

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

At about 4:00 this morning, the Queen of Apostles visited the infirmary of our Divine Providence community, Rome, to lead to the Father's house our sister:

LAURIA PANTANO DOMENICA – SR. M. VIOLA
born in Santo Stefano Quisquina (Agrigento), Italy on 4 October 1918.

The FSPs who visited the Via Antonino Pio community of Rome over the years will certainly remember the kindness, humility and hospitality of Sr. Viola who for more than 40 years carried out the service of doorkeeper there, welcoming visiting FSPs and also the families and friends of the sisters of that large community. In eloquent silence and with great discretion, she saw to the needs of everyone with deep love and a big smile.

Sr. Viola entered the Congregation on 11 Nov. 1940 in Genzano, Italy, the community in which the Pastorelle Sisters were at that time taking their first steps as an Institute distinct from the Daughters of St. Paul. In 1949, Sr. Viola made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1950. During this year, an ecclesial Holy Year, our Founder opened broader horizons to the Daughters of St. Paul, encouraging their missionary expansion with the words: "Don't limit your footsteps to Italy.... Have the heart of Jesus...." That same year, Fr. Alberione's preaching took on an urgent note as he sought to inculcate in the FSPs the conviction that "the Congregation must be a 'factory' that produces saints."

We are sure that Sr. Viola welcomed these new spiritual and apostolic vistas into her heart in the profound conviction that she was participating in the Congregation's missionary expansion even through the simple service of doorkeeper, uniting herself to the many initiatives that charged the large Via Antonino Pio community and were then diffused throughout the world.

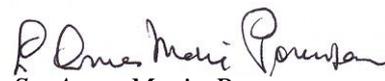
As a young professed, Sr. Viola spent several months in the community of Caltanissetta, after which she was transferred to Palermo. There, she spent several years carrying out the apostolate of dissemination of the Word of God to the families and collectivities.

In the mid-1960's, she was assigned to the Via Antonino Pio community of Rome, which at that time was made up of about 400 professed sisters and young women in formation. It was in this community that Sr. Viola spread the sweet fragrance of her virtues, which sprang from a life completely dedicated to God. For many years, the doorkeeper's office and guest parlors were her "pulpits," the places from which, with great simplicity, she evangelized all those who visited the community for various reasons. Everyone with whom she came in contact retained warm memories of her friendliness, kindness, solicitude and spirit of serviceability.

Sr. Viola truly taught others what it means to serve: instead of carrying bags heavy with books, she spent her days continually crossing the community courtyard with trays laden with cups, plates and snacks.... And she performed this service very quietly and discreetly, almost as if she wanted to disappear from sight so as to be noticed only by God. From the small "hospitality zone" in which she carried out her apostolate, she taught others how to live the Gospel and offer it to others selflessly.

In these last few years, Sr. Viola resided in the infirmary wing of the Divine Providence community, where she continued to live in silence and serenity, her heart fixed on Jesus in incessant prayer. She was very happy that she was still in the shadow of the Queen of Apostles Sanctuary, where she had spent many hours of adoration and the most beautiful moments of her life. And it will be in this same Sanctuary that our sister will receive the last, loving farewells of the FSPs, who thank her in the name of the entire Congregation for her life and service among us.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 17 February 2009