

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

We received the news that at about 11:30 this morning our heavenly Father visited the infirmary of our Alba, Italy community to call to himself a great Pauline apostle:

**TONET MARIA – SR. MARIA OTTAVIA**  
**born in Oderzo (Treviso), Italy on 31 March 1936.**

In the summer of 2010, fragile health made it necessary to transfer Sr. Ottavia from the community of Lublin, Poland to Alba, Italy. This huge sacrifice was the latest in a long line of sacrifices that Sr. Ottavia had embraced with peace and serenity throughout her life. In fact, she had left Italy right after her perpetual profession in 1966 and had spent more than 45 years in the missions. She accepted this return to her homeland with her habitual humility and docility, offering the Lord the sacrifice of not being able to help our sisters of Poland open their new community in Warsaw.

Sr. Ottavia entered the Congregation in the community of Alba on 2 Sept. 1957. After a period of formation in the Motherhouse of Alba, she was sent as a postulant to carry out the propaganda apostolate in the diocese of Lodi. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1961. Afterward, she resumed the diffusion apostolate even more intensively in the Rovigo diocese. She returned to Rome to prepare for her perpetual profession, which she made in the Queen of Apostles Sanctuary on 30 June 1966. On that occasion, her formation mistress wrote to her: “As if this great grace were not enough, the Lord is now offering you another one—that of being a missionary! I join you in thanking the Lord for this and urge you to do everything possible to make your *yes* last a lifetime....”

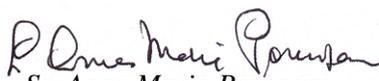
Sr. Ottavia left for Peru immediately after her perpetual profession and spent the next twenty years alternating between the communities of Lima, Peru and La Paz and Cochabamba, Bolivia. In these countries, she carried out the book center apostolate, the service of delegation superior for three non-consecutive terms of office, and the service of local superior in Lima and Cochabamba.

In 1985 she returned to Italy, where she was inserted in the Generalate community for a period of updating as a prelude to a new stage in her life. In fact, she had been asked to accompany Sr. Ester Fissore in her trips to Poland to carry out the vocation apostolate. At that time, Poland was still under the communist regime and the Church there was known as the *Church of the East*. These were difficult years for Sr. Ottavia because a visa to Poland was granted only for the purpose of study and it was not easy for her to learn a language so different from Italian and Spanish. It was also very hard to find ways to obtain recognition for our Institute in an Iron Curtain country. But her contacts with the Local Church, the Pauline Family in Poland and young women carrying out a vocation discernment were all very positive and encouraging.

Our first sisters in Poland were able to eventually move from their small, poor residence to a larger house and to lead a more regular community life. With this step, they were also able to initiate the pre-postulancy and postulancy programs and to launch the Pauline apostolate through the translation of the audiovisual program, *Mary, Mother of the Lord*. Sr. Ottavia participated in all the joys and sufferings of our Polish foundation, supporting the sisters with her help, discretion and above all her deep love for them and for the people of this country. In 2001, she was appointed superior of the Lublin community, an office she carried out with great responsibility up until February 2008. In June 2009, she joyfully participated in the perpetual profession ceremony of one of the Polish junior professed sisters, her happiness intensified by the knowledge that the Pauline charism was in good hands and was bearing abundant fruit on Polish soil.

But the Lord once again intervened, asking Sr. Ottavia to offer her life like a good seed that falls to the ground and dies in order to produce a mighty tree. Thus, while the rest of her community was preparing to move from Lublin to their new house in Warsaw, Sr. Ottavia said *yes* to the Lord’s request that she accept the more arduous move back to Italy, where she was welcomed into the Alba community. In these last few weeks Sr. Ottavia’s health deteriorated to the point that she suffered a stroke and collateral complications. And today the Lord, in his infinite goodness, welcomed her to heaven, where she is now singing his praises eternally.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Vicar General

Rome, 17 December 2011