



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

In the journey that is slowly leading us to Easter, the Lord is calling us to believe more intensely in him, including through his repeated visits to us. At 4:45 p.m. today, the Fifth Sunday of Lent, he visited the San Raffaele wing of our Albano community, Italy, to call to himself our sister:

CONTI SR. MARIA CARMEN
born in Villavesco (Lodi), Italy on 27 December 1940.

Sr. Maria Carmen gifted the Congregation with her apostolic and intellectual vivacity, her profound love for the Pauline charism and spirituality, and her caring and affectionate attitude toward every sister— all of which favored her continual reappointment as superior of various communities in Italy and abroad.

She entered the Congregation in the house of Rome on 5 January 1964, following in the footsteps of her aunts, Sr. Teresita and Sr. Rosanna. She made her novitiate in Alba, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1966. Prompted by a profound desire to respond to the Lord always more radically, she wrote to the Superior General: “I place myself in your hands so that you can offer me to Christ. I want to be faithful to him and faithful to you, who represent the Congregation. With the help of God, I want to be faithful up until my death.” She yearned intensely “to be a true Pauline; to be a missionary either in Italy or abroad; to be faithful and generous.”

Since Sr. M. Carmen had already received a high school diploma before entering the Congregation, as a young professed she was assigned to our Albano community to study medicine, but she interrupted her studies at the end of her third year. After her perpetual profession in 1972, she worked briefly in the “Ut Unum Sint” sector and then in the International Secretariats at the Generalate. In 1974, she spent a short time in the Naples book center, after which she was sent to Bologna to work in the formation sector. But surprises were not lacking.... She soon began a long itinerary in the service of governing: first as superior in Florence—a new community dedicated to diffusion through our Pauline Editions Agency. Immediately afterward, she was made superior of our Cagliari community, then was appointed provincial councilor of the newly-unified Italian Province. After serving the province for 6 years, she was made superior of the Viterbo community and then served as Delegation Superior of Spain (1987-1993).

When she returned to Italy, a new surprise awaited her: she was invited to join the sisters who were preparing to open a house in Moscow, Russia, in 1994. She enthusiastically lived that time, which was difficult but also full of promise, prophecy and hope...but the death of her father suggested her return to Italy to be closer to her loved ones. So in 1994 she once again embraced the role of superior, this time of the Ancona community, and then proceeded to fulfill that same office in Galloro (Ariccia) and the James Alberione community of Albano. At the end of this last term of office, she was transferred to the St. Joseph community, Alba, of which she was soon appointed superior.

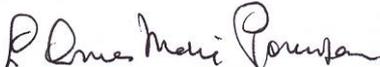
In 2006, health problems made it necessary for her to remain at Albano, first in the James Alberione community and then in the community of what was then our Albano Delegation, where she was quickly made a delegation councilor. When her 3-year mandate ended, Sr. M. Carmen was transferred to the Divine Providence community of Rome (Via Antonino Pio) to carry out the role of group leader and at the same time serve as a member of the spirituality team of the Italian province.

In 2014, she began another stage of her life—that of physical suffering as a result of cancer of the liver, which made it necessary for her to be hospitalized frequently and undergo continual operations. In spite of the advance of the disease, she fought the battle for health with great courage and faith, offering everything for the intentions of the Congregation, the Church and her loved ones. Through it all, she continued to radiate serenity and a positive outlook, saying: “It’s all right. Whatever God wants.” And she confided her great secret: “I am in the heart of the three divine Persons, and I am at peace because of this.” She repeated these words a few days ago when she was once again hospitalized and the gravity of her situation was revealed.

Today Sr. M. Carmen, like Lazarus, heard the Master call her to new life with the words: “Set her free and let her go.” After years of intense suffering, the doors of salvation have opened to her and she now abides in the heart of the Trinity, font of mercy and great hope.

Affectionately,

Rome, 29 March 2020


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan