

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
CASA GENERALIZIA
Via S. Giovanni Eudes, 25
00163 Roma
Tel. 06.661 3039 - Fax 06.661 57 208



Dearest Sisters,

At a little after 3:00 p.m. today, the Lord once again visited the Generalate to call to himself one of our sisters who had been temporarily living in the San Raffaele wing of our Albano community:

NUME TERESA – SR. MARIA RITA
born in Taranto, Italy on 19 September 1929.

In the last period of her life, Sr. Rita continually expressed her thanks to everyone for all their services to her, along with the repeated request for forgiveness. Feeling that her meeting with the Lord was drawing near, she surrendered herself completely into his hands and ended her life quietly and peacefully.

Sr. Rita entered the Congregation in the community of Rome on 10 January 1954, blazing the trail for her younger sister, Sr. Maria Grazia, who followed in her footsteps a year later. It was immediately noted that the new candidate had a special gift for housekeeping and so she was quickly asked to lend a hand in the sewing room—a service that would give a particular color to her Pauline life. After a brief time of apostolic experience in Reggio Calabria, where she helped out in the book center, she returned to Rome to make her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 30 June 1957.

As a young professed, Sr. Rita worked in the book centers of Sassari and Agrigento. After making her perpetual profession in Rome in 1962, she continued the book center apostolate and also worked in the St. Paul Film Agencies of Reggio Calabria, Messina, Belluno, Udine and Matera.


From her mother, Sr. Rita had learned the arts of sewing, cooking and keeping a house in good order. Thus, in 1976, when Superior General Sr. Maria Cevolani asked her to take on the responsibility of the Generalate sewing room, she accepted the invitation with great naturalness and the desire to place at the service of all our sisters her love for beauty and elegance, as well as her professional skills, which with the passing of time she perfected to a very high degree. In fact, the large sewing room on the third floor of the Generalate little by little became the heart of the house. In carrying out her duties, Sr. Rita paid no heed to timetables; she was always ready to serve not only the members of the community but also the many sisters from abroad who took advantage of their sojourns at the Generalate to repair and refurbish their personal wardrobes. In the more than 40 years in which she carried out this apostolate, Sr. Rita basted countless garments and set thousands of “miles” of perfect stitching with the help of her faithful sewing machine, which she lovingly kept in perfect condition with a touch of jealous pride.

Sr. Rita was also an excellent cook and up until a just a few years ago she was always ready for her team’s Sunday turn in kitchen, during which she prepared meals typical of her Pugliese origins.

Although she carried out an intensive apostolate, Sr. Rita always reserved the first hours of the afternoon for prayer. We can still picture her in the chapel’s choir loft, immersed in recollection as she placed her dear ones in the hands of the Lord. Always very close to her sister, a missionary in Latin America for many years, she did everything possible to share and support her sibling’s apostolic projects across the miles. But one regret gnawed at her heart: the fact that over the years she had not devoted more time to study and to deeper reflection on the Pauline spirituality. Another big cross for Sr. Rita was her deafness, which often made it hard for her to communicate normally with other sisters. She suffered when she was not able to hear the conversations going on around her because she wanted to participate as fully as possible in the life of the community. The last period of Sr. Rita’s life was a masterpiece of grace, availability and detachment. For some time, she had been aware that the lung disease she had contracted many years earlier was worsening. She coped with the re-emergence of this malady by quietly putting her bedroom at the Generalate in order, detaching herself even from personal items that were very dear to her. She also took the step of asking to temporarily move to the San Raffaele (infirmary) wing of our Albano community so that she could receive the medical assistance she needed and prepare herself for her meeting with her Spouse.

We will miss Sr. Rita very much but we are sure that she is already in the arms of our heavenly Father because, in imitation of the example of the Apostle Paul, whom she loved very much, she too “fought the good fight, finished the race and preserved the faith.”

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 1 April 2019