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Dearest Sisters,

With profound emotion, I want to let you know that at about 9:00 this evening the Lord visited our Carril del Conde community in Madrid, Spain, to call to himself our sister:

**BASSI LINA – SR. MARIA EPIFANIA  
born in Licciana Nardi (Massa), Italy on 31 July 1913.**

Sr. Epifania's health had been slowly deteriorating for some time. After a brief hospitalization, she spent the last weeks of her life in our Madrid community, surrounded by the affection of the sisters and the members of the Pauline Family, who sought to recompense her for all the good they had received from her. It is beautiful to think that Sr. Epifania took leave of this earth from Spain, a country she loved very deeply and in which she spent the last 30 years of her life. It is also significant that after spending consecutive 60 years in the missions, Sr. Epifania remained a missionary up to the very end of her life.

She entered the Congregation on 2 January 1928, together with her sister Emma (the future M. Assunta). The two older Bassi sisters (the future Sr. Domenica and Sr. Thecla) later followed their younger sisters into the Institute. Sr. Assunta once recounted the "magical" moment of their entrance into the Institute in this way: "Maestra Thecla came to meet us at the door. She did not look like any of the sisters I had seen depicted in various books. Instead, she wore a simple dress—the kind worn by Italian country women of that period. She was smiling and I noticed her profound gaze, which communicated eloquently without words. The house was poor and very dilapidated...." Sr. Epifania adapted to her new life simply and quickly, embracing everything in a spirit of faith and obedience. At the age of 17, prior to her profession, she was sent to Rome to take charge of the postulants. While she was carrying out this service, Maestra Amalia asked her to go to Grosseto to open a community there. Sr. M. Epifania did not feel equal to the responsibility and recalled that on the day the new book center opened she felt very embarrassed and prayed that no one would come in and ask for a book that she probably wouldn't know where to find.

Sr. M. Epifania's entire life was a miracle of obedience. She made her novitiate in Alba, concluding it with her first profession on 20 August 1934. She finished her higher academic studies in Rome while contemporaneously carrying out the office of mistress of formation. In 1942, she was appointed superior of the Bologna community and in 1947 she was sent as a missionary to Argentina. Sr. M. Epifania recounts that before leaving Italy she went to Primo Maestro in the hope of receiving some guidelines for her future mission. She told him she feared that she was too shy and too incapable to be a missionary. Primo Maestro replied: "Go with faith! Surrender yourself to the Lord. Trust in him. You have the Constitutions—they will guide you, and the Queen of Apostles will accompany you. In Argentina too you will find a tabernacle in which you can take refuge. Prima Maestra will give you all the guidelines you need." These words filled Sr. M. Epifania with great peace. She wrote: "Relying on the faith of those who were sending me out, I left my homeland serenely, with a great sense of security, even though I had only five dollars in my pocket."

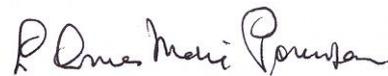
From 1947-1965, Sr. M. Epifania served as superior of the Buenos Aires community and, at the same time, as novice mistress. As the FSP presence in Argentina little by little took on new juridical configurations, she went on to serve as regional superior and then provincial superior. From 1965-1972, she was the provincial superior of Colombia. It was probably toward the end of this term of office that she revealed to the Superior General her great spirit of generosity, saying: "I am at your disposition in every sense of the word: both now and in the future. Use me in whatever way you want. You can call upon me at any time and send me wherever you please. With all my heart, I place in your hands the little that I am and that I have."

Sr. M. Epifania was assigned to the community of Lima, Peru for a short time, where she worked in the catechetical sector. In 1978, she accepted a transfer to Spain with her usual docility. When she arrived in Madrid, she wrote: "I am serene. May the Lord arrange and do everything according to his will. I will try to be a small instrument in his hands." In the following years, she carried out the offices of local superior and delegation counselor almost without interruption. A modest, quiet and discreet person, Sr. M. Epifania overflowed with Gospel wisdom. Wherever she went, she disseminated peace, communion and hope. In the last years of her life, as her strength slowly diminished, she continued to be a clear point of reference not only for the FSPs of the Spanish Delegation but also for the whole Pauline Family there. Up to the last day of her life, she radiated an extraordinary spiritual strength, a true nobility of soul, and a Pauline wealth assimilated in the school of the Founder and Maestra Thecla, the models from whom she drew continual inspiration.

By means of her life, Sr. M. Epifania has written a page of goodness and holiness in our Pauline annals that, in the climate of Advent, invites us to cultivate the attitudes of praise, hope and gratitude to God for the great things he is able to accomplish in those who are faithful to him.

Affectionately,

Rome, 18 December 2009

  
*Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan*  
*Vicar General*