

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

At 4:00 this morning, one of our sisters in the San Raffaele wing of our Albano, Italy community was called to heaven as a result of respiratory failure due to an accumulation of fluid in the lungs:

RANDISI FILIPPA – SR. MARIA MERCEDES
born in Cattolica Eraclea (Agrigento), Italy on 9 August 1930.

The life of Sr. Mercedes was characterized by a deep yearning to carry out the will of God at all times, with great love and as perfectly as possible. She entered the Congregation in the community of Rome on 24 March 1952 and from the outset her formators recognized that she was a young woman with a deep interior life—an observant and selfless person who treated everyone with great charity. They wrote of her: “She is a very malleable person; a true Pauline.... If only there were more [candidates] like her....”

After a time of initial formation, which included a period of capillary diffusion of the Word of God in Reggio Calabria, she returned to Rome to make her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 19 March 1955. She received the grace of spending the whole afternoon of profession day with Maestra Thecla, who passed that time in the company of the newly professed sisters whose parents were not able to be present for the occasion. As a Junior, Sr. Mercedes carried out the propaganda apostolate in Reggio Calabria. Afterward, she continued her studies in Rome. After receiving a degree in teaching, she was assigned to Alba to serve as assistant formator. In 1967, she was transferred to Vercelli, where she worked part-time in the book center while continuing her studies at the University of Turin. She obtained a Master’s degree in Pedagogy from this Institute in 1975. Sr. Mercedes’ serious commitment to the Pauline life enabled her to pursue her studies while also serving as a councilor of the Milan Province for two consecutive terms (1973-1978). Afterward, she was appointed superior of the Via Varanini community, Milan. In 1980, she returned to Alba to carry out the service of superior of the large Motherhouse community.

In 1983, Sr. Mercedes accepted the invitation to go to Pakistan as a missionary. Although she was no longer in the first bloom of youth, she made every effort to learn both English and Urdu so as to be able to accompany and form the young women who little by little were entering our Institute in that country. In Lahore, she served as both postulant and novice mistress, and in 1986 she was appointed delegation councilor in charge of initial formation. She wrote to the Superior General: “I burn with passion for the missions and want to live this service with my entire being. May your kingdom come, Lord, and extend to the ends of the earth! Grant that I might live and proclaim your saving Word in a Pauline way. Here I am!”

However, in 1995 a different path—one filled with suffering—opened before Sr. Mercedes: she was obliged to take a leave of absence from the Congregation for 6 years in order to care for her gravely ill mother. She wrote to the Superior General: “As you know, I can’t abandon my mother.... I entrust myself completely to the will of God. I continue to burn with desire to carry out our mission, which I am living concretely at the moment through the daily routine of maternal assistance. Through loving self-offering, I am trying to reconcile God’s calls to *come, follow me, and go forth*, with his command to *honor your father and your mother.*” Among other serious health problems, Mrs. Randisi suffered from senile dementia, which made her very depressed and distrustful of people. Sr. Mercedes wrote: “Life is not easy. I surrender myself totally to the Lord, placing my life in his hands.... True love requires self-offering.... To be absent from the community and far from the Pauline mission is a deep suffering for me, but I’m sure the Lord sees it as a concretization of the ‘here I am’ I offered him.”

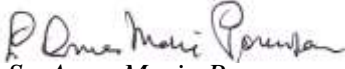
Mrs. Randisi died in February 2001 and Sr. Mercedes, unmindful of the fatiguing years of caregiving that had left her own health very fragile, was ready to begin a new stage of her life. In fact, in May of that same year she left as a missionary for Romania. In Bucharest, she once more poured all her efforts into learning a new language and culture. She served as superior of the community from 2003-2006 and during this time also launched the first group of Annunciationists in that country.

In February 2014, the final stage of her life began: a time lived in great silence and suffering as the result of a chain of serious health crises that befell her one after the other: first, she underwent colon surgery to remove a tumor; a few months later she suffered a heart attack. And as if this were not enough, she then suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. Welcomed lovingly into the Albano community, Sr. Mercedes spent the last years of her life unresponsive to external stimuli. Only the gleam in her eyes indicated to her caregivers that she might be aware of the other sisters and of what was going on around her. We are sure that in the midst of this “dark night” she continued to repeat in her heart the *here I am* that had marked her entire life.

This morning Sr. Mercedes flew to the arms of the Lord silently and peacefully, leaving behind her the example of a Pauline life lived to the maximum in a spirit of love, humility, commitment and the continual search to do whatever would yield the most good. Like the Apostle Paul, she served the Lord “with all humility and with tears and trials...never shrinking back from what could be useful to bearing witness to the Gospel.”

Let us entrust to Sr. Mercedes the sisters she deeply loved, especially those of Pakistan and Romania, as well as our Romanian Annunciationists, sure that she offered her sufferings in these last years particularly for them.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 10 May 2016