

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

At about 9:30 this morning, local time, the Good Shepherd visited our community of Mumbai, India to take in his arms and carry home to heaven our sister:

**ESPOSITO ANNA – SR. MARIA AMABILIS
born in Naples, Italy on 11 September 1926.**

Sr. M. Amabilis spent 59 years of her life as a Pauline missionary in India. She entered the Congregation in the community of Naples on 28 April 1947 and made her novitiate in Grottaferrata, concluding it with her first profession in Rome on 19 March 1950. From her first day in the Congregation, Sr. M. Amabilis dreamed of going to the missions. Preparing for her profession, she wrote to Maestra Thecla: "Trusting in the grace of the Lord, I want to tell you that I yearn to be admitted to the ranks of the Institute's missionaries. I would like to go to Asia, but if my superiors prefer to send me somewhere else, that is fine with me." This desire was quickly satisfied. After a short time in Cagliari, Sr. M. Amabilis was sent to India along with Sr. Albina Baruzzi. They arrived in Mumbai on 28 March 1952 to reinforce the small group of FSPs who had opened the Congregation's first house in this country two years earlier. Although they did not speak English or any of the local languages, they immediately began to carry out the diffusion and vocation apostolates with great faith and enthusiasm.

From the outset, Sr. M. Amabilis made herself "an Indian among the Indians," adapting herself to the customs and culture of the people while at the same time maintaining her strong Neapolitan characteristics such as simplicity, a joyful outlook on life, industriousness and above all her selfless dedication to others. The local young women felt her great love for them and many of them embraced the Pauline vocation thanks to her witness of life. From 1952-1970, Sr. M. Amabilis not only carried out the diffusion and vocation apostolates but also served as cook for the Mumbai community. Her vocation work often involved making long trips on crowded trains to Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. And the Lord blessed her labors with the gift of many beautiful vocations. Over the years, Sr. M. Amabilis served as superior of the Mumbai, Goa, Bangalore and Calcutta communities. In Nagpur, she worked in the book center. In spite of the fact that she had finished only elementary school, Sr. M. Amabilis was a very intuitive person and knew how to grasp the signs of the times. With great vision, she promoted and encouraged the sisters, urging them to generously place their gifts at the service of the Pauline mission. She herself was a tireless missionary. When the Congregation launched its Missionary Project in 1994, she wrote to the Superior General: "If I were younger, I would offer to take an active part in this project. But now my contribution is prayer and the great enthusiasm I feel for all the beautiful things that are happening."

Sr. M. Amabilis irradiated goodness and good humor wherever she went in spite of the fact that she suffered from severe arthritis of the knees, which progressed to the point that she was unable to walk. While in Italy in 1996, she underwent knee surgery and returned to India very happy with the results, which she attributed to the intercession of Blessed Timothy Giaccardo.

But the Lord was calling Sr. M. Amabilis to fecundate through suffering the abundant seeds she had sown in her many years of intense apostolic activity. Her feet, which had traveled so many miles for the sake of the Gospel, were now wearing out. During the last years of her life, Sr. M. Amabilis was confined to her room, which became the heart of the community—the place of her prayer and self-offering for all the needs of the province and Congregation. She also developed a skin tumor, accepting this new malady without complaint, content to offer her sufferings for the progress of the apostolate and for vocations. And the Lord in his infinite mercy saw to it that her death was a "work of art." This morning, the young women who took care of her with great tenderness brought her breakfast, saying that they heard her taking her morning shower and that she emerged from it looking better than usual. But after breakfast she began to have trouble breathing so the rest of the community was hastily called. The sisters were all gathered around her bedside when Sr. M. Amabilis placed her life in the hands of God the Father a few minutes later—a life that was truly a masterpiece of grace, love and humility.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 16 May 2011