



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

While preparations for our upcoming General Chapter move full speed ahead and the Generalate is taking on the colors of the Pauline world, the Lord visited St. John of God Hospital in Manila, Philippines, at 11:00 this morning to call to himself our sister:

**GERNANDISO CARMEN – SR. MARIA COLOMBA
born in Cebu City, Philippines on 16 November 1938.**

Sr. M. Colomba had been a patient for the past two weeks in the hospital's intensive care unit due to a lung infection that aggravated her already very precarious health.

She entered the Congregation in the Regina Apostolorum community of Pasay City on 3 April 1960. After a period of initial formation, she made her novitiate in Lipa. Her novitiate group would become "famous" in the annals of the Province because it numbered 33 novices. She concluded this stage of her formation with her first profession on 8 December 1963.

From her mother, who was Chinese, Sr. M. Colomba inherited her character and also learned to speak the Chinese language. Because of this ability, after her profession she was immediately sent to carry out the Pauline apostolate in Formosa (now known as Taiwan). She would have liked to be sent as a propagandist to Australia, and made this request to the Superior General, Sr. Ignazia Balla, but this particular dream was never realized. In 1966, Sr. M. Colomba began to carry out itinerant propaganda in various zones of the Philippines. She traveled the length and breadth of the country, visiting innumerable islands with her propaganda bag overflowing with titles, which she offered with great kindness to all those seeking a word of light, comfort and hope. For 15 years she carried out this demanding apostolate joyously and wholeheartedly in Vigan, Dagupan, Olongapo, Pasay and Bacolod. Wherever she went, she tried to find collaborators and benefactors to help support the Pauline mission.

From 1984-1989, Sr. M. Colomba was assigned to the sewing room of the Pasay community and also worked in the book center. Following this, she willingly returned to the diffusion apostolate in Iloilo and then was transferred to Pasay, where she worked in the film agency, promoted diffusion and carried out other services compatible with her fragile health.

In 1996, she briefly returned to the propaganda apostolate in Olongapo and Legaspi. But a new chapter of her life was beginning: one in which she would no longer have direct contact with the people so as to learn about their needs first hand, but in which she would serve her sisters in the silence of the community.

She spent the last 15 years of her life in Cebu, Lipa and finally Pasay City, where the Thecla Merlo community welcomed her warmly and provided her with the care her steadily deteriorating health required.

Sr. M. Colomba deeply loved her Pauline vocation and joyfully welcomed the chance to participate in an international course on the charism (the "Charism Tour Course") held in 2007. She felt that the end of her life was drawing near and that, after this updating session, she could say with Simeon: "Lord, let your servant go in peace for I have seen with my own eyes...."

Today Sr. M. Colomba saw for herself the eternal goods—the salvation—for which she had always yearned. We want to entrust our upcoming Chapter to this dear sister, who several days ago assured her provincial superior that she was offering her life for this important congregational and ecclesial event. And as we prepare to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption, we place her in the hands of the Blessed Virgin, asking our Mother and Queen to present her, purified of every stain, to the throne of the most high God.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 12 August 2013