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Dearest Sisters,

At about 1:00 p.m. local time today, the Feast of the great Apostle St. Matthew, the Divine Master visited the Sanatrix Clinic in Caracas, Venezuela to call to himself a wonderful Pauline missionary who had been a patient there for several days undergoing physical therapy:

**DI MICHELE CONCETTINA – SR. MARIA LETIZIA
born in Montorio nei Frentani (Campobasso), Italy on 24 August 1919.**

We vividly remember Sr. M. Letizia's last visit to Italy: she was already 90 years old but bore her age with great elegance. In fact, she arrived at the Rome airport without accompaniment, dragging behind her two heavy suitcases and smiling with satisfaction at the thought of soon being reunited with her beloved family. At the age of 90 she still got around with confidence—the same confidence she displayed in our Caracas book center, located in the heart of the city, where she had worked intensively for the last 20 years. In fact, it was only a few months ago that she was transferred to the delegation headquarters in El Hatillo. But her mind and heart were still in the book center and she phoned the sisters often for news about what was happening, continuing to hope that she would be able to return to there. Unfortunately, she fell and broke her leg a few days ago and complications set in, leading to her unexpected meeting with our Lord and Master.

Sr. M. Letizia entered the Congregation on 18 July 1931 in the house of Rome, which had been opened just a few years previously. She was 12 years old at the time. During her years of formation, she carried out the diffusion apostolate in Palermo, Grosseto and Salerno. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 3 March 1940. Afterward, she returned to the propaganda apostolate, this time in the dioceses of Rovigo, Modena, Reggio Emilia, Salerno and Trent. Then came the call to the missions: on 3 November 1956, Sr. M. Letizia and Sr. Graziana Lo Scialpo left Italy for Venezuela. Looking back on that day, the sisters wrote: "Prima Maestra Thecla, who came with us to the airport, was all maternal concern, advising us as to how to behave in the new land toward which we were headed, where we would be sowing the first seeds of the Pauline mission. She said encouragingly: 'Several sisters from Colombia arrived in Venezuela a few months ago. They are waiting for you with open arms.' Because we were taking a night flight, she added: 'I will be thinking of you all night. If you glimpse the moon, remember that I am looking at it too. That way, we will feel closer to one another.'"

In Caracas, Sr. Letizia was asked to carry out the service of formator but in 1961 she and two other sisters were sent to open a house in Maracaibo. Sr. Letizia was appointed superior of the community and afterward carried out the same service for two terms in Barquisimeto. In 1973, she willingly accepted a transfer to Puerto Rico, where she was assigned to the book center. Following this she returned to Italy for two years. During that period, she served as a driver in the Generalate community. But Venezuela was never far from her thoughts and in 1977 she was delighted to return to her beloved mission land. She wrote to the Superior General: "It is superfluous to say that I am happy because you well know how much I wanted to return to this country, not because I think I am necessary but simply to contribute to our apostolate in love and for love.... Please pray for us because I have a feeling that this will be a good year for vocation work." In fact, pastoral work for vocations was one of Sr. Letizia's priorities. In 1979, she wrote from Caracas: "I am preparing to make a short trip to pick up two girls who will be making a retreat with us. Please pray that some of the participants will remain with us—at least 5 of them! I have faith that the Lord will answer this plea because he knows we need sisters to replace us."

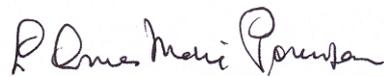
In 1984, Sr. Letizia was appointed delegation bursar. In 1991, she was reassigned to the Caracas book center—a service she carried out joyfully and wholeheartedly, but her ardent love for souls gave her no peace. In 1993, she wrote to the Superior General: "I did not offer myself for the Congregation's Missionary Project because I know it is useless. However, I want you to know that I am available for any need here in my delegation and I hope and pray that the Lord is preparing some of our Venezuelan

sisters for this Project. I am happy to continue with my work in the book center—it is my life! I never had a chance to pursue higher studies but I have always managed to carry out the diffusion apostolate, thanks be to God.” Sr. Letizia was happy to spend a period of time helping our sisters in the Santiago de los Caballeros community in the Dominican Republic and she prayed fervently for vocations from that beautiful island. She wrote in 1995: “I am doing well, thanks be to God. I carry out the responsibilities entrusted to me by the Lord happily and enthusiastically.” In fact, Sr. Letizia never lost a minute of time: her hand-made pearl rosaries were shipped around the world and she rejoiced to be able to express her gratitude to the Lord in this way.

God the Father, in his infinite goodness, allowed Sr. Letizia to remain in Venezuela up to her death. With deep gratitude, we entrust to our sister the vocations from her delegation and all our young Pauline missionaries who are preparing to set out for new nations and cultures, asking that, like Sr. Letizia, they will always be urged on by love.

Together with our sisters of the Delegation of Venezuela-Puerto Rico-Dominican Republic, we place in the hands of the Father Sr. M. Letizia who, with a big smile on her face and her suitcase in hand, salutes us from “the other shore.”

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'A' and 'M'.

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 21 September 2011