

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

At about 5:30 this morning, local time in Japan, the Divine Spouse visited Jyuzen Hospital in Hiratsuka, Japan to call to the eternal wedding banquet our sister:

**MATAGAWA MOTOKO – SR. M. ALBA**  
**born in Kochi Ken (Takamatsu), Japan on 18 February 1927.**

Sr. M. Alba entered the Congregation on 6 February 1952 in the community of Osaka. She had been baptized just a year earlier and thus received the sacrament of confirmation on 22 June 1952, during her aspirancy. She underwent her period of initial formation in Tokyo, concluding her novitiate with her first profession on 30 June 1955. From the time she entered our Institute, Sr. M. Alba stood out for her fidelity, diligence and perseverance in learning the content of the Faith and the requirements of the Pauline mission.

She carried out capillary and collective diffusion and also served as cook in the communities of Tokyo, Takamatsu, Sendai, Nagoya and Kagoshima. Because of her great efforts to learn from everyone and everything, in 1970 she was placed in charge of the FSP bindery in Tokyo. The sisters remember her commitment to constantly improving her professional skills in the apostolate and say that she carried out her responsibilities with wisdom and love. Sr. M. Alba had a deep yearning for knowledge. She was very interested in Japanese history and culture, including the Buddhist culture, and was a great source of information concerning Buddhist temples, especially those of Kamakura, which she had visited while on propaganda to the families in that area. In fact, she could explain the distinctive features and history of each temple better than most tour guides!

In 1972 Sr. M. Alba was asked to carry out a service particular to Japanese society: in collaboration with the local civil authorities, she was placed in charge of coordinating the response of the FSP communities of Tokyo in the event of fires, earthquakes or other natural disasters. She carried out this role for more than 20 years, undergoing periodic updating so as to fulfill her service responsibly and help our sisters respond correctly in case of an emergency.

Even before entering the Institute, Sr. M. Alba's health was fragile due to rheumatism. Little by little the pain spread to her hands, her neck, her feet and so on until it pervaded her entire body, requiring her to be hospitalized frequently. She spent the last years of her life wrapped in the mystery of silent suffering. On 28 Sept. 2004, she suddenly collapsed while walking down the hallway of our Hiratsuka community and went into a coma. She underwent surgery to prevent her from remaining in a comatose state for the rest of her life. Although the operation was successful, the left lobe of her brain was so impaired that she was never able to speak again. She was able to breathe on her own but she could only be nourished by a tube running into her stomach. Whenever someone spoke to her, she would flick her eyelids in reply because she could not move her eyes—a situation aggravated by her rheumatism.

Sr. M. Alba spent 5 long years bedridden, unable to communicate with anyone. The Lord of mercy purified her like gold in a furnace and kept her "lamp" burning brightly with the flame of absolute poverty, silence and self-renunciation. Today her divine Spouse invited her to leave her sickbed and come to meet him so that he could lovingly lead her to her place at his wedding banquet—a banquet characterized by intimacy and communion.

Today, the Word of the Cross that Sr. M. Alba proclaimed with her life was transformed into the power of God for the salvation and redemption of many. Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Vicar General

Rome, 27 August 2010