

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

At about 4:00 p.m. local time today, the Lord visited our Thecla community of Tokyo, Japan to call to eternal life our sister:

HAGIWARA KIKUE MARIA – SR. MARIA PAOLINA
born in Tochigi-ken (Urawa), Japan, on 25 October 1935.

As usual, Sr. M. Paolina worked in the collective propaganda department until about 3:00 p.m. today, preparing a supply of books for one of the city's hospitals. A short time later, after she had left the apostolate to pray and rest, the Lord suddenly called her to himself, thus fulfilling the request she had asked of him and recounted on our Japanese web site *Laudate*: "When I reflect on the fact that I have been a religious for more than 40 years, I am deeply moved at the way the grace of God has supported and guided me up to today. I do not feel worthy of this grace. I want to live the gift of my vocation joyously and faithfully and I want to proclaim the Gospel with the instruments of social communication up to the very end."

When she was a teenager, Sr. Maria Paolina was struck by the beauty of a Gothic church and felt the urge to enter it. That was the beginning of her journey toward the Christian life. She was baptized at the age of 17 and enthusiastically read the lives of saints. In doing so, she felt a growing desire to imitate them by dedicating her life completely to the Lord as a religious. She met the Daughters of St. Paul while they were carrying out a Bible Mission in her parish and from that time on her "yes" to God, who in his goodness was calling her to himself, became more and more fervent.

She entered the Congregation in Tokyo on 24 January 1959. She made her initial formation and novitiate in this community, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1963. Her formator described her as a good, fervent and faithful sister, sensitive to the needs of others and always ready to serve them; a sister who loved her Pauline vocation with all her heart and generously dedicated all her energies to making the Gospel and the person of Jesus known to as many people as possible.

Sr. Maria Paolina carried out the propaganda apostolate up to the last day of her life. As a young professed, she visited the families, schools and parishes in the Nagoya diocese. After her perpetual profession, she lived and worked in the communities of Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Sapporo and Hiroshima. The community of Nagoya enjoyed her joyous presence for many years and through her apostolate there she offered countless people words of consolation, hope and love. She loved helping to organize "Catholic Press Days" in both Catholic and secular schools because she greatly enjoyed being among the people, especially children.

In 1991, she was transferred to Tokyo to promote and reinforce the diffusion sector. At the moment of her death she was involved in an intensive apostolate of collective propaganda, paying regular visits to about 80 parishes, 40 elementary schools, 7 high schools and 2 universities in Tokyo and its outlying areas. Sr. Maria Paolina was a serene, simple and affectionate sister, who silently bore the sufferings and difficulties that came her way. She loved everyone and was deeply loved in return. She readily lent a hand with household chores; in the last few years she took upon herself the duty of sweeping the community courtyard early in the morning and opening the gate for the Pauline priest who came to celebrate Mass for the sisters. In 2009, she had the joy of going to Italy to participate in a course of deeper study of the Pauline charism. On that occasion, she wrote: "I am not worthy to receive such a big grace but I gratefully accept it from the hands of God. I will try to prepare myself to participate in it with an open heart, in the company of St. Paul, our dear Protector."

Today, the Lord knocked on the door of Sr. Maria Paolina's heart unexpectedly, calling her to share his compassion for the crowds famished for the bread of his Word. He called our sister to the banquet of spousal intimacy with himself—a feast from which death has been banished forever and where all tears have been dried as everyone rejoices in their eternal salvation. Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 5 December 2012