

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

At 1:50 last night, our loving Father visited the Thecla Merlo community of Pasay City, Philippines, to call to himself our sister,

LOPEZ CARMEN – SR. ASSUNTA MARIA
born in Garchitorena (Nuova Caceres), Philippines on 27 March 1942.

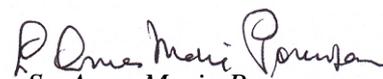
On 3 May 2011, Sr. Assunta was diagnosed as suffering from colon cancer stage IV with liver metastasis. The doctors said she probably had about 6 months more to live but her condition deteriorated much more rapidly than they expected. It seems that the Lord, in his immense love, wanted to call our sister to himself at an especially significant moment: the night between the Feast of St. Paul and the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Paul and Jesus were the great loves of Sr. Assunta, who wrote in her personal notes: “I am struggling moment by moment, day by day, and year after year to persevere and lovingly grow in God’s service, because I am fully convinced that God alone, my Creator and Savior, deserves my love, my service and the total commitment of my life. I firmly believe that if I am sincere, God is always there to help me in every way. I love our apostolate and I want to spend my whole life in God’s vineyard.”

Sr. Assunta entered the Congregation in Pasay City on 15 August 1961, after finishing high school. She quickly stood out for her open, serene, kind and respectful character. She underwent her initial formation in Manila and her novitiate in Lipa, concluding this stage of her Pauline journey with her first profession on 30 June 1966. As a young professed, she worked in the Vigan book center and had the chance to complete her religious formation prior to her perpetual profession in 1972. In her request for admission to perpetual vows, she expressed her joy at the beauty of the Pauline mission and also her desire to be sent abroad as a missionary, if that was God’s will. Instead, Sr. Assunta was destined to carry out the mission of the Institute in her own country, dedicating herself for almost 30 years with great generosity and enthusiasm to capillary and collective diffusion and part-time service in the book centers of Naga, Legaspi, Tuguegarao, Manila, Baguio and Olongapo. She was always very interested in the new products of our Pauline publishing house and audiovisual sector because she deeply desired that our publications respond to the needs of the people.

Toward the end of 2003, Sr. Assunta spent a period of time away from her community, caring for her mother, who was gravely ill. Upon her return, she was assigned to Legaspi, where she continued to carry out the diffusion apostolate through book center work and various forms of “propaganda.”

She was very happy to participate in the International Charism Tour Course held in Italy in 2009. During the course, she was able to tread the “holy ground” associated with St. Paul and the Pauline Family in Rome, even though poor health did not permit her to make the pilgrimage to the sites of our Pauline beginnings in Alba. She rejoiced at the chance to experience the international dimension of the Congregation, get to know FSPs from all over the world, and participate in the official closing of the Pauline Year.

About a year ago Sr. Assunta was transferred to Naga, where she continued the outreach apostolate she loved so much. But the Lord in his infinite wisdom and providence soon called her to associate herself more intimately to his cross so as to render her even more beautiful for her entrance into heaven. The words of the First Reading of today’s Liturgy of the Sacred Heart are particularly meaningful when applied to Sr. Assunta: “It was not because you were the biggest that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you, but rather because he loved you.” While we place yet another of our Filipino sisters in the arms of the Father (Sr. Assunta is the fifth sister from this province to die in the last few months), we adore the unfathomable plan of God, who is faithful to his eternal love for us. Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 1 July 2011