

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

At 5:15 p.m. today, Monday of Holy Week, after almost 40 years of Pauline life in the Albano community, Italy, one of our sisters was called to anoint the feet of Jesus with the precious perfume of her life:

PARK SOON KI– SR. HELENA
born in Pusan, South Korea, on 14 November 1951.

We remember the gentleness and competence with which Sr. Helena animated the liturgies and prepared the songs of the Albano community. We can picture her directing its choir with kindness, firmness and grace, without a thought for her own health, which was often very precarious. We once again hear the psalmody of the Easter Vigil, in particular the resurrection hymn that Sr. Helena loved so much: “O night that never knows darkness, O night that brings salvation, O night that opens heaven to us.” In this time of suffering, it is consoling to think that Sr. Helena’s long night of suffering has been transformed into a nuptial night as splendid as the sun.

She entered the Congregation in the Seoul-Miari community, Korea on 8 September 1974 after finishing high school. She underwent her initial formation in this community, concluding the two-year novitiate with her first profession on 25 January 1979, Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. In 1981, while still a Junior professed sister, she was sent to Italy as a missionary in response to a request of the Superior General, so as to prepare herself to carry out the nursing apostolate in our Queen of Apostles Hospital, Albano.

After studying Italian at the Generalate for several months, Sr. Helena joined the large Albano community, whose members were dedicated to full-time service of the hospital. With generosity and a great desire to serve others, she went to nursing school and obtained a degree as a registered nurse, little by little learning the work of many different departments, including pediatrics, respiratory medicine and eye surgery, where she carried out a variety of duties with great responsibility. She continued to update her professional skills by attending various courses of ongoing formation for health workers. The sisters who lived and worked with Sr. Helena well remember her serenity and self-donation, her active participation in the life of the community, and her ability to reduce tension in difficult situations.

But all too soon, Sr. Helena’s nursing responsibilities started to become too tiring for her, due to the onset of a severe form of scleroderma, a chronic disease that stiffens skin tissue and, later, the tissues of the body’s internal organs, causing a progressive development of fibrosis. One of the many complications she experienced as a result of this disease was serious kidney failure for which she had to undergo dialysis for a few years until she was able to receive a kidney transplant six years ago.


The malady was relentless but Sr. Helena’s love of life made her determined to rise above her condition and so she was very faithful to periodic check-ups and to meeting the challenges of even her darkest moments with a smile. In the past few weeks, however, her physical situation steadily worsened and a few days ago it declined even more sharply, causing bronchopneumonia and, finally, respiratory failure.

As we say our last farewell to this dear sister, it comes spontaneously to remember the many funeral celebrations that she herself animated and it is touching to hear again the words of a song she loved very much and that today find fulfillment in her life and death: “I know you are here, in this instant; I know you are here, inside me. You dwell within me, even though I am nothing. You will tell me things I’ve never heard before. You will tell me about the Father, you will fill me with love, and I will discover who you are.”

Let us entrust Sr. Helena to the arms of God the Father, asking him to reveal his face to her and to speak to her in the depths of her heart.

With deep affection,

Rome, 6 April 2020


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan