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Dearest Sisters,

We received the news that at 5:40 p.m. yesterday afternoon (local time), our Father of Light visited the St. Joseph Rehabilitation Center in Dorchester (Boston), United States, to lead to his dwelling of peace our sister:

**FANTINO LENA – SR. MARY ANTOINETTE**  
**born in the Bronx, (New York), United States, on 23 September 1923.**

Sr. M. Antoinette belonged to a beautiful Italo-American family of eleven children that lived in the Bronx next door to our first FSP community in the United States. Her first encounter with the Daughters of St. Paul took place when she was 9 years old and it left its mark on her whole life. She immediately made friends with Maestra Paula and the first sisters, who were living the difficulties of the foundation period in the midst of the Great Economic Depression pervading the country, but she had to wait until she reached adulthood before her parents gave her permission to join the community she deeply loved. She entered the Congregation in the Staten Island (NY) community on 23 September 1944, after completing her studies at a local business college.


In 1947, following a period of formation in Staten Island, she was sent to Rome to make her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 19 March 1948. Returning to the United States, she carried out capillary and collective diffusion in Youngstown, Ohio. In 1952, she was transferred to Alexandria (Louisiana) and in 1955 to Boston. Over the next 10 years, she managed the Boston, San Diego, Oakland and Cleveland book centers successively. In 1968, she was appointed superior of the Buffalo community and 5 years later she returned to book center work, this time in St. Louis, Philadelphia and Chicago.

From 1981 onward, Sr. M. Antoinette was a member of the Boston community, where she worked as a driver and errand runner for about 30 years, carrying out her services intelligently and resourcefully. She was also in charge of booking the travel itineraries of the sisters and of preparing and submitting any documentation needed by the Immigration Office. Behind the wheel of her car, she moved swiftly between government offices, airports and travel agencies. A well-known figure to the employees in these places, she is still remembered fondly at Logan Airport, Boston, where, armed with a smile and a persuasive manner, she often tried to negotiate the prices of plane tickets for the sisters as well as for members of the Society of St. Paul and other religious Institutes. In fact, she spent so much time at the airport that the authorities there set aside an office for her. Every year, on Ash Wednesday, she would go down there and arrange things so that Catholic employees who were unable to attend services in the parishes could nevertheless receive this Lenten sacramental.

Sr. M. Antoinette loved the Congregation very much and never lost an opportunity to express her deep affection for the Founder, M. Thecla, M. Paula and the sisters with whom she shared many years of the Pauline life. She was profoundly convinced of what Fr. Alberione had often said during her time of formation in Rome: "The Lord has prepared an abundance of graces for all of you.... Count on your vocation in a special way: you have a right to those graces so as to be good Paulines." With this conviction in her heart, Sr. M. Antoinette was an active vocationist for many years. In fact, a good number of our American sisters owe their vocations to her insistent invitations to "come and see."

In 2012, due to declining health, Sr. M. Antoinette was transferred to the infirmary wing of the Boston community. Her physical condition continued to deteriorate and about 2 months ago she was admitted to the Dorchester Rehabilitation Center due to a serious form of dementia. She was lovingly accompanied by the sisters of her community, including the young women in formation, to whom she was deeply attached.

Let us entrust this dear sister to the mercy of our heavenly Father, who rejoices with great tenderness in each of his creatures and who will raise from the dead all those who entrust themselves to him. Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General

Rome, 27 March 2017