

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

At about 8:20 this evening, God the Father visited the infirmary wing of our community in Alba, Italy to call to new life with the risen Christ our sister,

**CODIAS GISELLA**  
**born in Sassari, Italy on 11 February 1926.**

Sr. Gisella entered the Congregation in the community of Sassari on 7 April 1945, after having obtained a degree as an elementary school teacher. As a candidate, she was well known for her intelligence and her desire to dedicate herself completely to the Lord. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1948. On that occasion, she said that her heartfelt desire was “to reach perfection in spite of all my poverty.” Her secret in attaining this goal was Mary, to whom she entrusted herself from the outset of her formation.

As a young professed, Sr. Gisella was assigned to Grottaferrata, where she continued her studies in philosophy and theology. At a certain point poor health made it necessary to transfer her to Albano, where she remained for several years. The Lord blessed Sr. Gisella with many gifts of nature and grace, all of which she lovingly placed at the service of the Pauline mission. Returning to Grottaferrata, she carried out the apostolate of design/painting from 1953-1961, while at the same time taking a 3-year course in Gregorian music. At the end of the course, she earned a diploma as a teacher of sacred music. Transferred to Rome, she worked in the typography of the technical apostolate and in the offices of the Central Apostolic Sector. Following this, she worked in the book centers of Arezzo, Lodi and Alessandria, and then served as the bursar of our Milan community for several years.

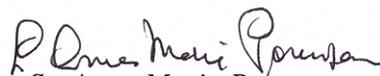
Sr. Gisella began a new stage of her Pauline life in 1973, when she was assigned to Vatican City. She was the first woman to work in the very austere offices of the Holy See, where she served as secretary to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, at that time Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. When she was forced to leave this job because she had reached the age of obligatory retirement, Cardinal Ratzinger himself wrote the following moving testimony about her: “Sr. Gisella is leaving this Dicastery after almost 24 years of dedicated service. We are saddened by the departure of a such a faithful collaborator, whose service we have always deeply appreciated, and I want to tell her how deeply grateful I am to her for her activities, carried out with great generosity. Sr. Gisella was a great support to many superiors and officials in this Dicastery.”

Sr. Gisella was very proud of “her” Pope and willingly displayed a great quantity of pictures of her beloved Prefect and other members of the Dicastery staff. She wanted very much to see him one last time after his election to the Papacy but this was not possible because after her retirement from the Vatican she had asked to join our Spanish Delegation.

In Madrid, Sr. Gisella continued to use her many gifts for the good of the Congregation, carrying out various duties in the community and in the delegation’s administration office. About 2 years ago she was diagnosed as suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and as a result was transferred to Alba. The last period of Sr. Gisella’s life was marked by profound suffering. In 1992, she had written down instructions concerning her funeral, saying: “Please choose cheerful songs for my funeral Mass—hymns that praise and thank God for all the love he bestowed on me. I ask forgiveness of all those whom I caused to suffer in any way and I sincerely forgive those who caused me to suffer. I have always loved all my sisters and I thank God from the bottom of my heart for having placed them on my path in life. I pray that each one will deeply love the God who chose us all. Nothing else matters.”

We too thank Sr. Gisella above all for the witness of her great love for the Church and we entrust her to our loving Father, who bestows on us the Spirit of Life in infinite measure.”

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Vicar General

Rome, 5 May 2011