

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

At about 10:00 p.m. yesterday, God the Father visited our Cidade Regina community in Sao Paulo, Brazil to call to himself our sister:

DE CASTRO M. AMALIA – SR. BERNARDETTE
born in Jacarezinho Pinh. (Londrina), Brazil on 31 may 1933.

Sr. Bernardette's passage to eternal life was abrupt, even though her health had been fragile for many years. In fact, in 2001, while carrying out the diffusion apostolate in the Archdiocese of Porto Velho, located in the heart of the Amazon forest, she suffered a massive brain hemorrhage. Her situation was so critical that she was air-lifted to Sao Paulo in a plane specially-equipped for medical emergencies. After a long period of intensive physical therapy, Sr. Bernardette's condition improved to the point that she was able to resume the book center apostolate, first in Maringa and later in Cidade Regina. But last year her health began to decline once again, causing her superiors serious concern. On her part, Sr. Bernardette continued to carry out the Pauline apostolate with generosity and enthusiasm, fired by the same missionary ardor that had characterized her Pauline life and activities in both Brazil and Chile. And it is significant that the Lord called our sister to himself on World Mission Day, which this year revolved around the theme: "I believed and therefore I spoke." We can truly say that Sr. Bernardette was a woman of deep faith, a zealous communicator who was always ready to collaborate with spreading the Faith, especially through catechetical animations.

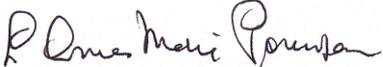
She entered the Congregation on 2 June 1948 in our Divine Master community in San Paulo, Brazil. She made her novitiate in that community, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1951. Afterward, she spent almost 20 years as the assistant mistress of formation to many groups of aspirants in Curitiba. It was here in 1960 that she and the other members of the community obediently followed the directive of Prima Maestra Thecla to launch the catechetical apostolate via records so as to reach the many people of the area who were illiterate. In 1972, Sr. Bernardette was transferred to the Maringa book center and 3 years later she was sent as a missionary to Chile, where she made an important contribution to the Pauline apostolate in the cities of Santiago, Valparaiso and Antofagasta through her work in the Diocesan catechetical office, our FSP book centers and capillary diffusion.

In 1977 she returned to Brazil where, after a short stay in Sao Paulo, she was sent to Curitiba to take care of both the editorial and technical aspects of the audio/videocassette department. She was later transferred to Rio de Janeiro and from there to the Salvador book center, where she was placed in charge of promoting FSP publications. At the same time, she took the opportunity to continue her education at the local Catholic university. After receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Theology and a Licentiate in Philosophy, she felt better prepared to carry out the catechetical apostolate, which she subsequently did with enthusiasm and love in the dioceses of Porto Velho, Fortalez and Maringa. In Rondonia, she helped to organize many formation initiatives, teaching our young candidates to become fervent communicators of the Gospel in their various daily situations.

Sr. Bernardette was known for her humble and kind manner, her great love for the Pauline mission and the people, her profound prayer life, and her sincere love for the Congregation, in particular for Fr. Alberione and Maestra Thecla, from whom she had absorbed an ardent desire to communicate the Gospel to everyone.

While the Synod on the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith continues here in Rome, the memory of the apostolic passion of the many FSPs who have returned to the house of the Father in this period urges us to rekindle our faith and our esteem for the Pauline vocation, to give everyone a reason for the hope that is in us, and to allow the beauty and splendor of the face of Christ to shine in the many "deserts" of contemporary society through the most modern languages of communication.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 22 October 2012

Memorial of Blessed Timothy Giaccardo