

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

Once again the Lord has visited us: at 1:00 this morning he knocked on the door of our Divine Providence community of Rome, Italy to call to himself our sister:

**BERNARDINI LUCIA – SR. TERESA MARIA**  
**born in Verica di Pavullo (Modena), Italy on 21 September 1925.**

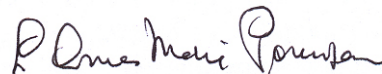
Sr. Teresa M. brought to her encounter with the Lord a life rich in apostolic commitment, a heritage due in part to the extraordinary family to which she belonged. The youngest of 10 children—11 including her adopted brother who later became the bishop of Ibadan, Nigeria—she was also the youngest of the six Bernardini girls to enter the religious life (5 of whom became Daughters of St. Paul) and all of whom preceded her to heaven. One of her brothers Germano, is the bishop emeritus of Smyrna, Turkey and another brother, Sebastian, is a Capuchin. And finally, we cannot fail to mention her parents—the Servants of God, Sergio and Domenica Bernardini, whose process of beatification is currently underway.

Sr. Teresa M. entered the Congregation in Alba on 23 Oct. 1938 at the age of 13. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1950. She was assigned to the FSP typography of Rome but soon after began the service of collaboration with the local Church to which she would return again and again throughout her life. In fact, in 1951, Prima Maestra Thecla asked her to open a lending library that the FIAT car company had offered to sponsor for the diocese of Turin. When Sr. Teresa M. said she was worried because she didn't have the training for this work, M. Thecla strongly recommended that she increase her faith! This reminder was enough to release Sr. Teresa M.'s hidden creativity, enabling her to successfully implement this project. After the library was up and running, she was transferred to Mantua. However, in 1956, she was reassigned to Turin, where she remained for the next 6 years.

Afterward, she worked for a time in the FSP *Ut Unum Sint* Center in Rome and from there went on to serve the people of Catanzaro, Naples, Asti and Turin through our Pauline book centers in these cities. During her time in Turin, she broadened her apostolic activities in the field of communications: at first through dissemination of the Catholic weekly newspaper *Avvenire*, and then by launching a social communications office in the Piedmont region under the guidance of Bishop Carlo Chiavazza and Fr. Lamberto Schiatti, ssp. This collaboration with the local Church was not easy because it required great creativity and initiative, but Sr. Teresa M. always looked back on those years with gratitude and nostalgia. In 1983, she was assigned to Mestre and from there to the FSP Generalate so as to collaborate with the Society of St. Paul in the publication of the *Pauline Cooperators Bulletin*. Sr. Teresa M. was very happy to contribute to this apostolic activity for the next 6 years, saying that benefited the entire Pauline Family and that it helped her feel the profundity of the Pauline spirit.

In 1992, she returned to the Italian Province. Assigned to the Divine Master community of Rome, she worked with great commitment in the administration office and then in the shipping department. After helping care for many sick and elderly members of her community during the last stage of their lives, Sr. Teresa M. herself reached the point of needing assistance. Artery blockage and failing eyesight obliged her to spend the last years of her life in the infirmary wing of the Divine Master house, where she attentively followed the information-gathering process for the beatification of her parents, which had been opened in May 2006. Up until just a few weeks ago, Sr. Teresa was still quite active and could frequently be found in the hallways or living room of the infirmary wing. However, visitors noted that she was living more and more on a supernatural plane, recollected in interior dialogue with the Lord and his Mother. On the occasion of her Golden Jubilee, she had written: "My whole life has been characterized by God's grace and mercy. I feel my poverty—before the Lord, my hands are empty. I am a miserable sinner and I beg him for redemption. I place all my hope in him and in his sweet Mother." We are sure that the Queen of Apostles, toward whom she nourished an intense devotion, helped Sr. Teresa M. make this definitive passage to eternity, where she has now joined the many sisters and brothers who make up our beautiful Family there.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Vicar General

Rome, 6 July 2010