

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

At 7:30 p.m. today, the Feast of St. Joseph, patron of the dying, our good Father visited the infirmary of the Divine Providence community, Alba, Italy to call to himself our sister:

CESTE MARIA – SR. ZEFIRINA
born in Costigliole (Asti), Italy on 29 March 1931.

Inspired by the example of the Baldi sisters (Ambrosina, Zefirina and Angelica) from her hometown, Sr. Zefirina entered the Congregation in Alba on 14 October 1951. While at home, she had learned the art of sewing and from the very first stages of her formation she put this talent to good use, helping to make the sisters' habits in the large sewing room of Alba. Before beginning her novitiate, she had the chance to experience the "propaganda" apostolate in Livorno and immediately after her first profession, made in Rome on 19 March 1955, she was assigned to the Massa community, where she continued her apostolic visits the families, traveling the roads of Tuscany with a bag overflowing with books. The annual renewal of her vows was a moment of great joy for her and a motive for sincerely thanking the Divine Master. She wrote: "I am always more content and more grateful to the Lord for having blessed me with the Pauline vocation."

On the Feast of St. Joseph 1960, she made her perpetual profession in Rome, after which she carried out the book center apostolate in the communities of Crema, Naples/Capodimonte and Chiavari successively.


After a brief time in Alba, she was asked to once again put her talent as a seamstress to good use in the sewing rooms of Turin, Genoa, and the Divine Providence and St. Joseph communities of Alba. She also continued to travel the roads of Italy, no longer with a bag filled with books but with needle, thread and scissors whenever she was asked to "loan" her sewing skills to different FSP communities up and down the peninsula. Sr. Zefirina loved beauty and it made her very happy to be able to clothe the sisters in a neat and dignified way. The virtues of kindness, generosity and goodness were an integral part of her character and thus she brought our communities not only her sewing skills and industriousness but also a breath of serenity, joy, peace, good humor.

A few years ago, Sr. Zefirina wrote: "For me, what counts is to live serenely, filled with gratitude to the Lord for the many graces he has bestowed on me and trusting in his mercy.... I thank him for making me a Daughter of St. Paul. I have always been happy to offer him my few abilities. I would like to have been a better person and to have expressed my gratitude more fully to many people. But I trust that God in his mercy will welcome me into the Pauline Family in heaven. I had the joy of knowing Fr. Alberione and Maestra Thecla and on my journey through life I have had the chance to meet many FSPs, beginning with the Baldi sisters. I am grateful to everyone."

About two years ago, Sr. Zefirina began to show signs that she was developing senile dementia, which necessitated her transfer to the infirmary of Alba. Once there, she often asked, "Why am I here?" because she did not realize what was happening to her. She continued to ask for needles and thread, perhaps imagining that she was still helping to sew beautiful habits for the sisters....

A few days ago, she developed a deep bronchial cough, which made it very difficult for her to breathe due to a lack of oxygen. And tonight, after supper, God the Father called her quietly to himself. The moment had come for Sr. Zefirina to offer him her last *yes*: the *yes* our Founder often referred to, as for instance when he said: "After having always said *yes* to the Lord in life, we will say *yes* to him one last time at the gates of heaven" (FSP54, p. 128). And with this final *yes*, our sister entered the kingdom of the blessed to receive the reward promised to good apostles and from where she is now singing her everlasting praises to the Lord.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Porenzan
Superior General

Rome, 19 March 2018