

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

this afternoon, around 3:00 p.m., in the infirmary of the community of Alba, the good and merciful Father called to himself our sister

**FERRARI LEONILLA Sr MARIA FLAVIA**  
**born in Valgatara-Marano (Verona), Italy on 20 April 1929**

Sr. M. Flavia entered the Congregation in Alba on March 15, 1952, at twenty-three years old, mature age in those days. After a period of formation, she started in the apostolate of diffusion in the community of Alessandria. She underwent the novitiate in Rome, which concluded with her first profession on March 19, 1955. With her companions, she prepared for this decisive step through a course of spiritual exercises in which the Founder, with stirring words, instilled in the hearts of those young Paulines a great love for the mission. Let us remember those words pronounced in March 1955 that have the flavor of prophecy:

“Yours is an office similar to that of Mary: to give Jesus Christ to the world. It is a virginal office, and where there is much purity there is much effectiveness. It is an office of charity, and the more you have love in your heart, the more you will be industrious in the apostolate. It is a demanding office, and the more there is fervor in the soul, the more strength will there be. It is an office that has no boundaries, except the ends of the earth.”

Right after her profession, with this fire in her heart, Sr M. Flavia dedicated herself to the diffusion apostolate along the beaches of Rimini and in the town schools, bringing into the classrooms “Il Giornalino,” the magazine which students of all ages eagerly awaited. In 1960, after her perpetual profession in Rome on the feast of St. Joseph, she continued the diffusion apostolate in the diocese of Campobasso.

In 1964, Sr Flavia was asked to remain in the community of Grottaferrata to dedicate herself to culinary services. It was a great sacrifice for her, one which she embraced with faith and obedience. In 1968, she was assigned again in Trento and then to Bari and Palermo, always giving her best wherever she was, with generosity and availability in the apostolate, carrying out “propaganda,” working in the book center or in the St. Paul Film distribution agency.

Since 1981, she was stationed in Alba, first in the “Divine Providence” community and then, for twenty-five consecutive years, in the community of “St. Joseph.” On the occasion of the “Missionary Project” she expressed her readiness to set off for one of the new foundations, but the Lord asked her to carry out her service, with a missionary heart, in the large bindery of Alba, applying herself to the work of binding Bibles and missals that would also reach the African soil. She was always very generous in the apostolate and did not spare herself any fatigue. Oftentimes she had sore arms because of her work gathering books from the high stacks to be sent to the warehouse, but she wouldn’t give up.

Sr. M. Flavia was a fervent sister, devoted to duty, kind, polite and essential. Her lifestyle was truly poor: in her closet she only kept a few things, and nothing more than necessary. She was sensitive, loved community life and even in sobriety, she was eager to witness to love and to express the gratitude she carried in her heart. A few years ago she wrote, almost in the form of a testament: “I thank all the sisters for the good that they have done in my life, and I ask forgiveness if I have been the cause of suffering for some, even if unintentionally.”

For some years, because of a severe form of Parkinson’s disease, she lived in the infirmary of the community of the Motherhouse. In these recent weeks her physical condition worsened, preventing her from even swallowing. To the end, in its simplicity and daily heroism, her life was a testimony of love and generous donation.

With all our heart, we thank Sr M. Flavia for the good she sowed among us, in the certainty that now she will enjoy forever the light of life.

Affectionately,

*Rome, 27 January 2016*  
Sr Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General