

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

At about 9:00 this morning, the Lord once again visited our James Alberione community, Albano, Italy to call to himself our sister:

**CAMPARA ANGELINA – SR. MARIA ANCILLA
born in Roverè (Verona), Italy on 7 September 1925.**

After spending several days as a patient in Queen of Apostles Hospital, Albano, Sr. M. Ancilla returned to her community last night because the doctors said there was nothing more to be done to treat the serious abscess in one of her lungs, which had caused her to run a very high fever.

Sr. M. Ancilla entered the Congregation in Alba on 25 March 1946, the Feast of the Annunciation and her “yes” to God, in imitation of the Blessed Mother, became the distinctive feature of her life. She was truly a humble handmaid of the Lord, asking nothing for herself. But her humility made her very great in the eyes of God, who accomplished marvels in her.

As a postulant, she took the “good press” to the families of Aosta. Following this, she made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1949. Her life as a Pauline was simple and linear: she carried out the propaganda apostolate in Ancona and Massa, helping to organize many Gospel Days and also visiting, year after year, the huge crowds of people who flocked to vacation spots such as Viareggio, Pietrasanta and Forte dei Marmi. Beginning in 1961, Sr. M. Ancilla carried out various services in the communities of Massa, Udine, Trent, Trieste and Ariccia-Galloro. In filling out a questionnaire sent to the sisters by the provincial superior in 1972, she wrote: “I can handle almost any kind of household duty: kitchen, sewing, laundry, ironing, housecleaning, etc. In my free time, I like to work in the garden and gather herbs to make tonics.”

Her rural upbringing had taught her to see her life as “good soil” that could help to fructify the Pauline mission. In fact, she would say with joy that she liked to think of herself as the warm, welcoming soil in which the Pauline apostolate could sprout and bear fruit.

In December 1997, Sr. Ancilla’s declining health made it necessary to transfer her to the Thecla Merlo community, Albano. She spent almost the whole of 1999 in a coma. The sisters of her community decided to ask Fr. Alberione to intercede for her and on the third day of the novena, which happened to be the Feast of Christ the King, Sr. Ancilla came out of her coma and asked insistently to be taken to the chapel to attend Mass. Her sister, Sr. Adeodata, who had been caring for her, had asked the Lord for the same grace. From that time on, Sr. Ancilla’s condition improved to the point that she was relatively self-sufficient for the last years of her life. The Eucharistic Celebration was always the center of her day—the supremely important event that gave direction to her life. Because of the great value of the Mass, she felt that it wasn’t enough to celebrate it for just one intention. She wrote: “Believing as I do that the Mass has infinite value and that it can’t be divided into pieces like a cake, I want to ask that the Gregorian Masses not be celebrated for me.”

Another note, in which she wrote: “It was Sacred Scripture that educated me!” throws a further ray of light on her life. She had committed to memory whole sections of the Word of God, which was her comfort and hope, and it was a great suffering to her when failing eyesight made it impossible for her to read.

The Lord worked miracles of grace in the life of this dear sister: miracles of love, goodness and self-offering. Sr. M. Ancilla truly kept nothing for herself: she dedicated her entire being to the Lord, who was thus able to do great things in her. To all outward appearances, her life was very simple and ordinary but it was rich in the eyes of God and we are sure it bore abundant fruit for the Church and our Institute.

From 2009 up to her death, Sr. M. Ancilla lived in the James Alberione community, Albano, where she was lovingly cared for by her sister, who had entered the Congregation several years after her. We entrust our General Chapter to Sr. M. Ancilla, asking her to obtain for us the grace to be as open to God as she was and to follow her example of making ourselves “handmaids of the Lord” who live his Word and joyfully communicate it to everyone.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 23 August 2013