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Dearest Sisters,

At 12:40 p.m. today, the Divine Master visited Queen of Apostles Hospital, Albano, Italy to invite one of our sisters to “get up” from her infirmity and rejoice in eternal life:

**MAZZUCATO MARIA – SR. VIRGINIA ROMANA**  
**born in Pontelongo (Padua), Italy on 6 February 1930.**

Sr. Virginia entered the Congregation in Alba on 15 August 1948 (the Feast of the Assumption), blazing the trail for her younger sister Ida, who also embraced the Pauline vocation the following year.

During her postulancy, Sr. Virginia carried out the Pauline mission of “propaganda” in Verona and Voghera. From that time on, the diffusion apostolate remained one of her great joys. For Easter 1976, she wrote from Belluno to the Superior General: “We just finished celebrating a Bible Week in a small town, which gave me the chance to relive my visits to the families in the 1950’s. Today this apostolate is harder but how much joy I experience through direct contact with people...”

She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1951. Following this, she spent her Juniorate and then 5 years as a perpetual professed in Verona. It was in this community that she began her many years of book center work—an apostolate that would characterize her Pauline life. Siena, Bologna, Belluno, Milan, Naples/Duomo, Ancona, Reggio Emilia, Arezzo and Ariccia-Galloro were the communities in which she served the people of God day after day.

Fr. Alberione’s convictions about the book center had deeply penetrated Sr. Virginia’s heart and they motivated all her apostolic activities. Firmly convinced that our book centers are centers of light, she did her best to follow the Founder’s advice to make them centers of preaching by getting to know the people who came in and help them find the books and periodicals that would meet their needs (cf. FSP55, p. 75).

For several years she worked in the FSP Apostolic Center in Rome and for a short time she was also a missionary in Dusseldorf, Germany. From 1984-87, she served as superior of Italy’s Foggia community.

Profoundly convinced that everything an FSP does is apostolate, Sr. Virginia serenely accepted a transfer from direct service of the public to the Castro Pretorio community, Rome, where she carried out various household duties. In 2008, she was reassigned to the Divine Providence community (Via Antonino Pio, Rome), where she performed small services in the technical apostolate.


We might say that the “secret” of Sr. Virginia’s life can be found in an envelope containing the handkerchief she had received on the day of her profession. She carefully preserved this gift, which symbolized her desire to be a docile instrument in the hands of her superior and therefore in the hands of God. On her 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of profession, she wrote: “After 60 years, you and I are still together, Lord. Thank you for your fidelity to me and for all the love you continually pour out on me.” And in another envelope containing a few holy cards with handwritten messages from M. Thecla, she enclosed a slip of paper containing the comment: “These little messages are very dear to me. I find great joy in re-reading them. They help to unify my heart, keeping it fresh, like a flower that never withers.... In this way, I have always safeguarded my vocation and today I am still moving forward, with ever-increasing love. Thank you, Jesus and Mary.”

A few months ago, Sr. Virginia underwent hip surgery in St. Eugenio Hospital, Rome. But several complications led to kidney blockage and she was transferred to Queen of Apostles Hospital, Albano, where she received loving, round-the-clock assistance.

The words of M. Thecla, written on the holy cards she treasured, today take on a prophetic tone. “I am praying that you will always do the holy will of God in everything and become a saint,” M. Thecla wrote on one of them. “This is all we have to do here on earth because life passes quickly and after that we die...”

Sr. Virginia was ready to take this big step and it makes us happy to think that her sister, Sr. Ida (who pre-deceased her by 2 years), was standing by M. Thecla at the gate of heaven waiting to welcome her.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General

Rome, 12 January 2018