

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
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Dearest Sisters,

Shortly after midnight, the Father of Light visited the Queen of Apostles wing of our community of Alba, Italy to call to eternal joy a great Pauline missionary:

SCARPA ADALGISA – SR. ELISEA
born in Tissi (Sassari), Italy on 20 April 1928.

The motivations that inspired the life of this dear sister can be glimpsed in a letter dated 2 Sept. 1949, just a few days before she entered the Institute. In it, she said: “I promise as of now to place myself completely in the hands of my superiors regarding my spiritual formation and also whatever duty they choose to entrust to me. I believe that any duty in the house of God, even the most humble, would be an honor for a person as unworthy as myself to carry out.” These words encapsulate the personality of Sr. Elisea: her humility, faith and desire to dedicate herself completely to the Lord through whatever would be asked of her in obedience. As a girl, she had personally experienced how the Gospel can change a person’s life. From that time on, her sole desire was to take the Word of God to as many people as possible. Even though physically fragile, she burned with an apostolic zeal that led her to make herself “all to all” like the Apostle Paul.

Sr. Elisea made her first profession on 19 March 1953 in Rome. Afterward she was sent to Avellino to carry out the apostolate that would characterize her life: propaganda. She made her perpetual profession in 1958, and a few months later she was asked to go to the Congo to join the FSPs who had recently opened our first community in Kinshasa. For the next 40 years, Sr. Elisea proclaimed the Gospel in Africa. She was a truly tireless apostle who could say with Paul: “I have made countless trips and faced dangers, problems and fatigue in cities and deserts, on land and on sea.” How many loads of books she carried, strengthening her muscles to bear the burdens associated with building the Kingdom of God! Sr. Elisea was gifted with the ability to draw people to help her fulfill her mission, as well as the determination to overcome every obstacle that prevented her from reaching her goal. She took advantage of local barges to cross the mighty Congo River, and used every means, including military transport and her own two legs, to penetrate the country’s vast forests so that the Word of God would reach even the most distant villages. On these missionary trips, she was often accompanied by Sr. Bernarda Vicario, who preceded her to heaven by just a few weeks. With simple but robust faith, she counted on the Lord to see to it that hundreds of copies of his Word were diffused on each missionary trip. Sr. Elisea’s propaganda experiences gave her great joy but the debilitating heat, lack of water, immense distances and many travel problems she faced on a daily basis were also precious sacrifices she offered to the Lord for the evangelization and peace of “great Africa.”

Simplicity, poverty and a deep love of sacrifice were the special characteristics of this Pauline missionary, who sowed the Gospel and the witness of goodness wherever she went. The sisters who lived with her in the Congo witness to her love for the African people, saying that she was an enthusiastic person who dedicated herself to the apostolate without counting the cost to herself, happy to consider herself to be “God’s postmistress.”

In Kinshasa, Sr. Elisea was not only a propagandist but also worked in the book center and carried out many services in the community. She lived for several years in our Kisangani community, located in the heart of equatorial Africa. In later years, she suffered from repeated attacks of malaria, which she contracted during her time there. But this never slowed her down.... Upon her definitive return to Italy in 1998, she was assigned to the Via Antonino Pio community, where she willingly carried out many household services. But, unknown to the other sisters, she would also collect the books that were discarded in the bindery because of small flaws and take them with her on visits families in the area, leaving the people not only these titles but also her smile and a word of faith and hope.

In 2006, Sr. Elisea’s failing health made it necessary to transfer her to Alba. Even in sickness, she was a docile and good sister, who was always grateful for everything done for her, convinced that it was more than she deserved. And last night the Lord quietly called her to heaven. While we thank Jesus Master for the gift of this sister, who possessed a truly extraordinary passion for the Pauline apostolate, we entrust to her intercession all our missionaries, asking that, like Paul, they be urged on by the love of Christ to courageously take his Word of reconciliation and hope to everyone. Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 10 June 2010