

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

At 6:12 this Saturday morning, the day of the week dedicated to the Queen of Apostles, Mary visited St. John of God Hospital, Pasay City, Philippines to introduce to eternal life our sister:

**BILLANES NATIVIDAD – SR. MARIA GRAZIA
born in Panay (Capiz), Philippines on 12 June 1927.**

Fired by an ardent desire to become a saint, Sr. Maria Grazia entered the Congregation in the house of Lipa on 3 February 1950. After a time of initial formation, she made her novitiate in Lipa, concluding it with her first profession on 20 March 1955. She spent her Juniorate in Pasay City, where she carried out “propaganda” to families and businesses. When she made her perpetual profession in 1960, she wrote to Maestra Thecla: “I thank God for this chance to tell you how much I want to strive for perfection and unite myself to the Lord for all my life. I am very poor in everything, but I place myself in the hands of God and my Mother Mary, the Queen of Apostles.”

For almost 20 years, Sr. Maria Grazia carried out the service of cook with simplicity, generosity and self-denial first in the community of Lipa and then in Pasay City. Afterward, she returned to the propaganda apostolate in Iloilo followed by a transfer to the Bacolod book center. While in the latter, she was able to help the sisters with their radio apostolate by collecting offerings from benefactors with whom she had established strong bonds of friendship and “spiritual maternity.” In 1991, she returned to the Divine Master community of Pasay and from there was assigned to Marikina, where she once again dedicated herself to community services, particularly in the kitchen. In 1997 she was transferred to the Cebu book center and for the next 10 years worked diligently to gather funds to sustain the apostolate. Under the urging of Sr. Maria Grazia, many benefactors, both well-to-do and poor, willingly collaborated with the Pauline mission. This dear sister, armed with the gift of humor, tirelessly invited everyone she met to do good through their generous economic support.

In 2008 Sr. Maria Grazia returned to the Divine Master formation community in Pasay City, where she transmitted to the Institute’s candidates the message and example of goodness and profound love for the Pauline vocation. She forged warm and solid human relations with the formandeas, motivated by the desire to pass on to them the bright torch of the Pauline vocation that enlightened and permeated her entire life. For the young women, she was a living example of prayer, assiduously bringing before the Lord the Institute’s need for vocations, its mission, its Cooperators and its benefactors. She was deeply devoted to the Queen of Apostles and said with a laugh that one day she kissed the statue of Mary with such fervor that it toppled to the ground and broke into pieces.

In 2012, Sr. Maria Grazia was transferred to the infirmary of the Queen of Apostles community in Pasay. Her physical situation began to seriously decline this past April and three days ago she was admitted to St. John of God Hospital because of respiratory problems. This morning, septic shock introduced her to eternal life. We are sure that she was accompanied on her journey to heaven by Mary, her Mother, whom the sisters gathered around her bed invoked up until the moment she drew her last breath.

Now that she is with God, may Sr. Maria Grazia continue to present to him all the intentions closest to her heart, above all peace in the world and all the candidates to the religious life in every part of the globe. May her simple and generous witness of life be a beacon of light for our sisters, Cooperators and benefactors—all of whom she loved very much.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 12 November 2016