

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

At a little before 1:00 a.m. this morning (local time), the Divine Master visited the infirmary of our Boston (U.S.A.) community to call to her eternal nuptials our sister:

**BOCCABELLO ANNETTE – SR. ANNETTE MARGARET**  
**born in Silver Springs (MD), United States, on 17 March 1956.**

At the beginning of Advent, Sr. Annette wrote a letter to the sisters of her province, saying that it was hard for her to find the words to tell them that she had chosen to stop her chemotherapy treatments which at that point were useless due to the widespread diffusion of cancer to her bones, lungs and liver. She added: “Advent is the perfect time for preparing for Jesus’s coming.... As I contemplate my life, it is full of beautiful memories of life as a Daughter of St. Paul. What a grace!” Sr. Annette had a great artistic eye. One of her favorite pictures, which hung on her wall, was Renoir’s painting *The Promenade*—the picture of a bride being led by the hand by her spouse up a lighted path. She said that that was what was going to happen when she ended her life here on earth: Jesus would meet her and lead her into the Light of heaven.

Sr. Annette entered the Congregation in Boston on 13 August 1978 and spent almost her entire Pauline life in this community, carrying out the Pauline apostolate with great intensity and fervor. She made her first profession on 28 June 1981. After a period of apostolic experience in Staten Island, New York, she returned to Boston, where she made her perpetual profession and then dedicated herself wholeheartedly to many different dimensions of the Pauline mission.

In the years that followed, she served as manager of the press-press and graphic design departments, then as director of publishing. Around Easter 1992, she felt a powerful call to the mission *ad gentes* and expressed the desire to be sent to our community in Moscow, Russia. But the Lord helped her understand that our United States province needed her collaboration, and thus, in 1993, she wrote: “The community of Moscow will always have a special place in my thoughts, prayers and sacrifices.”

From 1999-2003, Sr. Annette had the chance to carry out a very meaningful apostolic experience in Miami, Florida, working in the province’s Spanish Distribution Center. She returned to Boston in 2003, where she was appointed director of the apostolate—a service that allowed her to put to good use her gifts of nature and grace, creativity and organization. A great team player, Sr. Annette knew how to engage those she work with, valuing their gifts and offering them encouragement and ideas so as to foster the Pauline mission. She was also a “networker” in the truest sense of the word, willing to try something different and face the mistakes, setbacks, misunderstandings and sufferings that often accompany change. In her years in the Marketing Department, she served as a member of the Catholic Press Association, using the position to connect with other Catholic publishers.

Sr. Annette was diagnosed as suffering from cancer in 2005, in the midst of a very active apostolic time of her life. With great wisdom, courage and equanimity, she made the most of this opportunity to live her Pauline vocation with even greater intensity, continuing to serenely carry out the forms of apostolate compatible with her cycles of chemotherapy and its severe side effects. She was deeply grateful to God for the gift of life and for the chance her illness afforded her to spend more time with him in prayer. In her final days, when she could no longer leave her room, she commented: “One of the best hours for me to talk to God is in the heart of the night. Everything is so quiet and still—we have some great conversations!” A few weeks ago, the U.S. Provincial Superior informed the sisters that Sr. Annette was ready to meet Jesus Master: it was evident in her luminous eyes and in her voice. And today, the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Sr. Annette joined the universal Church in expressing the act of faith that colored her whole existence: “Let us enter and kneel before the Lord who made us, for he is our God...”

We entrust to Sr. Annette all our apostolic needs throughout the world, and in a special way those of our small Moscow community, which she always carried in her heart.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Vicar General

Rome, 29 January 2012