to Santa Rita, the only church dedicated to the Holy casciana Romania. The message that the Twinning of Faith Cascia wants to spread focuses on the factors that Santa Rita taught to his community and millions of believers throughout the centuries. The hope and the hope that move the union, are to live together this time of celebration, with great devotion and faith. One of the most evocative moments, during the visit of the delegation to the casciana twin city, is energizing the traditional "Torch of Peace", the bearer of Christian hope, which burn represents the love and devotion of Santa Rita. From the twin city every year, in the days before the feast of St. Rita - usually a week before - part of the "Torch of Peace" that athletes of the sports group more representative of the city, carry, with long runners, up to Cascia. Marathon runners, cyclists, skaters, soccer players ... all came on time in the evening of 21 May in front of the portico of the Basilica of Santa Rita to deliver, after traveling hundreds of miles, the torch to the Mayor of their city. And it is hosted by the Mayor who, in the presence of the mayor of Cascia and all the mayors of the Nera Valley, lights the flame on the monumental tripod, to seal a lasting friendship, an act that initiates the power of the thousands of torches that will burn all night in Cascia and in the surrounding hills: it is the fire of faith, evocative rite of fire in honor of the saint. The torches illuminate a busy night for the incessant arrival of the pilgrims. Throughout the night an interminable column of Cascia coach has as its goal. The next day the pilgrims, thousands, will wait along the roadsides the unfolding of the procession. The parade of the procession, which joins the outskirts of Cascia, the procession from Roccaporena, is the most awaited by those who came to Cascia facing challenging travel, want to experience the emotions that the life of Rita knows how to make it even in the minds of faithful. The parade is

particularly anticipated by many tourists who appreciate historical rigor with which, in tableaux, is again the human story of the saint. And it is a story that captures aspects of the Middle Ages stronger: in Rita's life is about love and hate, life and death, of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, in an unusual all-female perspective. And while elsewhere to dominate these events there are kings, generals and soldiers of fortune, armies, here, in Cascia, the protagonist is a humble woman, small in stature, but steadfast in his faith and determined to propose ideals of peace: his army is its people, normal people, peasants, pastoralists, artisans, beggars, the sisters of the monastery, that part of humanity that the story suffers dramatically and it also carries the signs. The historical parade can be admired throughout the urban itinerary, reaching out to the square in front of the Basilica of Santa Rita, where he was given the blessing. The roles are reversed: players become spectators, thousands of the faithful who rise high, turned to the sky, bouquets of roses, the flower loved by Rita, his symbol. A poetic gesture which renews a miracle of the century. XV