

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

At a little after 5:00 a.m. today, the Lord visited the Thecla Merlo community of Albano, Italy to lead to eternal peace and joy our sister:

CAZZATO SR. CECILIA
born in Tiggiano (Lecce), Italy on 6 October 1913.

The FSPs who lived for many years with Sr. Cecilia say that her existence was a “hymn to life.” She sang this hymn by means of her simplicity, sincere friendship toward others, love for beautiful things, discreet practice of the many nuances of love, wholehearted participation in the Congregation’s journey, and generous acceptance of old age and sickness. She also sang this hymn by means of her sense of humor and practicality, which led her to prepare ahead of time the habit she wanted to be clothed in after her death, so as to appear before the Lord suitably attired.

Sr. Cecilia entered the Congregation in the community of Alba on 12 August 1933. At that time the Daughters of St. Paul were still living in Piazza San Paolo. She was sent to Palermo for a period of apostolic experience and returned to Alba for her novitiate, concluding it with her first profession on 15 January 1939. She spent the war years working in our small but well-stocked book center in Bari and also offered concrete assistance to the poor through her service in a public canteen that provided meals for more than 1200 refugees. Here, she and another sister supervised the distribution of food and also helped the sick.


The war years were filled with adventures for Sr. Cecilia, such as the time when she and another FSP, visiting the dockyards of Taranto on propaganda, were thought to be spies until the situation was clarified. When the war ended, she was transferred to Matera, where she worked in the book center and communicated the beauty of the Pauline vocation to all the young women she met there. Inspired by her example, many of these young women entered the Institute and became Pauline missionaries to various parts of the world. When the community was closed for the first time in 1951, Sr. Cecilia returned to Bari, after which she was sent to Livorno to work in the cinema apostolate. Following this, she was appointed superior of the Matera community, which had just been re-opened.

When her term of office ended, Sr. Cecilia was transferred first to San Benedetto and then to Agrigento, Viterbo and Bari successively. She spent more than 30 years in this last community, irradiating goodness, kindness and joy to everyone she met. Sr. Cecilia had always yearned to be a missionary so when the Congregation launched its “Missionary Project” in 1993, she hastened to offer her services to “take the Gospel to new shores,” despite the fact that she was 80 years old at the time.

In 1996, she was transferred to the Ariccia-Galloro community and from there to the IV Novembre community of Albano. About a year ago, she joined the Thecla Merlo community of Albano where, together with its other sick and elderly members, she prepared herself for her definitive meeting with the Master. The sisters who lived with her remember how dedicated Sr. Cecilia was to animating the morning prayer of the community’s employees. The prayer liturgy, which began at 7:00 a.m. on the dot, would open with a thought for the day, followed by a brief but intense series of prayers.

During the last two months of her life, Sr. Cecilia’s health steadily declined due to cancer of the bile ducts. We like to think that she went to meet the Lord today with her lamp lit and with a flower in her hand, symbolizing the beauty, openness and sweet perfume of her entire life.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 29 April 2009