

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

At 2:45 a.m. this morning, the Divine Master visited our James Alberione community, Albano, Italy to call to himself our sister:

PORRU SR. ELENA
born in Sarroch (Cagliari), Italy on 11 August 1922.

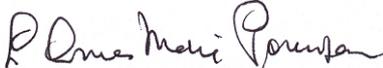
Sr. Elena entered the Congregation in the community of Cagliari on 13 August 1938, at the age of sixteen. Twelve years later, her youngest sister, Teresina, would follow in her footsteps and also become a Daughter of St. Paul. In presenting Elena to the Institute, her pastor described her as a young woman of exemplary character. She spent her period of initial formation carrying out the apostolate of diffusion of the Word of God to the families, then made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1943. During the course of spiritual exercises in preparation for profession, Fr. Alberione underscored the climate of the house of Nazareth, calling it a true “school” for every Daughter of St. Paul: a place of recollection, loving silence, and zealous commitment to work and prayer. Sr. Elena readily assimilated these attitudes and put them into practice throughout her life. Following her profession, she returned to the “propaganda” apostolate, traveling the streets of Campobasso, Cagliari and Terni with her bag overflowing with books. When the time came for her to make her perpetual profession, she humbly asked Maestra Thecla if it would be possible for her to spend that period in Rome and make her spiritual exercises there. She wrote: “I am always out on propaganda and to be in the world for long stretches of time can be very draining....”

In 1953, she was sent to Lecce to carry out the book center apostolate. Several years later (1959), she was transferred to Milan, where she collaborated with Sr. Clelia Bianco in the religious articles sector. During those years, the FSP community of Milan “moved house” several times: from Via Varazze to Via Astolfo to Via Feltre and finally to Via Mancini. Sr. Elena carried out her administration activities in the religious articles sector with great precision and soon became an expert bookkeeper. Because of this, in 1976 she was sent to Palermo to serve as bursar and afterward to Brescia to carry out the same apostolate. She spent the next 30 years of her life in Brescia, where she made an important contribution to the bookkeeping activities of the community and book center. She rejoiced to see the many priests, religious and laity who frequented this large apostolic center and even though advanced arthritis confined her to her office, in heart and spirit she remained alongside the sisters in direct contact with the people.

By 2009 Sr. Elena’s arthritis had worsened to the point that it was necessary for her to be transferred to the Thecla Merlo community, Albano and from there to the James Alberione community in the same town. She spent the last years of her life in great serenity and continual prayer, with a smile on her lips and a kind word for everyone, interacting with others lovingly, gratefully and benevolently. Little by little Sr. Elena’s strength diminished to the point where she fell into a coma several days ago. A climate of intense prayer surrounded her bedside, as the sisters watched her lips move in the invocation, “*Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, make us saints*”—a prayer she recited up to the moment of her death.

Sr. Elena led a simple life but its very simplicity made her a “preacher of truth” to everyone she met. A faithful student in the school of Jesus Master, she imitated his humility and kindness by proclaiming through the witness of her life the logic of the kingdom of heaven, that is, a perpetual readiness to “lose one’s life” so as to find it in God.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 8 August 2014