

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ  
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO  
CASA GENERALIZIA  
Via S. Giovanni Eudes, 25  
00163 Roma  
Tel. 06.661 3039 - Fax 06.661 57 208



Dearest Sisters,

At 5:30 this morning, the Memorial of Pope and Doctor of the Church, St. Leo the Great, one of our sisters of the James Alberione community, Albano, Italy, serenely passed to eternity:

**SEFFINO SILVIA – SR. GAETANA (GAETANINA)  
born in Manzano (Udine), Italy on 6 October 1914.**

When Sr. Gaetanina was born 96 years ago, the Little Workers' Typographical School opened by Fr. Alberione in Alba was taking its first steps. She entered the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Paul in Alba on 25 Sept. 1930 at the age of 16 and was immediately struck by the prayer life and fervor of the sisters, their love for one another, their family spirit, and their joy at dedicating all their energies to countless people they would never meet personally. In those years, the Founder exhorted the young members of the Institute with convincing appeals, such as: "You must love one another very much! This is the first work of charity you must perform and it will make you holy. Your family must be a replica of the Holy Family, which was united in every circumstance: in Bethlehem, in Egypt, in the Temple.... Love one another as true sisters in the Lord, in good health and bad, nearby or far away, in life and in eternity. Your love should be indestructible!"

After spending some time as a propagandist in the diocese of Novara, Sr. Gaetanina returned to the Motherhouse for her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 25 Jan. 1934. Afterward, she was sent to Taranto and then to Udine to diffuse the Word of God to the families. In 1941 she was transferred to Nuoro to continue the propaganda apostolate and also work in the book center. In fact, the book center was to be the pulpit from which she would proclaim the Word of God for most of her long life. In 1947 she was assigned to the community of Massa, which—except for short interludes in Gorizia, Monfalcone and Albano—became the place of her daily self-offering to the Lord, the place in which she channeled all her energy into helping the Word of God "race ahead" so as to touch the hearts of innumerable people and change their lives. From Massa, Sr. Gaetanina's apostolic heart also reached out to many outlying regions through Gospel Days and book exhibits held in Viareggio, Pietrasanta, Forte dei Marmi, Garfagnana and the towns of the Pistoia diocese. And how much diffusion she carried out in the hospitals of Massa, Carrara and Pisa, doing her best to bring a word of comfort and hope to countless sick people.... Chronicles of the times recount stories of genuine conversions resulting from this apostolate, as for example the case of a 72-year-old man who, after decades of indifference, at last listened to the sisters' pleas that he go to confession. He finally did so in their chapel and was able to receive communion after a 50-year absence from the sacrament.

Sr. Gaetanina celebrated her various "jubilees" in the religious life with great joy, expressing with deep emotion her profound gratitude for the gift of the Pauline vocation.

In 2003, she was transferred from her beloved Massa to the Thecla Merlo community of Albano and from there to the James Alberione community a short distance away. She was bedridden for the last few years of her life but had the great joy of receiving Jesus in communion every day. Whenever she was asked if she wanted to receive the Eucharist, she would shout "yes" loudly and with great conviction. These daily visits of the Lord were her support and comfort. And today, after a long life lived in simplicity and profound love, the moment finally arrived for her definitive meeting with Jesus Master: no longer sacramentally but face to face. Let us entrust to Sr. Gaetanina, who spent more than 80 years as a Daughter of St. Paul, the preparations for the Centenary of foundation of the Pauline Family, asking her to pray that it be for all of us a golden opportunity to rekindle the gift we received from the Lord through his great goodness.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Vicar General

Rome, 10 November 2011