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Dearest Sisters,

At 7:15 this morning, the Good Shepherd whom we contemplate in all his beauty in today's Liturgy once again visited our James Alberione community of Albano, Italy, to tenderly lead to his green pastures our sister:

TERRIACA TOMMASINA – SR. FRANCESCHINA
born in Frosolone (Isernia), Italy on 7 July 1912.

In just two months, Sr. Franceschina would have reached the age of 100: a simple, humble and beautiful life offered wholly to the Lord, whom she chose to follow at the age of 19 through unconditional service of her sisters.

She entered the Congregation in the community of Rome on 7 June 1931. After a time of formation and apostolic experience in various communities, she was called to Alba in 1935 to make her novitiate. This stage of her formation journey concluded with her first profession on 20 August 1936. As a young professed and then for 40 years without a break, Sr. Franceschina worked in the laundry of our large Alba community. Afterward she carried out the same service in Rome for more than 25 years, until advancing age and declining health made it necessary to transfer her in 2003 first to the Thecla Merlo and then to the James Alberione communities of Albano.

A very simple life, offered to God day after day with heroic trust by means of a service that required notable fatigue, especially in the years during which washing machines were not used and all the laundry was done by hand. In the 1970's, Sr. Franceschina was asked if there was another type of work she preferred to do and she replied with childlike simplicity: "I've always worked in the laundry...."

A life of poverty: Sr. Franceschina did not want anything for herself. She carefully mended her clothes and asked for only what was necessary. Her love of poverty even led her to the point of worrying about how much the Congregation would have to spend for her funeral....

A joyous life: Sr. Franceschina's clear and serene gaze radiated the light of God that pervaded her entire being.

A humble life: In 2000, she asked that no news be circulated about her when she died. But we don't think it would displease her if we spoke about the wonders of grace that the Lord accomplishes in the persons who entrust themselves wholly to him, in littleness and simplicity of heart.

A life overflowing with love: Sr. Franceschina had a maternal heart that placed her sisters before herself. At table, she was always the last to approach the serving counter, saying: "At mealtime, do mothers serve themselves before their children?"

Today, we all want to offer Sr. Franceschina the thanks that perhaps we never expressed to her during her lifetime: a thanks for her long years of tireless and attentive service; a thanks for her joy living the Pauline vocation to the full through small and hidden services; a thanks for her constant prayer for vocations—a concrete and operative prayer united to the offering of herself to God as a small victim, in harmony with the Pauline Offertory, which she lived on a daily basis.

Sr. Franceschina was truly a gift of God to us. And today, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, let us ask her to intercede for us to the Lord, asking that many young women will open their lives to his love and return it to him with their entire being, as she did.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 29 April 2012