

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

At 12:10 p.m. today, the Memorial of Blessed Timothy Giaccardo, God our Father visited Tokai-daigaku Oiso Hospital in Kanagawa province, Japan, to lead to fullness of life our sister:

MAKIYAMA KIKUNO – SR. MARIA ROSARIA
born in Madara-Saga Ken (Fukuoka, Japan) on 20 March 1935.

Sr. Maria Rosaria belonged to a family with solid Catholic roots and because of this she had the privilege of being baptized just a few months after her birth. She met the Daughters of St. Paul when they made an apostolic visit to her family when she was fifteen. Looking back on that encounter, she said: “In the summer of 1950, two unknown sisters came to my house and my father, after speaking with them, called me and asked me if I wanted to enter their Congregation. I didn’t know how to answer that unexpected question and so I remained silent. I was in a dilemma: I could either enter the Congregation of my older sister or that of these nuns who had come specifically to my house. My father left me free to decide... On the small island where I lived, all the people prayed to the Lord to call vocations to the religious life from their families. I was offered the opportunity to join the Congregation on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.”

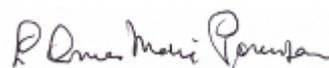
Instead, Sr. M. Rosaria, the mature fruit of the prayers of all the islanders, officially entered our Institute in the house of Fukuoka on 6 December 1950. The community had been opened just 5 months earlier—2 years after the first 4 FSP missionaries arrived in Japan. She therefore had the joy of living the foundation period of the community, serenely welcoming all the labors that inevitably went along with it.

In 1952, she was sent to Tokyo to continue her formation in the Institute’s first Japanese novitiate. Together with 8 other young women, she made her first profession in Tokyo on 30 June 1954. Sr. M. Rosaria quickly became an expert in the art of bookbinding, dedicating herself for more than 20 years to this craft and also to offset printing. Having come to understand the “mystical” language of the instruments used to multiply and give wings to the Word, she wrote: “We can’t do without machines now, if we want the Word to reach many people. Machines are important tools for evangelization and they are our companions... They transform us into apostles who are convinced that every printed character is a message uniting those who communicate the Word to the countless people who are seeking it.”

For more than 10 years, Sr. M. Rosaria lovingly devoted herself to various secretarial services in the FSP Catechetical Center in Tokyo. Then, after a brief period in Nagasaki, from 1989-2014 she enthusiastically carried out an apostolate oriented toward the visually impaired by organizing, in Kobe, lay volunteers to transcribe into braille articles from the FSP magazine *Akebono* and other Pauline editions. The content of these books was often taped to make it available to many disadvantaged people.

About 20 years ago, Sr. M. Rosaria was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis, which caused her to experience anemia repeatedly. In 2014, she was transferred to the community of Hiratsuka, but due to cerebral atrophy, she was admitted to a nursing home the following year. The words “thank you” continued to blossom on her lips even in these last times: a *thank you* that she transformed into incessant prayer. The rosary that always slid between her fingers was a visible sign of her dialogue with Jesus Master and her heavenly Mother, Mary. We are sure that the words of Psalm 138, which had touched her life in a special way, accompanied her in her last, painful self-offering to God: “I thank you, Lord, with all my heart. Before the angels, I sing praise to you. When I called out to you, you answered me. Lord, do not forsake the work of your hands.” Purified by long years of suffering and also by a serious form of liver cancer, Sr. M. Rosaria is now finally able to listen to the loving reply of her God and immerse herself forever in his fidelity.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 19 October 2019