

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

We received the news that at 12:53 p.m. today, local time, one of our sisters, while at the Tokai-daigaku Oiso Byoin Hospital, Japan, was called to say “Here I am” to God forever:

**KURITA MASAE – SR. M. ANCILLA**  
**born in Fukuoka, Japan on 13 March 1932.**

Sr. Ancilla entered the Congregation on 2 April 1951 in the community of Fukuoka, just a week after her baptism. She lived the pioneer years of our foundation and initial development in Japan with great enthusiasm. At the end of her novitiate in Tokyo, she made her first profession on 30 June 1955. The name she received on that occasion became a program of life for her. She wrote: “I am trying to live up to the name I received on the day of my profession: *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (Behold the handmaid of the Lord), which was Mary’s reply to the angel.”

Having finished her higher education while at home, Sr. Ancilla was immediately asked to help out with the writing apostolate after she entered the Congregation. In 1957, she was sent to Rome to continue her intellectual formation. After four very intensive years, she finished her study of philosophy and theology within the Congregation and then deepened her grasp of communications at the Italian Federation of Religious. Following this, she returned to Japan, where she dedicated her energies to formation and teaching in particular.

In 1966, Sr. Ancilla embarked on an extended period of governing. She served as a councilor of our Japanese province for three non-consecutive terms of office and also as local superior of the Tokyo community. In addition, she accompanied the Juniors in their preparation for perpetual profession. Very active in the Pauline mission, she devoted herself to writing and to the Center for Non-Pauline Editions; for a time she was also in charge of the circumscription’s apostolic programming.

In 1980, having terminated her duties of governing, she wrote: “My life is beautiful: I say ‘beautiful’ because without the responsibilities of governing and formation I can see the needs of our sisters and communities more objectively. I live the apostolic dimension of the Pauline vocation in my concrete daily life.”


While in Italy, Sr. Ancilla had learned to open her heart to the universal dimension of the Congregation and to understand its challenges. This experience intensified when she was appointed to various international commissions and then to the Preparatory Commissions for two General Chapters.

During the Institute’s 5<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, she was elected general councilor for the apostolate. At our 6<sup>th</sup> General Chapter (1989), she was reconfirmed in this office. During her service of governing, Sr. Ancilla visited many FSP communities throughout the world and became familiar with a wide variety of places and cultures. Her heart thrilled to see the apostolic possibilities offered to the Congregation everywhere. In 2001, she wrote: “I received many graces during the years I spent in Rome. The Lord did great things for me. He sustained my faith and provided me with light at the right moment. How great God is; how great Jesus is! We must be courageously open to change and to hope.” Sr. Ancilla longed to penetrate the mystery of God with her whole being. She loved to repeat in the silence of her heart: “Live in me, Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life.”

When she returned to her own province, she was asked to continue translation work, to serve as superior of the provincial community and was also put in charge of the apostolic administration of the circumscription.

In 2007, she underwent surgery for a subdural hematoma and in 2008 for hydrocephalus (water on the brain). But although her health was declining, she remained alert—a quiet, recollected, upright and humble presence in the community. She loved to spend long periods of time in chapel, immersed in prayer and contemplation. Last December, she was transferred to an assisted care community. Today, during lunch, she felt unwell and a short time later, at the hospital, she drew her last breath—her definitive “here I am” to Jesus Master.

Since Sr. Ancilla was very familiar with the fatiguing preparations for General Chapters, let us entrust to her this time in which our Congregation is reflecting and looking to the future so as to truly *rise up and set out on our journey, trusting in the Promise.*

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General

Rome, 29 August 2018