

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

At a little after 1:00 a.m. last night, the Father of Light visited the infirmary of our community of Mumbai, India to call to intimacy with himself our sister:

MARTHI SR. URSULA ANTHONY
born in Bhuigaon, India on 9 November 1968

Two years ago, on 11 February 2009, Sr. Ursula underwent surgery for ovarian cancer. Yearning to live so as to continue to dedicate herself to the Pauline mission, she courageously and patiently underwent various cycles of chemotherapy, none of which improved her condition. For Sr. Ursula, illness was a very significant “formation experience”: suffering purified her and cloaked her life in a new and special light. In fact, her malady helped her to experience with greater intensity the love of God the Father, including through the love of her sisters, who assisted her with great tenderness.


Sr. Ursula’s life as a Pauline was brief. She entered the Congregation in Mumbai on 1 August 1990. She made her postulancy and also her novitiate in this community, concluding this stage of her formation journey with her first profession on 20 February 1995. As a young professed, Sr. Ursula experienced the joys and fatigue of carrying out the apostolate of capillary and collective diffusion in Bangalore and Goa. Afterward, she continued her studies and received a diploma in theology in 2000. In 2002, she was sent to Rome to participate in the Institute’s international course of preparation for perpetual profession: a time of grace and maturation in preparation for her definitive “yes” to God. In her letter requesting admission to perpetual profession, she wrote: “I believe that the grace of God that chose me continues to live in me. I am profoundly sure that the God who called me will always be with me.”

This conviction continued to grow in Sr. Ursula when, after making her final vows, she was fully inserted into the life and activities of the Congregation: first in Calcutta and then in Mumbai, where she was in charge of the audiovisual department for several years. During this period, the department produced a music cassette in the local language that was the fruit of her hard work.

Illness was almost certainly not in Sr. Ursula’s plans but she gradually learned to embrace the plan of the Father for her life. The sisters who accompanied her on her road to Calvary say that she offered everyone a truly wonderful example in accepting her progressive decline without a single protest or complaint. In this, she was sustained by the compassionate and profound gaze of Jesus of Nazareth, depicted on a holy card that someone gave her. And it was precisely the name and face of Jesus that gave Sr. Ursula the strength to accept her sufferings with faith and courage up to the very end, when she could no longer swallow and had to be nourished intravenously.

Our Mumbai community will no longer echo with the sound of Sr. Ursula’s beautiful voice, but she will continue to use that gift now to sing hymns of praise to the Lord in the heavenly Jerusalem. The words of today’s Liturgy, the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, are especially beautiful: “Call and the Lord will answer; cry for help, and he will say: ‘Here I am!’” Sr. Ursula begged the Lord unceasingly to reveal himself and in today’s Liturgy he gives both her and us the consoling answer that he has heard her prayer.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 6 February 2011