

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

At about 12:20 p.m. (local time) today, the Divine Master visited St. John of God Hospital, Pasay City, Philippines to call to the joy of the resurrection our sister:

**BENDOY BEDA – SR. MARIA NOEMI**  
**born in Cantilan (Surigao del Sur), Philippines on 13 September 1942.**

Sr. Noemi entered the Congregation in the community of Pasay City on 3 Dec. 1963, bearing in her heart the great desire to be a Pauline missionary. After her initial formation and novitiate in Lipa, she made her first profession on 30 June 1968. As a young professed, she visited the families and collectivities of Metro Manila, Cagayan de Oro and all the regions of Mindanao, her bag overflowing with books bringing the light of the Gospel to everyone. Following her perpetual profession, she was placed in charge of the Lipa book center and afterward she had the grace to diffuse the Word of God in the book centers of Iloilo, Bacolod, Tuguegarao, Pasay City, Cebu and Baguio. In the communities of Bacolod, Tuguegarao and Iloilo, she also carried out the service of local superior. Wherever she went, Sr. Noemi was a zealous propagandist, presenting our books and audiovisuals with great conviction and encouraging the people to tune in to our radio and TV programs. She was a strong and at the same time gentle person whose love for the Word of God enabled her to think up many creative ways of disseminating it. She considered study and updating sessions to be important means for preparing herself to offer everyone “the charity of the truth” and to proclaim the Word always more effectively. This conviction led to her participate in a number of biblical and social communications courses.

Sr. Noemi burned with desire to be an apostle of the Gospel. In 1985, when she was stationed in Tuguegarao, she wrote to the Superior General: “Last May I heard that the Bishop of Papua New Guinea wants us in his diocese. Ever since I was a novice, I have always yearned to go to the missions, especially to New Guinea. I hope and pray that I will be one of those chosen for this foundation. My mother is Muslim and I would like to work among the Muslims...but I am ready to do whatever God asks of me.”

Sr. Noemi’s dream of being a missionary was realized in 1998 when, in response to the Congregation’s Missionary Project, she was assigned to the community of Lagos, Nigeria, where she worked in the book center. She loved Africa and the African people and thus, after 8 years in Nigeria, she willingly accepted a transfer to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in spite of the problem of having to learn Swahili.

In 20012, Sr. Noemi returned to the Philippines to take care of her mother, who was old and sick, but the call to the missions continued to burn in her heart. After the death of her mother in the autumn of 2013, she begged to return to Africa and was assigned to the Nairobi, Kenya community. She was placed in charge of the delegation’s small typography, in which our young women in formation take turns working. However, she did not carry out this apostolate for long because sickness knocked at her door. At the end of January 2014 she had to return to the Philippines because she was gravely ill. She was diagnosed as suffering from a large malignant tumor of the thyroid that had already surrounded her trachea and was making it very difficult for her to breathe. A tube had to be inserted into the trachea to enable her to breathe in the hope that in the meantime radio therapy would shrink the tumor to the point that it would be possible to remove it surgically. Sr. Noemi was fully aware of the gravity of her condition. Unable to speak, she wrote to her provincial superior on the evening of her operation that she was ready to die and that she placed herself in the hands of God. The last months of her life were characterized by deep suffering because the radio therapy provoked unbearable pain in her ears. In fact, the pain was so bad that the therapy had to be suspended several times.

On Holy Saturday, Sr. Noemi was once more hospitalized as the result of a lung infection and the metastasis of the cancer, which by now had invaded her whole body. On Easter Tuesday our sister, like Mary Magdalene, was called to the intimate experience of a spouse of Jesus: the privilege of seeing and touching her Master and of ascending with him to the Father, to dwell in his marvelous kingdom forever.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General

Rome, 22 April 2014