



ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
CASA GENERALIZIA
Via S. Giovanni Eudes, 25
00163 Roma
Tel. 06.661 3039 - Fax 06.661 57 208



Dearest Sisters,

St. Joseph has led to heaven another Pauline missionary. At 8:25 p.m. yesterday, local time, he visited the Armenian Nursing Home in Boston, U.S.A., to accompany to eternal life our sister:

MATTUZZI ASSUNTA – SR. M. PHILOMENA
born in Cellore d’Illasi (Verona), Italy on 26 February 1935.

Sr. Philomena entered the Congregation in Alba on 8 December 1956, following in the footsteps of her brother Antonio (Fr. Giancrisostomo), a missionary to Japan who died there in 1997, and blazing the trail for her sister, Sr. Veritas, who died in Alba in 2012.

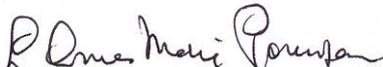
Sr. Philomena made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1960. After a brief apostolic experience in Mantua, she was asked in December of that year to go as a missionary to the United States, together with Sr. Piera Giarizzo. While the two sisters were still en route to their destination, Maestra Thecla wrote to them, saying: “I received the letter you sent me from Genoa. You are in my thoughts and prayers. It was very hard for me to leave the two of you on your own on the ship’s dock. You did well to offer everything for the Congregation and for the good of the people toward whom you are heading. You are true voyagers on the high seas! By the time you receive this letter, you will have had your first glimpse of America—a land blessed by God in which you can become saints. Be content. I am praying for you. Don’t be afraid when you face your first problems. Little by little you will learn the language....”

Sr. M. Philomena dedicated herself wholeheartedly to her new mission territory for the rest of her Pauline life, without ever looking back. She returned to Italy for an extended period of time only in 1991 when she was inserted in the Via Lucchesi community, Rome, to take a theological-pastoral updating course for missionaries. In the United States, she devoted herself to the “propaganda” apostolate in the Staten Island and Buffalo communities. As local superior in Buffalo, Boston, San Francisco, St. Louis and New Orleans, she was deeply loved by all the sisters. During her two-term period as local superior of the big Boston community, she also carried out the service of provincial councilor. In San Francisco, Miami and Philadelphia, she lovingly served the people through our book centers. Sr. Philomena’s smile and her kind nature were a gift to the sisters and to all the people she met in carrying out the Pauline mission.

In 2005, her health began to decline and she returned to Boston. She continued to serve the community in various ways for as long as she could, dedicating herself especially to tending the garden, where the perfume and colors of the flowers gave her great pleasure. Afflicted with senile dementia, her condition began to progressively worsen beginning in 2010, making an impact on her already deteriorating physical situation. She experienced a serious fall in 2017, making it necessary to admit her to a health-care facility just a step away from the provincial house in Boston. She was lovingly cared for in this nursing home and received frequent visits from the sisters.

The life of our dear sister speaks to us about the beauty of the Pauline mission. A missionary for 57 consecutive years, Sr. Philomena became “an American among the Americans,” donating her entire being to them without a backward glance after leaving her homeland. We are sure that she was inspired by the words of Maestra Thecla, who wrote the following note to her on the back of a holy card: “How beautiful it is to belong completely to God, to cling tightly to him, to allow him to fill us with his love, and then to go out to the world to take him to souls!” Sr. Philomena believed these words and joyfully traveled to the very end the road marked out for her by God, experiencing in the first person that it was a road that became *always longer, broader and more beautiful*.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 20 March 2018