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Dearest Sisters,

At about 1:00 a.m. last night, Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, one of our sisters in Boston, U.S.A., passed to eternity serenely, surrounded by the affectionate presence and support of the members of her community, in particular those who had shared many years of Pauline life with her:

**PRESTOFILLIPO CONCETTA – SR. MARY NAZARENE**  
**born in Pittsford, New York, U.S.A., on 26 December 1919.**

When she flew to heaven this morning, Sr. M. Nazarene was able to present the Lord with a life rich in good deeds. A member of an Italian immigrant family, she was one of the first vocations in the United States. Attracted by the poor and simple life of our first Pauline missionaries, who had opened a community on Staten Island, she entered the Institute on 9 Sept. 1937. Chronicles of the time reveal that in 1938 the little foundation already had a good number of vocations: “On 9 January of that year,” the account reads, “the second stage of the presence of the FSPs in the United States began with the religious vestition of the first aspirants. Several benefactors covered the vestition expenses, as well as the trip to Italy for three of them, who were sent there to begin their canonical novitiate. These three sisters were Sr. M. Nazarene Prestofillipo, Sr. M. Celeste Carini and Sr. M. Stella Parnoff. They made their religious profession on 10 Feb. 1939—a day of mingled joy and mourning because it was also the day on which Pope Pius XI died. A short time later, the three sisters left for the Motherhouse of Alba and then made a brief visit to other places in Italy. They returned to the United States by ship, reaching New York on 17 March. Back home, they did not find the small, poor house they had left but a much larger house on Staten Island.”

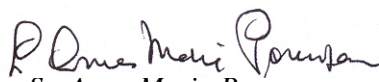
Sr. M. Nazarene’s trip to Italy and her experiences there remained forever impressed on her heart. In fact, when she celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of religious profession two years ago, she reminisced fondly about the welcome she and her companions had received, and above all she expressed her joy at having had the chance to get to know Fr. Alberione and M. Thecla. Once back in the United States, she was asked to teach high school classes to the young women in formation completing their academic studies in the Congregation. She carried out this service for many decades, first in Staten Island, then in Derby and Boston. She herself attended Fordham University, New York, from which she obtained a Master’s Degree that enabled her to competently teach subjects such as mathematics, languages and English literature. Sr. M. Nazarene loved to be in the midst of our young women and to share with them her thoughts and feelings about the Pauline vocation and above all about Primo Maestro and Prima Maestra. Besides teaching, she also wrote booklets that were then disseminated on “propaganda,” worked in the garden, and carried out various household duties. In the 1970’s, she was assigned to the circumscription’s audiovisual department.

From 1956-1994, Sr. M. Nazarene lived in the large Boston community, but she willingly worked for long and short periods of time in local communities that needed temporary help due to the absence of sisters for retreats, meetings, etc. Even when she was over 70, she joyfully carried out this “itinerant” apostolate. It was at about this time that she asked to learn to drive a car so as to be of greater help to the communities in times of need. At the age of 80+ she was assigned to the New Jersey book center where, seated on a raised chair because of her small stature, she assiduously served the center’s clients, offering everyone a word of encouragement and hope.

About 6 years ago, Sr. M. Nazarene was forced to withdraw from the active apostolate due to serious kidney problems that made it necessary for her to undergo dialysis. She accepted this situation serenely, placing herself in the hands of her nurses three times a week for this fatiguing medical procedure. But not even this burdensome health problem caused her to lose her good humor or her ability to joke about things, and she continually expressed her gratitude to her sisters and caregivers for all the good she received from them.

In these last few weeks, Sr. M. Nazarene’s situation steadily declined and last night the Lord Jesus, who from the cross draws everyone to himself, gathered into his merciful arms this dear sister so as to bless her with the gift of eternal life.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Vicar General

Rome, 14 September 2011