

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

At about 11:00 a.m. today one of the members of our James Alberione community, Albano, Italy, suffered a heart attack and flew to the embrace of the heavenly Father:

**FESTARI GIUSEPPINA (Lucia) – SR. MARIA SPERANZA
born in Genepreto (Piacenza), Italy on 7 May 1919.**

In her long Pauline life, Sr. M. Speranza ardently lived the desire she expressed on the occasion of her perpetual profession, namely: “to be more intimately united to Jesus.” Fired by this yearning, she entered the Congregation in the community of Alba on 7 February 1937, blazing a trail for her sister, Sr. Angela, who would follow in her footsteps.

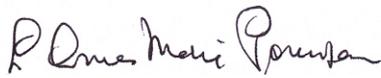
After several years of capillary diffusion of the Word of God in Alba and Novara, she was sent to Rome to make her novitiate, concluding it with her first profession in the presence of Blessed James Alberione on 19 March 1941. Afterward, she returned to carrying heavy bags of books along the streets of Italy, anxious that no family be denied the chance to receive the Good News of Jesus. In Bari, Lodi, Massa Carrara and Trent, she climbed countless staircases and rang thousands of doorbells. Memories of the difficult post-war years in Massa Carrara remained particularly vivid to her. The Pauline chronicles regarding our community in this city recount that “after the war, many Fascists lived hidden in basements and attics. Their wives would come to the book center to purchase reading material for them. The other book shops and news stands were still closed and thus our book center and propaganda apostolate were deeply appreciated. Throughout the city, the Dominican Fathers preached in church and on the streets against the ongoing fratricide between the local guerrilla fighters (known as “partisans”) and the ex-Fascists. Helped by the women of Catholic Action, we visited every family in the city, bringing them the Gospel. The first Gospels Days held right after the war were a real triumph.”

In 1951, Sr. M. Speranza was called to collaborate in the cinema apostolate by double-checking the films returned to our St. Paul Film Agencies. Blessed with “hands of gold” when it came to house-keeping, Sr. M. Speranza lent those “golden hands” to good purpose in the cinema sector by checking thousands and thousands of meters of film footage for any damage after their use. She carried out this important service for more than 20 years in the St. Paul Film Agencies of Livorno, Piacenza, Cremona and Turin.

Afterward, she carried out the service of cook and other housekeeping responsibilities for another 25 years in the communities of Rome, Turin, Alexandria, Reggio Emilia and Livorno. When the Congregation launched its Missionary Project, she wrote to the Superior General: “A person is a missionary not only when she leaves her homeland for a foreign country but above all when she profoundly lives her vocation, feeling that her particular duty is also a part of the command to evangelize all peoples. I know that I am poor in every way but I pray intensely for everyone and I ask Jesus to transform me in the person he wants me to be.”

From 2002 onward, Sr. M. Speranza lived in the James Alberione and Thecla Merlo communities of Albano, alternating between the two houses. Fired by the desire to do the will of God, she serenely accepted the problems and sufferings that go hand-in-hand with the aging process, entrusting herself to the care of her sisters. And this morning she had the joy of uniting herself to the offering of Jesus in the holy Mass by promptly accepting the Father’s invitation to surrender herself into his loving hands. In this spirit, she quietly “passed to the other shore,” filled with great hope, in keeping with her name.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 28 June 2011