

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

We just received word that at 2:30 a.m. last night the Divine Master visited our Thecla Merlo community of Pasay City, Philippines, to “call to the other shore” our sister:

**MAGSARILI FELISA – SR. MARIA RAFFAELLA
born in Sampaloc (Manila), Philippines on 29 July 1931.**

Sr. M. Raffaella had been ill for about 4 years but it was only last December that she was diagnosed as suffering from Alzheimer’s disease, accompanied by senile dementia. In these last few weeks, her physical condition deteriorated even further due to her inability to eat and assimilate food. Last night, a heart attack ended our sister’s life while she slept, leading to her definitive meeting with the Lord.

An only child and very sensitive by nature, Sr. M. Raffaella entered the Congregation in Pasay City on 17 Oct. 1954. As a postulant, she worked in the technical apostolate, where she became very proficient at binding paperbacks and operating the cutting machine. She made her novitiate in Lipa, concluding this stage of her formation with her first profession on 30 June 1959. As a young professed, Sr. M. Raffaella carried out with great generosity the apostolate of capillary and collective diffusion to schools and parishes. She lived most of her religious life in the Pasay community, with the exception of a brief period in Davao and an absence from the Congregation for about a year and a half, during which she assisted her elderly and sick parents.

During her many years as a Pauline religious, Sr. M. Raffaella carried out various aspects of the apostolate: besides her “propaganda” activities, she worked for more than 15 years in the bindery and typography of the technical apostolate; produced radio programs for about 10 years; was in charge of the stockroom for 12 years, and then dedicated herself to seeking funds to support the Pauline mission.

Sr. M. Raffaella was a good, sincere and honest person, as simple as a child. She deeply loved her Pauline vocation and devoted herself wholeheartedly to the duties entrusted to her by obedience. In these last years above all, she fructified her mission with her many prayers and the offering of her sufferings for all the intentions she carried in her heart, the first of which was the conversion of sinners. Sr. M. Raffaella was very gifted when it came to music and dancing, and willingly placed her talents in these areas at the service of the sisters. She especially loved to use her beautiful voice to sing the praises of God.

In her spiritual notes, she wrote: “I am fully aware of my defects but I promise to work up to the end of my life to correct them. I feel supported by the grace of God and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles. God will certainly not deny me his grace. I want to strengthen my conviction that striving to become a saint is a sign of love for the Congregation.” Sr. M. Raffaella felt that God was calling her to witness to him by means of her life and she took this responsibility very seriously. Especially during the time she was at home caring for her parents, she made every effort to offer others good example, to witness to the faith and to be a sign of God’s love for everyone. She firmly believed that God is a provident Father and that he would never forsake her. In fact, in his infinite goodness, he called Sr. M. Raffaella to himself quietly and peacefully, in the middle of the night, inviting her to participate in the glory of his risen Son. In this way, he fulfilled her ardent desire, voiced by the whole Church in the responsorial psalm of today’s liturgy: “One thing I ask of the Lord, this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.”

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 6 May 2011