



ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ  
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CASA GENERALIZIA  
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Dearest Sisters,

At 3:30 p.m. today, the Lord visited Queen of Apostles Hospital, Albano, Italy to call to himself our sister:

**SCHREIL ELISABETH – SR. MARIA CHRISTINA**  
**born in Haslach Traunstein, Germany on 23 May 1933.**

Sr. Christina loved nature very much and during the last days of her life she confided: “I look out the window and see the branches of the trees moving in the wind.... They are dancing and I dance with them.” This comment is a good summary of the life of our dear sister, whose time among us can be compared to a beautiful dance, performed with great grace and love, combined with the moderate lifestyle and tenacity of spirit typical of the inhabitants of Bavaria, her birthplace, and also the birthplace of Pope Benedict XVI—a common background of which she was very proud.

Sr. Christina entered the Congregation in Rome on 13 January 1953. She made her novitiate here, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1956. Immediately afterward, she was given the chance to put her keen intelligence and sensitivity to things of the spirit, as well as her energetic and strong-willed character, to good use in the Pauline mission. From 1957-59, she continued her theological studies in the FSP “St. Thecla Scholasticate” in Rome and at the same time collaborated with the *Ut Unum Sint Center*. Sr. Christina threw herself into the ecumenical apostolate wholeheartedly, competently assisting Sr. Domenica San Martino in organizing various initiatives aimed at disseminating knowledge of the Scriptures and theological thought, and other projects aimed at the formation of the clergy and laity. She helped to prepare and disseminate study aids to accompany the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and also published a prayerbook dedicated to *the friends of unity*. But her primary task consisted in preparing and organizing correspondence courses on the Bible, on theology and in other specialized areas. In the 1960’s, these courses numbered up to 30,000 subscribers a year. Sr. Christina also organized numerous Bible Weeks, which were held throughout Italy, “live-in” courses, and the annual week-long encounter that constituted the “spinal column” of the biblical correspondence course, since it offered the professors and students a chance to meet and speak with one another. She also contributed articles to an ecumenical periodical that was published with the collaboration of expert theologians. She herself deepened her theological formation by taking courses at the Pontifical Lateran University, from which she received a Master’s Degree in Theology, and then went on to obtain a diploma in spirituality from the St. Theresa Pontifical Institute.

Sr. Christina’s many experiences in the field of ecumenism left a profound mark on her and in the last months of her life, in spite of the cancer that was progressively undermining her stamina, she dedicated herself with great zeal to revising a book she had written in 1969 on the ecumenical vocation of the Pauline Family. She very much wanted to re-ignite in the FSPs a passion for unity and she sensed that she did not have enough time left on earth to conclude what she had come to feel was her special mission.

But we should not forget that Sr. Christina also made other important contributions to our Congregation: she served as novice mistress in the Italian Province in 1973; as an expert on discernment; as a collaborator with the “Better World Movement” at Rocca di Papa; as a member of various apostolic, spiritual and formation commissions, as a provincial councilor for Rome (1976-79) and for the re-united Italian Province (1994-1997); and as one of the group heads in the Divine Providence community (V. Antonino Pio, Rome). We also remember Sr. Christina’s compe-

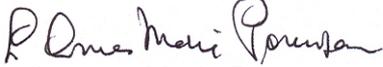
tent 9-year service in the spirituality department of our FSP Publishing Headquarters in Milan, and her contribution to the Intercongregational Commission for Study, where she was in charge of producing a study guide on “The Unitary Project of the Pauline Family.”

And we can never forget Sr. Christina’s invaluable service in the FSP International Secretariat for Spirituality, where she prepared ecumenical seminars on the person and writings of Prima Maestra Thecla. We will always remember the great love with which she studied Maestra Thecla’s personal notebooks and helped to organize the Hermeneutics Seminar that was held last November.

In 2011, Sr. Christina learned that she had breast cancer. The malady advanced rapidly, creating many problems for her, but she accepted with great dignity and without complaint the cross the Lord had placed on her shoulders, bearing it with nobility and grace. When she went to her trusted doctor for a periodic check-up two weeks ago, no one would have imagined that she would never return to the Generalate or ever again enter the bedroom from which she had watched the trees dance in the wind and where she had smiled at the sparrows who alighted on her window ledge.

Sr. Christina has left us a great legacy: she taught us, by means of her life, what it means to be a “teaching” Congregation, that is: a Congregation that studies, reflects and above all strongly believes in the grace of its vocation and thus is able to accomplish greater and greater things with the help of God.

Affectionately,

  
*Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan*  
*Vicar General*

Rome, 6 May 2013