

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

At a little after 8:00 this morning, the Father visited our James Alberione Community of Albano, Italy to lead to the heavenly Jerusalem our sister:

GERACI FRANCESCA – SR. PIA
born in Alimena (Palermo), Italy on 23 September 1917.

Sr. Pia was waiting for the arrival of her Spouse. In fact, just a few days ago she asked her caregivers to prepare the clothes she would need “to go to meet Jesus.” Her health had been steadily declining for some time due to blockage of blood vessels leading to the brain, but she felt surrounded by the love of the sisters. “You are all too good to me,” she said to one of her nurses. Sr. Pia’s body literally “wore out” as a result of her advanced age and the health problems connected to this, but the words of the prophet Isaiah in today’s Liturgy fill us with great hope: “Your heart shall rejoice and your bodies flourish like the grass.” Today she once again “flourished” as she did had back in 1931 when, at the age of 14, she entered our Institute in Rome, overflowing with love for the Lord, who had asked her to leave, for his sake, the family she loved dearly and to whom she always remained closely attached. Shortly after her entrance, she was sent to the Motherhouse in Alba, where she continued her formation and also worked in the technical apostolate. Even though very poor in material goods, the Alba community was pervaded by an atmosphere of serenity, simplicity and enthusiasm. As Prima Maestra wrote, everyone’s goal was to “live the poverty of Bethlehem.” Sr. Pia and her companions were not discouraged by the cold or by the many times they worked through the night to produce the Bible in different languages. Indeed, they were happy to offer their many sacrifices for the sake of the apostolate. In this community, in which the Gospel was given a place of honor in every room, sometimes with a small votive light before it, Sr. Pia came to love the Word of God profoundly.

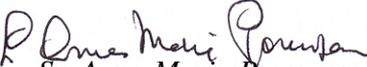
In 1935, she was sent to Ancona to diffuse the Word, which she was slowly learning by heart and which now filled her life. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding this stage of her formation with her first profession on 10 Feb. 1939. Immediately afterward, as World War II escalated, she returned to Ancona and over the next few years went on to carry out the Pauline mission in Modena, Piedimonte, Catanzaro and Taranto. She served everyone who entered the book center with great kindness, offering them not only good reading but also words of consolation. Herself at peace, she radiated peace to everyone she met.

In 1962, Sr. Pia was transferred to Argentina so that she could be close to her parents and siblings, who had emigrated there in search of work. In Buenos Aires and then, later, in Valparaiso, Chile, she worked above all in the technical apostolate and also performed various household services. In 1968, she returned to Italy and was assigned to the community of Lecce. In the following years, she lived and worked in Caltanissetta, Agrigento, Sassari and Messina. Deeply concerned about her frail and aging mother, she was very happy to be able to return to Argentina to assist her during the last period of her life.

Sr. Pia loved Italy very much and she prayed abundantly for its heads of state. In fact, in 1972 she sent a letter to the President of the Republic and his government, assuring them that she was offering her prayers and her very life for the country, which she hoped would be an example of good government to other nations.

During the last 10 years of her life, spent in the Thecla Merlo and James Alberione communities of Albano, Sr. Pia continually thanked the sisters for every small service done for her and repeatedly said that they were “too-good” to her. Today, we rejoice with our sister in the certainty that the Word of God has been fulfilled in her and that her name is now written forever in heaven.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 4 July 2010