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Dearest Sisters,

Last night, at a little after midnight, one of the sisters of our Thecla Merlo community, Albano, Italy, was called to dwell forever in the house of her Lord and Master:

BIONDANI SR. AGNESE
born in Verona, Italy on 2 January 1940.

And thus another sister has flown to heaven to enrich the Pauline Family there with her contagious enthusiasm, reminding us that our entire existence, in any situation in life, in health or illness, is mission—a conscious offering to God for the salvation of many.

Sr. Agnese entered the Congregation in the house of Verona on 2 February 1960 but was soon transferred to the Motherhouse in Alba for a time of formation. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1963, the very day on which Paul VI officially began his Petrine ministry.

With her characteristic joy and exuberance, Sr. Agnese dedicated her first years as a Pauline to capillary and collective diffusion of the Word of God in the communities of Mantua, Genoa, Bergamo, Lugano and Lodi. She was an expert driver, a dynamic worker, and a generous and fervent communicator.

She made a valuable contribution to the bindery in Alba for several years and then, in 1980, was called to explore new apostolic paths by travelling the roads of Tuscany to promote our Pauline editions and place our new publications in the secular bookshops of the region.

In 1986, she was assigned to the Cicogna community, which welcomed groups of sisters for their annual retreats. She moved easily from kitchen to garden work, from shopping to carrying out the service of hospitality in a community whose doors were always open. In 1992, she was transferred to Reggio Emilia to help out with book center work and household management.

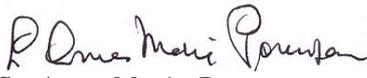
But the situation of Sr. Agnese’s family began to give her serious concerns. After the death of her father and brother, she had to ask for a leave of absence from the Institute so as to assist her sick mother, who was over 90 years old. That time, which was not easy for her, lasted for about 8 years. She constantly asked the Lord for the grace “to live my daily life in the most ‘Pauline’ way possible,” offering this suffering “for our marvelous Pauline mission.” She took advantage of every opportunity to visit our Verona community and lend a hand in the book center and participate in the sisters’ monthly retreats.

In 2003, she re-entered the Congregation and was assigned first to the provincial house and then to the St. Joseph community of Alba, where she worked in the bindery and laundry room and saw to the upkeep of the community wardrobes.

Transferred to the James Alberione community, Albano, Sr. Agnese helped in the kitchen and also traveled the roads of the “Castelli Romani” by car, carrying out many errands and spreading a word of faith and hope wherever she went. But in the meantime her health was declining due to an intestinal tumor and about 10 years ago she underwent colon surgery. In spite of considerable physical discomfort, Sr. Agnese continued to dedicate herself tirelessly to lightening the fatiguing workload of the FSP caregivers in our Thecla Merlo community. She never complained and did not attribute much importance to her own health, which continued to decline due to the onset of a number of other maladies. For the last month-and-a-half of her life, she was bedridden, but this did not constitute a problem for her....

The testimony of this fervent sister is an invitation to us to continually seek new opportunities to sow the Word of God with *the imagination of communication*, to rediscover the importance of the itinerant apostolate, and to go forth every day to bring everyone the truth in love.

With deep affection,


 Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 12 February 2020