

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ  
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO  
CASA GENERALIZIA  
Via S. Giovanni Eudes, 25  
00163 Roma  
Tel. 06.661 3039 - Fax 06.661 57 208



Dearest Sisters,

At 11:00 this morning, the Divine Master visited the infirmary wing of our Divine Providence community in Via Antonino Pio, Rome, Italy to call to new life with him our sister:

**BENEDETTI SR. VIRGINIA (GINA)  
born in Sezano (Verona), Italy on 2 March 1925.**

Sr. Gina was firmly convinced that the Lord was always at her side, supporting her with his love. She never tired of saying: "Love conquers everything." And her life was marked by many things that needed to be "conquered." Gina was a happy, carefree teenager who loved to read. As her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday approached, her thoughts were focused more on boys than on spending time in church. "In those days," she said, "we had to go to confession once a week and I didn't like that at all." But it was precisely during one of those compulsory confession sessions that Gina met Fr. Furlanis, a Stigmatine Father, who was destined to change her life. The priest suggested that she read a verse of the Gospel every day and meditate on it. From that day on, Gina began to notice a change in herself. Although she had a boyfriend, another "passion" began to warm her heart to the point that she finally decided to enter the religious life. Her love of books and a very inspiring encounter with the Daughters of St. Paul did the rest....

Gina entered the Congregation in the community of Alba on 22 June 1945. Her initial time as an aspirant was not easy, above all due to severe asthma, which gave her no rest. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1948. In September 1949, she was sent to Staten Island, U.S.A., where she carried out the "propaganda" apostolate among the skyscrapers and factories of New York. However, visa problems soon made it necessary to transfer her to Canada—a move which proved to be providential. In fact, Sr. Gina was the first Daughter of St. Paul to set foot in this country and it was she who laid the groundwork for an FSP foundation in Montreal. A serious lung disease forced her to interrupt her work and enter a sanatorium so as to receive the medical treatment her condition required but even there Sr. Gina continued to carry out the Pauline apostolate in the ways possible to her. She recovered from the disease so completely that the doctors were amazed and after a short trip to Italy to restabilize her health completely, she was sent to her final missionary destination: Lyons, France. Sr. Gina remained in France from 1955-1973, where she carried out book displays in the schools and other apostolic activities in the communities of Lyons, Marseilles and Besançon. She also carried out the services of seamstress, cook and hospitality in these communities.

In 1973, Sr. Gina returned to Italy, where she was assigned to the reception desk at the Generalate. In 1977, she was transferred to the Divine Providence community in Via Antonino Pio, Rome—the community in which she was to spend the rest of her life. Since she possessed a diploma as a seamstress and was truly an expert in this field, she was assigned to the sewing room. She carried out this important service to the sisters for more than 25 years, together with her equally valuable service as sacristan of the Queen of Apostles Sanctuary. Under her expert care, the altar linens and garments were always in perfect condition. The Sanctuary became Sr. Gina's second home, the place where she spent every moment of her free time. She also carried out the service of Eucharistic minister in Queen of Apostles parish, as well as in the parish attached to the Basilica of St. Paul, just down the road. With great recollection she would take the Eucharist to the sick, feeling that she was "a living tabernacle of God."

About 10 years ago, Sr. Gina had to give up her apostolic activities due to poor health and for the past 4 years she was bedridden. This morning, Paul's statement was fulfilled for her: "You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God!" We like to think that our sister is now "hidden in God" and that from there she will celebrate the "Liturgy of heaven" for all eternity.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Vicar General

Rome, 7 September 2011