

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,

On this 32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, as the liturgical year draws to a close, the Divine Master once more knocked on the door of our Alba community to call to himself our sister:

ISNARDI GIOVANNA ANTONIA – SR. MARIA IMMACOLATA
born in San Giuseppe di Castagnito (CN), Italy on 5 February 1917.

Sr. M. Immacolata's birthplace—Castagnito—is very dear to all of us since it is also the hometown of Maestra Thecla, her cousin. In a letter dated 4 Dec. 1946, M. Thecla told her mother about Giovanna's upcoming entrance into the Institute, saying: "Did you know that in these days Antonietta is coming to join us? I am very happy about this. I hope she will be successful." And we can say that Sr. M. Immacolata was indeed "successful" in the Pauline life, leaving us the beautiful witness of her goodness, simplicity and holiness.

She entered the Congregation in the community of Rome on 28 Dec. 1946. Because of her mature age, her postulancy was a short one, followed by a year of novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 19 March 1949. At that time, the cinema apostolate was taking shape through the distribution of films by the St. Paul Film Agencies. After her profession, Sr. M. Immacolata remained in Rome to learn this new and complex apostolate, which called for great intuition and sensitivity because it involved grasping the message of each film carried by the Agency, discerning the categories of people for which it was best suited and establishing the movie's rental price, which varied according to the amount of people who turned out to see it and the number of times it was shown.

Sr. M. Immacolata carried out this apostolate without interruption from 1949-1984 in the St. Paul Film Agencies of Rome, Verona, Udine, Mestre and then once again Verona. She remained in this last community until the year 2000, when her declining health made it necessary to transfer her to Alba. During her 30 years in Verona, Sr. M. Immacolata left everyone with the unforgettable memory of not only her strong apostolic ideals and convictions, but also her great love for nature and art, and her warm bonds of friendship with many people who sought her company and advice. The many plants and flowers that she arranged throughout the house and on its terraces spoke of her love for life and for all things beautiful. The same is true of the greeting cards she made with great passion and care and afterward distributed to the sisters, her friends and many other people. She often reread with deep emotion the many letters her beloved cousin, M. Thecla, had written to her throughout the years, especially those dating from the time she was carrying out her very difficult vocational discernment. Those letters, filled with encouragement, prompted her to courageously take the final step. The last note she received was written just a few weeks before M. Thecla suffered the cerebral hemorrhage that changed her life forever. The note read: "Albano, 30.10.1963. Dearest Sr. Immacolata, I'm doing very well, you know! I am not in any pain. I just feel weak and a little light-headed. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Everything passes. Let us try to earn as many merits as possible and become saints. In a little over a month, you will be celebrating your feast day, so as of now I want to send you my best wishes. My warmest regards to you and all the sisters, especially your superior. Affectionately, M. Thecla."

Carrying in her heart the example of her dearest Maestra Thecla, Sr. M. Immacolata, lived the last decade of her life in the Alba infirmary, accepting the steady decline of her strength quietly, in a spirit of poverty, without asking for any special treatment. She continued to love flowers and to water them with great care, almost as if she saw in them the vigor and vitality that she no longer possessed. And this morning, the "sun of justice," whom she had long desired to behold, surrounded her with his healing light, warmed and purified her, and called her to her definitive meeting with him.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 14 November 2010

Vicar General