

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
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Dearest Sisters,

With deep emotion, we want to inform you that at 9:00 this morning, God the Father visited our Queen of Apostles Hospital, Albano, Italy to manifest his eternal love for our sister:

SCHENA SARA – SR. MARIA SAVERIA
born in San Zeno di Montagna (Verona), Italy on 30 July 1937.

A short letter from Sr. Sara to the Superior General for Christmas 2006 offers us a very good synthesis of this dear sister's life:

"I am increasingly happy with the gift of the Pauline vocation," she wrote, "and I want to respond to it humbly and wholeheartedly, lovingly and gratefully dedicating to it all the strength the Lord sees fit to grant me. Even if my energy is not what it once was, my heart is striving to allow itself to be pervaded by the Master so as to participate in his mission in the way he wants. I welcome from him the gift of interior freedom and a readiness to say 'yes' to him in the many small circumstances of daily life, whatever these may be. All this gives me great serenity and trust in the Lord because I know he brings to completion whatever he places in our hearts."

Sr. Sara lived her Pauline vocation joyfully, enthusiastically, in a continual attitude of self-offering and above all in progressive intimacy with her Lord and Master. She entered the Congregation in the community of Alba on 7 November 1953. After a year of novitiate, she made her first profession in Rome on 30 June 1957. As a young professed she took courses in philosophy and theology organized by the Congregation. In 1963, she was sent to Korea as a missionary. At that time, the Pauline presence was just initiating in this country but already the seeds of its future development could be glimpsed. Sr. Sara threw herself into the study of the Korean language with her usual energy and she quickly mastered both speaking and writing this tongue. She was placed in charge of the formation of the local young women requesting entrance into the Institute. At one point she was simultaneously the mistress of novices, local superior of the Seoul community and delegation councilor. She launched various sectors of the apostolate, in particular the publishing department and the *Ut Unum Sint* correspondence course, infusing great apostolic thrust into the circumscription and helping to give the Pauline presence in Korea a solid foundation.

In 1983, after our 5th General Chapter, Sr. Sara was assigned to the Generalate, where she was asked to accompany the sisters participating in a 9-month course for the Institute's novice mistresses. She also completed her theological formation, earning a License in Spirituality from the Gregorian University with a thesis entitled: "The Goal of Pauline Formation in *Donec Formetur Christus in Vobis*." Her reflection on this Alberionian text was one of the first and most significant attempts to study it more profoundly.

In 2010, during a seminar for the Institute's formators, Sr. Sara gave this testimony: "From the very beginning of my Pauline life, I was taught to take to heart the journey of our young Paulines and in doing this I received the gift of getting to know and reflect more deeply on *Donec Formetur Christus in Vobis*, a text fundamental to Pauline formation. The statement of the Founder that drew me most powerfully and that gradually provided me with more and more light was: *Master, your life traces out the way for me*. These words gave me the light and incentive to perceive and travel the "Pauline way" offered to each one of us. They drew me simply, docilely and humbly into the school of the Master, following the path of conformity to him under the action of the Holy Spirit. I praise and thank the Blessed Trinity for this gift and pray that all our young women will follow the same path of handing their lives over to the Lord."

In 1986, Sr. Sara was reassigned to Korea but she was soon asked to return to Rome as a member of the team coordinating preparations for the Congregation's 6th General Chapter. However, Korea

always remained in her heart and in the following years she went back to the country many times, often to serve as a translator and to guide animations on the Pauline life.

Sr. Sara served a period of time as superior of the Generalate community and then, in 1990, was assigned to the International Secretariat for Formation. As a member of this sector, she accompanied various international courses for spirituality and formation, in particular the groups of juniors participating in the Course of Preparation for Perpetual Profession and the sisters participating in the year-long course on the charism of the Pauline Family.

Sr. Sara's life was characterized by her deep love for her Pauline vocation and for every sister and also her intense desire to live the will of God by conforming herself always more fully to her Lord. For Christmas 2007, she wrote to the Superior General:

"I want to take advantage of this time in which we are contemplating the mystery of love and the self-abasement of the Son of God to repeat what I've told you on other occasions, namely: that I want to live in an attitude of interior readiness to welcome whatever is asked of me by obedience."

In the last years of her life, Sr. Sara was called to live the mystery of "self-abasement" through the aggressive return of a form of cancer that had been in remission for years. The tumor spread throughout her body and penetrated her bones, causing the severe deterioration of her spinal column. About two-and-a-half years ago, she was transferred to the San Raffaele wing of Albano, where she serenely accepted and lived the consequences of her illness, which were manifested externally in the visible consummation of her body. In fact, her vertebrae were slowly disintegrating, crushing into one another and compressing her internal organs. But Sr. Sara was not daunted by her sufferings and continued to feel in the depths of her heart the profound need to share the wealth of the Pauline charism with others. Because of this, she took every opportunity to guide prayer liturgies and reflections on ecclesiastical or congregational themes for her community, which was made up of sick and elderly sisters.

We thank each sister of the Albano community for having accompanied Sr. Sara with great love on her journey of suffering, in the confidence that she is already rejoicing in the presence of God. And we entrust to Sr. Sara all the young women who have embarked on the Pauline life, above all those of the Korean Province, which she loved so deeply and for which she offered, day after day, her prayers, her sufferings and her very life.

The words of the prophet Jeremiah, proposed for our reflection in today's First Reading, offer us motives for profound hope: "I have dearly loved you from of old, and still I maintain my unfailing care for you, Virgin Israel. I shall build you up again, and you will be rebuilt." Today the Holy Spirit, the "finger of God," brought to completion his work of art in Sr. Sara, putting the final touches on her beauty so that she was ready to participate in the wedding banquet of the Lord.

Affectionately,



Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 8 August 2012