

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
CASA GENERALIZIA
Via S. Giovanni Eudes, 25
00163 Roma
Tel. 06.661 3039 - Fax 06.661 57 208



Dearest Sisters,

The Lord has visited us once again, this time in Australia where, at about 8:00 this evening (local time), he stopped at the Caritas Christi Hospice, a clinic for terminally ill patients in Melbourne, to call to himself our sister:

GAROL SR. EMMA
born in Mangagoy, Bislig (Surigao Sur), Philippines, on 24 September 1960.

Last Saturday, wrapped in the affection of her loved ones and the sisters of her community, Sr. Emma exclaimed: "This is the most beautiful moment of our life!" Thanking everyone, she underscored what a great grace it was to feel accompanied by so much love as she approached the supreme moment of death.

Thus ended Sr. Emma's earthly journey—an end certainly unforeseen back in 1998 when she arrived in Australia as a missionary, ready to make a gift of her youthful enthusiasm to the Pauline apostolate there. A few months later, in Sydney, she was diagnosed as suffering from breast cancer, which had already reached a stage that merited concern. The malady would accompany her entire time in this country.

Sr. Emma entered the Congregation in Pasay City (Manila) on 8 June 1983. After her initial formation and novitiate, she made her first profession in Pasay on 29 June 1987. As a young professed, she carried out the Pauline apostolate in the communities of Iloilo and Pasay. After finishing her studies during her juniorate she was asked to prepare radio programs in Bacolod. Due to her training in communications, she also made a valid contribution to the National Office for Social Communications, in which she worked for 2 years. In 1996, she went to France to participate in a communications course taught by Pierre Babin.

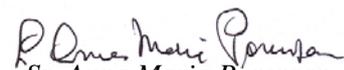
From 1998 up until her death, Sr. Emma expressed her deep love for the Pauline mission through her work in our Australian Delegation, above all in the communities of Sydney and Melbourne. The sisters who lived with her during this stage of her life remember her commitment in the book center and her love for reading, which she transfused to everyone who approached her, recommending to them titles that she had found meaningful in her own life. Sr. Emma had an innate ability to communicate with others, listening to them in such a way that they felt she was close to them and shared their experiences. She also carried out pastoral work for vocations with great zeal, visiting schools and parishes to share with young people the beauty of the religious life and the Pauline vocation.

When the tumor was discovered in 1998, she applied her strong will power to trying to overcome it. But although the cancer seemed to go into remission, it re-emerged even more forcefully in 2001, obliging her to undergo a new operation to remove the malignant cells. After 6 years of apparent recovery, the tumor once again made its presence felt in 2007. At this point the cancer had already spread to the liver and it seemed as if Sr. Emma would not live more than a year. But this time too chemotherapy proved effective and she was able to resume her apostolic activities. But in April 2012, as she prepared to celebrate her 25th anniversary of profession, the cancer reappeared once again, more aggressively than ever. Unable to join her novices for the festivities, she wrote: "I did not feel alone on the day of my jubilee because Jesus was with me. I told him: 'I want to renew my vows intimately, offering my whole life in the presence of the Blessed Trinity, Mary, Queen of Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, Primo Maestro and Prima Maestra.' I felt great peace and joy. I was happy to be alive and to be a Daughter of St. Paul...."

The last months of Sr. Emma's life were filled with physical suffering. She was hospitalized repeatedly as her situation progressively worsened. By now, her body was so weak that no further medical interventions were possible. Through it all, she continued to offer herself to God for the intentions closest to her heart, above all our upcoming General Chapter, the Congregation, the Australian Delegation, the Pauline Family and her community, whose members surrounded her with unflinching love, support and assistance. On one of the last days of her life, the sisters at her bedside heard her say: "Thank you, Jesus. My life is yours. Take me in your arms and lead me to the Father, to the beloved members of my family who have preceded me to heaven and who are with you. Jesus, I love you and I offer you my life."

May God, our provident Father, abundantly repay Sr. Emma's generous self-offering, as well as that of the sisters of her community and delegation, who supported her throughout her long ordeal with great tenderness and love.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Ponzan
Vicar General

Rome, 5 March 2013