



ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
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Dearest Sisters,

At 11:30 p.m. today, the first Tuesday of Advent and the memorial of St. Francis Xavier, the Lord of history and the King of justice and peace visited St. John of God Hospital in Pasay City (Manila), Philippines to call to himself our sister:

CRUZ SOCORRO – SR. MARIA GERARDA
born in Santa Cruz Laguna (Lipa), Philippines on 10 September 1932.

Sr. M. Gerarda entered the Congregation in Pasay City on 8 September 1956 at a relatively mature age, after having obtained her high school diploma while still at home. During her time of initial formation, she had the chance to experience the joys and fatigues of the Pauline apostolate by carrying out itinerant missions to families and businesses in the big metropolis of Manila.

She made her novitiate in Lipa, concluding this stage of her formation journey with her first profession on 8 December 1961. As a young professed, she continued the “propaganda” apostolate in the dioceses of Manila, Lipa and Naga. After her perpetual profession on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception 1966, she worked for more than 15 years in the Pasay and Lipa book centers.

In 1982 Sr. M. Gerarda was appointed superior of the Legaspi community. At the end of her mandate, she was placed in charge of the bookkeeping sector of the Regina Apostolorum community in Pasay City, as well as of the sector for non-Pauline editions and of the bookkeeping sectors of other services. Always ready to help out wherever needed, she also lent a willing hand in the sewing room and in the infirmary, after receiving some training in this field.

Due to Sr. M. Gerarda’s book center experience and her orderly and precise personality, she was then asked to take charge of the secretary’s office of the diffusion sector. Over the years, her love for diffusion resulted in her appointment as manager of the Zamboanga, Cebu, Bacolod and Lipa book centers successively—a service she carried out with wisdom and love.

In 2012, she returned to the Regina Apostolorum community in Pasay City, where she was asked to supervise household maintenance and also offer hospitality to the sisters visiting from various parts of the province. Sr. M. Gerarda’s smile, kindness and welcoming demeanor created an atmosphere of warmth and cordiality that made every sister feel at home.

The sisters remember her as a silent, humble, caring, sensitive and orderly person who was very faithful to her responsibilities. She also had a very good sense of humor, with a ready laugh that “infected” everyone around her. She was truly one of the “little ones” spoken about in the Gospel—a sister upon whom the Lord, in his benevolence, poured out his blessings and made a participant in the mysteries of his Kingdom.


About a year ago, Sr. M. Gerarda’s health began to deteriorate due to chronic kidney problems. She was hospitalized about ten days ago but her situation continued to worsen, complicated by acute pneumonia.

One of her personal notebooks contains an entry penned by M. Thecla herself, who wrote in her unmistakable, flowing script: “Live in the presence of God. Do everything to please him. Love the Blessed Mother very much and pray to her fervently. If you pray, you will obtain the graces you need to become a saint.”

We are sure that these words were engraved on the heart of Sr. M. Gerarda and that they became a program of life that she lived with the upright intention so characteristic of her. Today these words have been fulfilled and our dear sister is now experiencing the joy of dwelling in the radiant presence of the One she ardently desired and loved all her life.

With deep affection,

Rome, 3 December 2019


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan