

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
CASA GENERALIZIA
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Dearest Sisters,

At 5:20 a.m. today, one of the members of our Divine Providence community, Alba, Italy, serenely and peacefully surrendered her soul into the hands of the Lord:

DAL PRA' CATERINA – SR. ANNA MARIA
born in Vicenza, Italy on 15 June 1917.

At the age of 101, Sr. Anna Maria belonged to the FSPs of the “first generation,” given the fact that she entered the Congregation in Alba on 25 April 1931. Even though still very young, she was admitted to the novitiate after her postulancy because of her maturity. In fact, she made her first profession on 17 December 1933 at the age of sixteen. A few weeks earlier, the FSPs had moved from Piazza San Paolo to their new residence in Borgo Piave, where they initiated an important stage of the history of our Congregation.

Chronicles of the times report the news of this profession, saying: “Filled with zeal and generosity, [the young women] made their promises to the Lord in the hands of Rev. Primo Maestro, who strongly urged them to be faithful to the small practices of community life and to silence, which are the secrets of spiritual progress” (cf. UCAS, 1 [1934], 13).

On 9 December 1933, during the course of spiritual exercises preceding their profession, the Founder said to the novices: “Walk through life like angels on earth. Leave behind you everywhere the perfume of virtue, edification and good example. Take every family the seed of the Word of God, which will blossom into good, virtue and grace.”

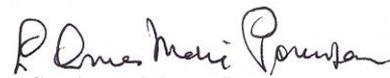
Sr. Anna Maria put this recommendation into practice wholeheartedly as she visited towns and villages, climbing up and down countless staircases with a bag overflowing with books and a heart filled with love and peace. For 18 consecutive years (1934-1952), she carried out the “propaganda” apostolate in Rome, Salerno, Verona, Udine and Genoa. She recalled with pride: “I wore out all my shoes because I walked so much!”

Following this, she was reassigned to Alba—the community in which she would spend the rest of her life. For the next 60 years, up until the age of 95, she worked with great fidelity in the technical apostolate. She once confided that the sounds of the folding and cutting machines were music to her ears. Sr. Anna Maria truly lived the spirit of “Pauline apostolic mysticism”: in her many years in the bindery, she would often turn her gaze to the center of the room where the Gospel was enthroned, emitting—like rays of light—words that served to give direction to the various initiatives of the community. How many rosaries she and her companions “shouted” so that their words would be heard above the thunderous clamor of the printing presses! How many ejaculations filled the air as the sisters sought to elevate their minds and hearts to the Lord and incessantly offer him their lives in reparation for all the evils committed through the instruments of communication.... Although she did not hold the office of formator, Sr. Anna Maria, in all her simplicity, helped to form hundreds of postulants, novices and young professed sisters by transfusing to them her love for the Pauline mission through the hidden, anonymous but also very fruitful work she carried out so zealously in the technical apostolate and which continues to be carried out by Paulines today in a more modern environment, enriched by digital technologies.

Lucid up to the end and aware that her time on earth had reached its conclusion, Sr. Anna Maria was waiting for the arrival of the Lord. In this last stage of her life, once the duties of community life were completed, she would ask to be taken to chapel in her wheelchair, where she would spend hours with the Divine Master. Or else she would ask to be wheeled to her room and positioned before a little shrine dedicated to the Blessed Mother, set up near her bed. She would tell her caregiver: “You can leave me here. I am with Mary.”

While we place in the hands of our merciful Father this dear sister with a perpetually-young heart, let us entrust to her all the world’s young people, asking him that they allow themselves to be drawn to Jesus, who will open new and amazing paths for them.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parezan
Superior General

Rome, 27 March 2019