

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

On this fifth Sunday of Lent, at 1:20pm (local time) in the Hospital of Hiratsuka (Japan), the Lord Jesus, our Master, called to the eternal beatific vision, our sister,

FUKUOKA TERU Sr. MARIA FIORENZA
born in Hokkaido Shinei Machi (Japan), March 20, 1932

Sr. M. Fiorenza was a sister who, through her goodness, humility and love contributed in a decisive way to the progress of the Japanese province. She was from an island in northern Japan and had the opportunity to meet some of our Pauline missionary sisters who had traveled to her region on propaganda. She had been baptized for only 3 years and welcomed with joy the invitation to follow these sisters who did not yet speak Japanese well. She entered in the house of Tokyo, on April 27, 1955. She made her novitiate in Tokyo and her first profession on June 30, 1959. Her request to be admitted to this very important step in her life reflected her personality: "Convinced of being called among the Daughters of St. Paul, with my heart full of gratitude, I desire to respond totally to this divine call. I am sure of my weaknesses and my miseries, but I have great trust in grace."

Trusting in the grace of her vocation, Sr. M. Fiorenza completed the journey of her formation and carried out the various services that were entrusted to her. After a brief time of insertion into the radio-editing department, in 1960 she arrived in Rome to study Italian and to pursue a two year philosophy program and a three year theology program-- all courses offered through the Congregation. With a heart full of gratitude for the experience that she was living, on June 30, 1964, she made her perpetual profession in the Sanctuary dedicated to the Queen of Apostles.

In 1966 she returned to Japan. She was soon named superior of the community of Nagasaki, and went on to serve as formation director, superior of the community of Tokyo and provincial councilor. From 1974 to 1981 she was provincial superior of Japan for two mandates. She was a good superior, gentle, humble and very respectful, capable of transmitting with her entire person a strong sense of belonging to the Congregation and a great love for the Pauline charism. She had some time for updating in Rome, in the community of Via dei Lucchesi, obtaining a specialization in spiritual theology. In 1983, she returned to Tokyo to offer herself through the duties that obedience entrusted to her: vocationist and then once again for four non-consecutive mandates, provincial councilor, overseeing the apostolic areas as well as that of formation. Then for almost eight years she served as formation director for the postulants.

In 1999, she generously became part of the initiative of the diffusion of the Word of God in the Basilicas of Rome on the occasion of the great Jubilee of the Redemption. With fidelity and punctuality, she placed herself at the service of the multitudes of pilgrims, especially the Japanese, who filled the Basilica of Santa Mary Major. Although it was tiring for her, she welcomed every sacrifice with the certainty that this Word of salvation that she herself had learned to savor with ardent faith, would also touch and convert many hearts.

Upon returning to Japan in 2000, she was again named superior of the community of Sendai but by this time her energies were literally consumed. Struck with Alzheimer's disease, she serenely accepted admittance to a hospital that provided the appropriate care and in this way was also close to Sr. Nazarene, another sister with whom she shared the same illness. Coming into contact with people of every faith, she endeared everyone to her and did not miss an opportunity to announce Jesus even through catechism lessons. The doctors and nurses were touched by the goodness that emanated from her: she was truly a "fiorella" (little flower), as her classmates had nick-named her so many years ago.

A few months ago, she was transferred to Hiratsuka. In these final weeks, her physical condition suddenly declined due to serious cardiac failure that hastened her encounter with the Lord. The Gospel of this fifth Sunday of Lent is certainly the most appropriate to describe her life and her personality: she is like a grain of wheat that falls to the earth and dies in order to produce much fruit, fruit of vocations, of apostolate, of renewed hope for the sisters of the Japanese province that she so greatly loved and for whom she offered her entire self, every day.

With affection.


Sr Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicaria generale

Rome, March 25, 2012