

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

At 8:50 this evening, our good Father visited the James Alberione community of Albano, Italy, to call home to heaven our sister,

BALDUCCI MARIA – SR. MARIA LAURA
born in Corinaldo (Ancona), Italy on 15 February 1927.

Those who knew Sr. Laura never forgot her. They never forgot her smile, her good humor, her industriousness, her simplicity of life and above all her great humility. The people of her hometown (the same as that of St. Maria Goretti) are known for their wit, their hardy physiques and their great ability to make sacrifices and Sr. Laura possessed all these attributes.

She entered the Congregation in the community of Alba on 1 Dec. 1946. During her initial formation, she worked in the technical apostolate, after which she was sent to Rome for her novitiate. This concluded with her first profession on 19 March 1950. In her letter requesting permission to make her vows, she wrote: "I am ready for anything and I will be faithful in everything."

As a young professed, Sr. Laura was assigned to work in the huge vegetable garden in the Via Antonino Pio compound—a work she carried out with heroic fidelity for the next 30 years with a smile on her lips and a great disregard for all the personal sacrifices this work required. It was a normal thing to see Sr. Laura dressed in farm clothes, driving a tractor with great competence. Her day began before 4:00 a.m., with participation in the pre-dawn Mass celebrated by Fr. Alberione. In the silence of those early morning hours, she obtained the abundant graces she needed to meet the fatiguing labor of the day with generosity and self-sacrifice. Because she suffered severe back pain, she often had to wear a heavy plaster girdle that restricted her movements and made it hard for her to bend over when hoeing the ground. In order to keep her spine straight she would have to wield the hoe on her knees but this was not a problem for her. Her only concern was to remain faithful to her duties so that the many sisters and young women in formation in the huge Via Antonino Pio community would not lack food.

Sr. Laura never studied beyond the fourth grade, but when filling out personal data records, she would always humorously write in the space entitled "studies": "PhD in Agriculture."

In 1978 she was transferred to Alba to assist the sick members of that community. Thus a new stage of her life began in which the Lord asked her to perfect her already great spirit of self-sacrifice by assisting Sr. Magdala Castellino, who had suffered a brain aneurysm and was confined to a wheelchair. Sr. Laura carried out this service lovingly for 27 years. Only Sr. Laura and Sr. Magdala's sister, Sr. Carla, were able to understand Sr. Magdala's slurred speech and thus they acted as her interpreters. When Sr. Magdala was transferred to the Thecla Merlo community, Albano in 1992, Sr. Laura and Sr. Carla went with her, continuing to provide her with loving assistance up to the end of her life.

Care of the sick had become a true mission for Sr. Laura and to favor this apostolate she learned a small medical technique to alleviate spinal and sciatic pain: she would make a small incision in the sister's the ankle vein to draw out the hardened blood that was causing the blockage and pain. She was always very happy when this simple therapy relieved a sister of her sufferings and enabled her to carry out her apostolic activities more effectively.

A few years ago, Sr. Laura was diagnosed as suffering from intestinal cancer and thus she herself became one of the members of the Thecla Merlo community in need of assistance. Several months ago, she was transferred to James Alberione community and in the last few weeks she was hospitalized twice due to the advance of the cancer. But at this point, Sr. Laura's gaze was fixed on the treasure that awaited her in heaven—a treasure she had enriched through her many good works and that today took on the name and face of her Lord and Master.

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 22 June 2012