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Dearest Sisters,

The Lord has once again visited our Indian Province, this time on the Feast of St. Mark, to call to his house a sister who ardently desired to see him:

VAZ FRANCESCA IVY KATHLEEN – SR. MARIA GRAZIA
born in Kallianpur (Mangalore), India on 3 December 1934.

Sr. Maria Grazia died very peacefully in the Mumbai community at 10:25 a.m. today, local time, after several months of intense suffering due to a 4th stage tumor of the urinary tract.

She came from a family of teachers and thus received an excellent education from her parents. After completing her higher studies, she entered the Congregation on 22 June 1958 in the community of Mumbai. There she underwent her initial formation and made her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 8 Dec. 1962. She was immediately assigned to carry out the apostolate of capillary and collective diffusion by means of visits to the families and the celebration of Gospel Days and Bible Weeks. Her life was characterized by a deep love for the Word of God, assimilated and proclaimed.

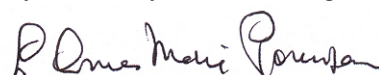
As a young professed, Sr. Maria Grazia was sent to Goa, the cradle of Christianity in India. When Superior General M. Ignazia Balla visited that community in 1964, she wrote: "There are 4 sisters in this little community, all Indians and all brimming over with good will. Their house is very poor, perhaps the poorest I have seen. But the sisters are all happy and carry out propaganda in the city and surrounding areas with a truly apostolic spirit." In 1971, Sr. Maria Grazia became the first superior and vocation directress of the Mangalore community. This community left a distinct mark on her life, not only because she came from that part of the country but also because she helped to both open the community and assist at its closure in 1974. It was also the community to which she returned in 2010, two years after its reopening, and the place where she was stationed when it was discovered she was suffering from the serious illness that would quickly lead to her meeting with our heavenly Father.

After the closure of the Mangalore community in 1974, Sr. Maria Grazia was transferred to Goa where she deepened her spiritual formation by taking a two-year course in Religious Sciences at the Mater Dei Institute. From 1977-1984 and 1992-1994, she served as Directress of the Catholic Inquiry Center, a diocesan evangelization center in Bangalore. She carried out this apostolate joyfully, responsibly and creatively, seeking every means to spread knowledge of the Bible, including through correspondence courses. She enthusiastically promoted the work of the Center by surrounding herself with numerous, well-trained collaborators to ensure that the Word of God would race ahead and reach everyone, especially the poorest and most needy. She also succeeded in obtaining government authorization to bring the Word of God to hospitals (a permission not easily granted). Sr. Maria Grazia's love for the Pauline vocation and her yearning to take the Good News to everyone gave impetus to her vocation work and to the articles she wrote for the SSP magazine, *Home Life and Petrus*.

She spent a beautiful period running the bindery in Mumbai, where she animated the province's young candidates in the Pauline spirit and infused them with zeal for the apostolate, for prayer and for silence. A person who readily made friends and collaborated with others, Sr. Maria Grazia was always striving to do the greatest good possible, inspired by the promise of Jesus Master, which echoed powerfully in the depths of her heart: "Do not be afraid. I am with you always."

Our sister spent the last 20 years of her life alternating between the communities of Secunderabad and Calcutta. When she returned to Mangalore two years ago, her health was already declining. In October 2012, while she was making her spiritual exercises with her co-novices in preparation for her Golden Jubilee of religious profession, a health crisis made it necessary to rush her to the hospital by ambulance, where it was discovered she was suffering from an aggressive form of cancer, already in its terminal stage. Sr. Maria Grazia accepted this news with great faith and serenity, offering her life to the Lord so that the seed of the Gospel, which she had sown abundantly for many decades, might sprout with renewed vitality and fecundity.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 25 April 2013
Feast of St. Mark, Evangelist