

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

At about 9:00 p.m. today, the Divine Master visited the infirmary of our Divine Providence community, Alba, Italy to call to himself our sister:

PIVETTA GENOVEFFA – SR. ILDEFONSA
born in Fratta di Oderzo (Treviso), Italy on 8 September 1912.

Although Sr. Ildefonsa died just 3 months before reaching the much-desired goal of her 100th birthday, she already had the distinction of being the oldest member of the Congregation. How many things our sister experienced in her long life! The Institute had just received diocesan approval when she entered it in Alba on 15 Nov. 1930. Chronicles of the times record that her group was the first to make a canonical novitiate. Sr. Ildefonsa made her first profession in Alba on 20 August 1935 and afterward was assigned to Ancona. There she carried out capillary propaganda, worked in the book center and also collected news for the parish bulletin, “Voice of the Marche Region.” She recalled: “I carried out my work with great simplicity and a certain ingenuousness, putting my whole self into it. God was with me and he guided me.”

With the simple and strong faith characteristic of her, Sr. Ildefonsa carried out the service of superior in the communities of Gorizia, Ancona, Sassari and Catanzaro. Her name will always be linked to Gorizia, the community she opened in April 1941, while the first canons of World War II were being fired just across the border in Yugoslavia. In blessing our very small and poor book center, the Archbishop said to that courageous group of FSPs: “You are taking your first steps in a time of testing. You will do a lot of good.”

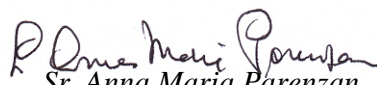
Sr. Ildefonsa liked to recall her many fruitful apostolic experiences, especially in the hospitals of the Venezia-Giulia region, where the sisters brought serenity and comfort, trust and optimism, to everyone. Many of the patients were young soldiers who were eager for reading material to while away the long hours spent in bed. In 1944, our Gorizia community lived through a very difficult time when the city was occupied by Tito’s troops. Like the Apostle Paul, our sisters had to overcome all sorts of dangers, including the invasion of these troops, who fired seven times into their dormitory in their search for spies.

In 1963, when Sr. Ildefonsa finished her last term as superior in Gorizia (where she had held the office for 14 non-consecutive years), she was sent to Chieti and from there to Ferrara and Reggio Emilia successively. Wherever she went, she radiated her joy at belonging to the Lord and dedicating her life to him. She wrote in 1992: “The Spirit of the Lord speaks vehemently to our hearts and urges us to live in a spirit of joy and self-offering because he is with us.... I am a poor old woman but I want to become a saint in spite of my miserable condition. The Pauline vocation is stupendous. We will never fully understand it....” She yearned to continue to carry out the direct apostolate but in 1969 she wrote: “I accept the will of God in docile obedience up to the very end....”

We can truly say that Sr. Ildefonsa offered everyone the example of faith, love and acceptance of God’s will through her superiors up to the end of her life. When she celebrated her 70th anniversary of profession in 2005, she wrote: “God looked upon me while I was still in my mother’s womb and called me to work for his kingdom of love. I have not corresponded to this call as fully as I could have but I am very happy to be a member of the Pauline Family.”

It is wonderful to think of Sr. Ildefonsa as already enjoying the company of the many FSPs who preceded her to heaven, including her beloved sister, Sr. Rosa, who died 9 years ago. We ask the Pivetta sisters to pray for the young women who in these days are offering themselves to the Lord through the Pauline vocation. Through the example of Sr. Ildefonsa and Sr. Rosa, may they receive the gifts of fidelity, joy and of a faith strong enough to move mountains.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 18 June 2012