

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

At noon, or better, at the hour of the Angelus today—one of the members of our James Alberione community, Albano, Italy—was called to the eternal banquet:

**TERRIACA NUNZIA – SR. MARIA VITTORIA**  
**born in Frosolone (Isernia), Italy on 22 September 1915.**

Everything happened very quickly: Sr. M. Vittoria was eating her midday meal in the refectory along with the other members of her community when a long and profound sigh signaled her passage to eternity. We can well say that our sister—who had passed the hundred-year mark—“died on her feet” even though the last period of her life was characterized by progressive decline. Her body was being consumed but her gaze and her entire being radiated a surprising vitality. Her life was rich in days and good works, above all great zeal in the apostolate and love for her sisters.

Sr. M. Vittoria entered the Congregation in Rome on 8 March 1935, following in the footsteps of her sister, Sr. Franceschina, who had entered the Institute several years earlier. In 1936, after a year of formation, she was sent to Pescara to disseminate the Gospel to the families there. And it was precisely because of the fire in her heart that she experienced an “unexpected bath” with potentially grave consequences. The setting was the village of Villa Petto in the Teramo province. Scrupulously adhering to the Founder’s recommendation to never skip a single house or hamlet when visiting the families, Sr. Vittoria (who was still a postulant at the time) and her companion decided to cross a rushing stream, taking advantage of a narrow “bridge” made of unstable planks. Reaching the middle of the stream, where the torrent was at its fiercest, Sr. Vittoria lost her balance and disappeared beneath the waves. Luckily two men on the riverbank saw what had happened and plunged into the stream to drag her to safety. After drying their drenched habits, the two young Paulines continued their visits to the families.

Sr. M. Vittoria made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 3 March 1940. She remained in that community for the next 20 years, where she worked with great dedication in the vegetable garden, refectory and kitchen. She was then asked to serve as cook in the Albano community—a service she later continued in Grottaferrata, the Generalate (when it was located in Via Laurentina), and Galloro (Ariccia). Wherever she went, Sr. M. Vittoria was a kind, quiet and sociable presence in the community, very attentive to the needs of the sisters and ever-ready to serve them (a quality innate to her).

In 1999, she was transferred briefly to the Thecla Merlo community, Albano and then to the James Alberione community in the same town, where she spent the rest of her life, irradiating peace, serenity and kindness to all. She fully accepted her advancing years, keeping busy with many small activities like rosary-making and crocheting. Even though she suffered from Parkinson’s disease and other age-related infirmities, she sought to remain autonomous as much as possible up to the end of her life.

Sr. M. Vittoria truly carried out an uninterrupted dialogue with the Lord and recited the rosary ceaselessly—a practice that had become as habitual to her as breathing. She enjoyed following the Pope’s talks and other religious programs broadcast over the media because they gave her prayer a universal dimension. A close friend who stopped by to see her just a few days ago said: “A visit with Sr. M. Vittoria always fills me with peace.”

Today, the commemoration of the Blessed Mother’s final visit to the children of Fatima, let us place our dear sister in the arms of Mary, asking her to lead her into the kingdom of God, where she can now contemplate the Face she had yearned for all her life.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General

Rome, 13 October 2016