

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

Just after midnight last night, our good Father visited the James Alberione community of Albano, Italy to call to his eternal joy our sister:

**SPERTI MICHELINA – SR. FERDINANDA**  
**born in Talsano (Taranto), Italy on 13 March 1923.**

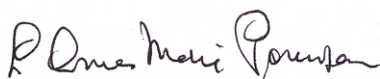
In a testimony she wrote several years ago, Sr. Ferdinanda recounted her vocational experience as follows: “I got to know Prima Maestra while I was a teenager. She came to Taranto to visit the sisters there and they invited me to meet her. My first impression of M. Thecla was very positive. I watched her cross the swinging bridge, her veil floating in the wind, and she looked at me with such shining eyes that my heart was immediately conquered. I went home and told my family that I wanted to become a nun. A few months later, I received a letter from Prima Maestra and I prepared myself—along with several other young women—to leave for Rome. I always called myself ‘Prima Maestra’s vocation’ because on that visit to Taranto she accepted me into the Institute.”

Sr. Ferdinanda entered the Congregation in Rome on 8 Nov. 1942. She underwent her initial formation in the large Via Antonino Pio community and concluded it with her first profession on 19 March 1945. During her novitiate, she had the chance to get to know Maestra Thecla better. She often recalled her humility: “One day, during a community meeting,” Sr. Ferdinanda recounted, “Prima Maestra blamed herself for something that had happened. She said she was unworthy to hold the office she did and we all cried along with her. She even said she was unworthy to remain in the Congregation...and we cried even harder...” Referring once again to those years, Sr. Ferdinanda commented: “During the war, we had many opportunities to witness Prima Maestra’s great charity not only toward the Daughters of St. Paul but also toward the seminarians of the Society of St. Paul. Whenever they ran short of anything, she immediately provided for their needs. She acted the same way toward the Benedictine nuns of Cassino, taking them under her wing for the duration of the war and performing countless acts of charity for them.”

Treasuring in her heart these novitiate experiences, Sr. Ferdinanda spent her first years as a professed sister carrying out capillary diffusion in Bari, Grosseto and Benevento. Afterward, she began a long period of apostolic activity in our book centers (Lecce, Cosenza, Salerno, Potenza and Naples), alternating this with the service of superior in the communities of Ascoli Piceno, Aquila and Matera. Wherever she went, she disseminated her joy in the Pauline vocation through her bright eyes and cheerful demeanor. Her brief time alongside Maestra Thecla had given wings to her life. She recalled: “[M. Thecla] helped me a lot in developing faith in the Lord. Each time I would tell her about one of my worries, she would urge me to trust the Lord. And she lived her own advice. I am very grateful for everything Prima Maestra taught me and I am sure that now, from heaven, she will continue to help me make progress in carrying out the will of God.”

Sr. Ferdinanda spent her senior years in the Naples/Capodimonte community, where she helped to make hosts and rosaries—a work she performed in intimate union with the souls in purgatory, to whom she prayed with great devotion. In 2010, she was transferred to the James Alberione community of Albano, where she spread serenity and peace around her, including in situations of suffering, praying abundantly, even during the night. *Simplicity, fidelity and prayer:* these words sum up Sr. Ferdinanda’s long Pauline life: a humble, serene and industrious life lived in profound intimacy with Jesus Master, who today placed her on a lampstand to illuminate the Congregation, the Pauline Family and the Church.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General

Rome 30 January 2014