

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

At 12:20 p.m. today, Good Friday, after many years of suffering and self-offering, one of the members of the infirmary wing of our Divine Providence community, Rome, Italy, was called to share forever the Paschal Mystery of the Lord:

BAGA LUCIA ANGELICA – SR. MARGHERITA MARIA
born in Lavenone (Brescia), Italy on 22 October 1930.

Sr. Lucia entered the Congregation in the house of Alba on 25 June 1953. After a period of initial formation, she was sent to La Spezia for a time of apostolic experience. She then returned to Rome to make her novitiate, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1957. As a young professed, she enthusiastically visited the people of the beautiful valleys of the Trentino region, her car packed with books to offer to families and schools and to use for parishes displays, especially during the summer months. In 1962, she went to Rome to prepare for her perpetual profession. On that occasion, she wrote to Maestra Thecla: “Today I feel more than ever that in spite of my unworthiness the Lord wants me to become a saint here [in this Institute]. I want to place myself in his hands, Prima Maestra, like the handkerchief you gave me on the day of my first profession. I am ready and willing to be used in whatever way you think is best.”

Sr. Lucia was assigned to the diffusion apostolate in Verona and also served as a driver for the community. Following this, she worked for almost 15 years in the St. Paul Film Agencies of Mestre and Verona, and later as a fervent member of the book center staff in Mestre, Aquila, Treviso and Cremona. Her jovial, sociable, talkative and strong-willed personality made it very easy for her to dialogue with the many people she met while carrying out the apostolate. She loved the Pauline vocation and was happy to make herself useful in various ways in the communities in which she lived, including through her lovely singing voice. She was profoundly convinced of what she had written in one of her annual requests to renew her vows: “I feel that the Lord wants to make me a saint here, among the Daughters of St. Paul. I want to be faithful to my vocation, certain that despite my faults, the Queen of Apostles, my Mother, will be close to me in this struggle and will never allow me to abandon my ideal of becoming holy.”

When Sr. Lucia was about 56 years old, the Lord asked of her another *yes*, much more difficult than the first—the apostolate of suffering. She began to find it hard to walk because her muscles did not support her but the doctors were not able to identify the cause of this problem. It was a very hard time for her because her physical malaise was compounded by incomprehension and moral pain. But shortly afterward her infirmity revealed itself in all its severity: a rare disease called “Mills Syndrome”—a form of multiple sclerosis that progressively paralyzed her lower limbs and, toward the end of her life, also one of her arms.

She was first sent to the Thecla Merlo community, Albano, and then, in 1996, to the Divine Providence community, Rome. Sr. Lucia never passively surrendered to the disease. With great faith and courage, she tried in every way possible to remain self-sufficient in moving around. Like the expert driver she was, she first used a wheelchair and then an electric cart that allowed her to navigate the community’s hallways and garden paths and even reach the Queen of Apostles Sanctuary to participate in the celebrations there. Mary, our Queen, was truly at her side in her daily battle, giving her the strength to accept the heavy burden of her malady. She lived her daily calvary with great simplicity, uniting it to the Passion of Christ.

Two days ago, Sr. Lucia suffered a pulmonary edema (a build-up of fluid in the lungs), which hastened her meeting with her Master. Like the Suffering Servant, “purified in the crucible of affliction,” she is now finally experiencing the boundless love of the Father. With deep gratitude, let us place her in his merciful hands, in the certainty that the dawn of the resurrection is already shining for her.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 10 April 2020