

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

At about 12:15 p.m. today, the Lord Jesus visited our James Alberione community, Albano, Italy to take gently by the hand and lead to his eternal pastures our sister:

**MASALA GERARDINA – SR. MARIA GERARDA**  
**born in Nule (Sassari), Italy on 27 November 1926.**

Sr. Gerarda was a member of a large and beautiful Sardinian family, from which she inherited a robust Christian faith and a deep love for the Church. As a young woman, her faith was transformed into active and responsible service in the local Catholic Action group. People in her hometown still remember her apostolic zeal and her solicitude for the formation of young women, several of whom followed in her footsteps and entered the Pauline religious life. Among these, we cannot fail to mention her cousin, Sr. Francesca, who was called to heaven in 1980 after a painful illness.

Sr. Gerarda entered the Congregation in the community of Rome on 21 November 1950 at the age of 24, bringing with her the wealth and cultural traditions of her homeland. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1954. She spent her period of temporary vows in the community of Gorizia. After her perpetual profession in 1959, she was transferred to Trieste, a city that she learned to love and in which, besides working in the book center, she had the chance to collaborate with the FSP apostolic initiative known as “The Cinema for Young People.” This educational and formative activity, held in the city’s large public hall, screened movies chosen specifically for young people and then offered the audience guidance in interpreting and evaluating these films.


From 1970-1973, Sr. Gerarda served as superior of our Ancona community. But the apostolic activity that characterized her Pauline life was the book center. In our communities of Trieste (where she was stationed for 15 non-consecutive years), Piacenza, Reggio Emilia, Lugano, Ferrara, Sassari and Cagliari, she gave the best of herself to this apostolate, in which she had the chance to express her wonderful ability to relate to others and express her faith by means of the messages she proposed to people. Sr. Gerarda was very persuasive and it was difficult to remain unaffected by her convictions. With a smile and great warmth, she was able to foster collaboration, involve others in the Pauline mission and inspire generous responses to the call to the religious life. She was very open and accepting toward others, and the members of the Holy Family Institute of Trieste still remember her sincere participation in both the happy and sad moments in the life of their Institute.

From 1999 up until 3 years ago, Sr. Gerarda was a member of the Cagliari community, to which she dedicated herself completely up to the very end, making the effort to remain autonomous even though she was experiencing the aches and pains of advancing age. It was a deep suffering for her to withdraw from book center work in order to carry out community services full time. In making this transition, she was sustained by her great spirit of faith and the certitude that her prayers and self-offering would benefit the many people she carried in her heart, in solidarity with their problems, joys, yearnings and hopes.

In 2017, Sr. Gerarda’s progressive physical decline made it advisable to transfer her to our James Alberione community, Albano. This detachment from her beloved “mission field” helped to prepare her for her definitive transfer to the house of the Father. Several years ago, she wrote: “I entrust myself with joy and fidelity to the Lord, who does all things well. I want to offer him everything he asks of me, moment by moment.”

During this month of February, in which the Lord has been calling our sisters home to heaven so frequently, our beloved Maestra Thecla’s offering of her life for us should give us great hope. Since her most ardent desire for us was our sanctification, we believe that she has been on hand to welcome all these sisters passing to eternity and has accompanied them into the light of God.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 24 February 2020