



ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
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Dearest Sisters,

At 6:30 this morning one of the members of our Divine Providence community, Alba, Italy, was called to eternal life:

GRASSO GIOVANNINA – SR. EUGENIA
born in Priocca (Cuneo), Italy on 15 April 1917.

A little over two months from now, Sr. Eugenia would have celebrated her 100th birthday: almost a century spent in love, joy and continual thanks to God.

She entered the Congregation in the community of Alba on 5 August 1928 at the age of 11, following in the footsteps of her older sister, Sr. Costanza. In the Motherhouse, she learned the art of book-binding and also typographical skills, especially that of linotypist—an apostolate she carried out until she made her first profession on 17 December 1933 at the age of sixteen.

Sr. Eugenia's long life as a Pauline was filled with many different activities. In 1936, as a young professed sister, she experienced the joys and sufferings of the "propaganda" apostolate in Lyon, France. Following her perpetual profession in Alba in 1939, she worked with great enthusiasm in the book centers of Treviso, Verona and Vercelli. After a second year spent carrying out the propaganda apostolate in France, she once again returned to Italy, where she worked in the Tortona, Sesto San Giovanni (Milan), Mestre and Lodi book centers successively.

This was followed by a twenty-year period of service as superior in the Bolzano, Massa, Arezzo, Rimini and Torvaianica communities. Wherever she went, she diffused around her joy, serenity, optimism, and a spirit of praise and thanksgiving to God.

In 1985, Sr. Eugenia was assigned to the Arezzo book center but soon afterward she was sent to Torvaianica to carry out the hospitality apostolate and, during the summer months, to manage the Chianciano community, which opened its doors to sisters requiring rest and the mineral water treatments available at the town's noted health-spa. In 1995, after a brief period in Lodi, Sr. Eugenia was transferred to Alba but her long life as a Pauline was far from over. More than 20 years of humble household services, including that of receptionist, lay ahead of her. In the last years of her life she dedicated herself to spreading joy in the infirmary wing of the Motherhouse. She willingly spoke about her time in Alba during the early years of the Congregation, her face radiating love as she spoke about Prima Maestra: "We were happy to be able to say *yes* to her every request (transfers, extra hours of work...). She infused into us a great love for the apostolate. On our part, we were content to know that we were under her protection and that of the Founder. For us, it was enough that they were the ones guiding us and asking these services of us. We were happy...I personally was extremely happy. Looking back on my youth is like re-living it... When the chronicles that were later written about those years spoke about the many worries and problems that had to be faced, we were all amazed because we hadn't considered them to be burdens. M. Thecla and Fr. Alberione were walking alongside us at every moment."

Sr. Eugenia always spoke about Prima Maestra in a vibrant and heartwarming way: "How beautiful Prima Maestra was!" she would exclaim. "She was a simple but extraordinary woman with a penetrating gaze. When I see pictures of her, I look at her eyes and yearn to see them move again. I've asked her for this grace many times! I pray to both her and Primo Maestro all the time and I feel their protection every day. They were everything to us!"

A few years ago, Sr. Eugenia wrote what was almost a final testament. It reads: "I am very grateful to God for having called me to his service in the Pauline Family. I am grateful for the years I lived with Primo Maestro and Prima Maestra. My heartfelt thanks to all my sisters and brothers for the great good I received from them. If people remember anything positive that I did, may they give praise to the Lord because everything was his gift. Thank you for remembering me in your prayers. I will never forget you."

Don't forget us, Sr. Eugenia. Bring before God our whole Congregation and in a special way the young women of today, asking that they be drawn to the adventure of taking the Gospel to everyone and of announcing the One on whom you centered your life and will now enjoy for all eternity.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 27 January 2017