

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
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Dearest Sisters,

At 2:55 this morning, the vigil of the Feast of Christ the King, another of our sisters from the Hiratsuka, Japan community was called to eternal life from Hiratsuka Shimin Byoin Hospital:

OGURA KIYOKO – SR. MARIA LETIZIA
born in Tokyo, Japan on 14 February 1933.

Sr. M. Letizia came from a non-Christian family that owned a book store. From the time she was a child it was her job to distribute magazines to subscribers—a beautiful preparation for the Pauline mission.

She entered the Congregation in the community of Tokyo on 14 August 1955 and was immediately set to work in the bindery. Later, she carried out the propaganda apostolate in the Osaka diocese. She made her novitiate in Tokyo, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1960. As a young professed, Sr. M. Letizia continued the mission of diffusion, after which she returned to the technical apostolate, this time to the typography. She became an expert at this work and was truly the “right arm” of Sr. Giustina Rossi in teaching it to the young FSP candidates.

In 1987, Sr. M. Letizia’s steadily declining health made it necessary to transfer her to Hiratsuka, where she carried out various community services up until just a year before her death.


From childhood on, the life of this dear sister was marked by suffering, particularly in the form of acute arthritis, which made it necessary for her to undergo several operations. She patiently bore these physical sufferings, which resulted in severe deformity of her hands, but her greatest suffering was interior—the sorrow of not being able to carry out the different forms of the Pauline apostolate normally and naturally. She was entrusted with the maintenance of the heating plant in the large FSP Tokyo complex and later carried out the same service in the community of Hiratsuka. As a form of physical therapy for her hands, she was also asked to computerize a vast amount of documents for the Province’s spirituality sector—a work she carried out with passion and patience, aided by a special keyboard for the disabled. The fruit of her work can now be viewed and utilized on the virtual spirituality library of our Japanese Province.

In 2008, Sr. M. Letizia was diagnosed as suffering from Alzheimer’s disease, which, when added to her other health problems, made it always harder for her to participate in community life. In October 2015, she was transferred to a health care facility near the Hiratsuka community. A few days ago (11 November, to be exact) her situation took a sharp turn for the worse due to a urinary tract infection that made it necessary for her to be hospitalized.

Sr. M. Letizia was a simple and sincere sister, who dedicated her entire being to the Pauline mission. In 1993, when the Congregation launched its Missionary Project, the Superior General asked her to offer her prayers and sufferings in view of a new foundation in Nigeria. She responded joyfully to this invitation, writing back: “Thank you for notifying me so quickly of ‘my’ new country. I do not know anything about Nigeria, but from this day on I will carry its people in my heart. I have already begun to pray for them and I hope my small sufferings will help them. This mission encourages me and gives me the strength I need to pray and work even more intensely. During the Mass and Visit, my thoughts now turn spontaneously to Nigeria and I am praying for the speedy opening of an FSP community there.”

Sr. M. Letizia loved to read and meditate on the Word of God. At one particular point in her life, she chose as a light for her path the Gospel passage: “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Mt. 6:25, 34). Our sister lived this self-surrender to God, our provident Father, up to the last day of her life and we are sure that in his mercy he has now taken her in his arms and filled her to overflowing with his joy.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 19 November 2016