

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

At about 1:00 p.m. today, the Feast of Christmas, one of the members of the infirmary wing of our Divine Providence community, Alba, Italy, was called to heaven to sing the praises of the Lord forever:

PANARO CATERINA – SR. MARIA BIANCA
born in Castelletto d’Erro (Alessandria), Italy on 13 November 1928.

Sr. Bianca entered the Congregation in the community of Alba on 7 April 1946, following in the footsteps of her sister, Sr. M. Ernesta. After a time of formation in Alba and Lodi, she made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1954. In Novara, she carried out capillary and collective diffusion for a short time and then began a long period of service in the book centers. For almost 47 consecutive years, she dedicated all her energy, love, competence and apostolic spirit to her mission in the book centers of Pavia, Alessandria, Savona, Cagliari, Asti, Aquila, Terni, Domodossola and Caltanissetta.

The book center was truly the pulpit from which she proclaimed, day after day, the joy of the Gospel. She knew the contents of the books on the shelves and offered them to the people according to their needs. Her industriousness was proverbial and her enthusiasm boundless. She never made distinctions between one work and another, between community services and those more directly connected to the book center. She herself acknowledged that she was a “vivacious” person who loved others in a practical way and lived her daily responsibilities with the attitude of a person headed toward a feast.

Sr. Bianca deeply loved the Pauline spirituality and did her utmost to live it fervently and enthusiastically so as to “concretely make my own the personality of Jesus Master,” as she put it. In 1995, she wrote: “I feel like I am brimming over with new life; my zeal is boundless.... I have a powerful yearning for God. I want to live in Christ so as to give glory to the Father.” Aware that her “high gear” personality could at times be a motive of suffering for her community, she asked the sisters to forgive her for this and thanked them for accepting her as she was, with all her spiritual exuberance.

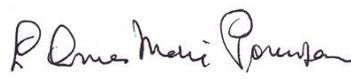
In 1998, when advancing age made it advisable for her to be transferred to the Livorno community, she wrote to the Superior General: “I have begun a new life. Obedience has asked me to leave the direct apostolate and join the Livorno community. In the morning, I work at the machine that makes hosts—a very delicate and tiring work; in the afternoon, I try to be useful to the sisters. At every instant, Jesus Master gives me the hands, eyes and abilities I need to carry out the various services asked of me. He fills me with peace, offered to me on the wings of love.”

In 2000, Sr. Bianca was transferred to Alba, where she worked in the bindery. She was happy to dedicate her remaining strength to preparing “the bread of the Gospel” for people thirsty for the truth and also for the opportunity to assist her sister, Sr. Ernesta, who was quietly living the calvary of suffering.

For Christmas 2003, Sr. Bianca wrote: “Jesus became a child so as to awaken in my heart the enthusiasm to make him grow in the hearts of people all over the world.” She told the Superior General that her spiritual resolution was to rediscover the living Source of her personal vocation and to improve her response of love to Jesus Master by living the binomial: Eucharist and mission.

Sr. Bianca spent the last five years of her life in the Alba infirmary. While her body slowly burned out, she continued to grow in kindness, serenity and a positive outlook on life. Toward the end she no longer spoke but she continued to make the effort to sing and it is beautiful to think that Baby Jesus called her today, Christmas day, to sing his glory forever in heaven.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 25 December 2018