



ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
CASA GENERALIZIA
Via S. Giovanni Eudes, 25
00163 Roma
Tel. 06.661 3039 - Fax 06.661 57 208



Dearest Sisters,

At 10:30 this morning, the Feast of the Queen of Apostles and the vigil of Pentecost, the Father visited our Queen of Apostles Hospital, Albano, Italy to lead to his kingdom of light our sister:

VICARIO ANGELA – SR. BERNARDA
born in Fontanelle di Teano (Caserta), Italy on 2 July 1939.

Sr. Bernarda lived her Pauline vocation with great love. She spent many years as a missionary in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and always spoke very enthusiastically about her time there. Above all, she loved the African people, whom she met on a one-to-one basis while disseminating the Word of God in the cities and also in the many villages scattered around the countryside of this immense nation. Sr. Bernarda made herself an “African among Africans,” sowing not only the Word of God but also her smile and the wealth of her very sociable personality. Her many years in the missions did not cause her lose her distinctively “Neapolitan” traits and the characteristics of her native region were clearly evident in her way of speaking, of gesticulating, but above all in the way she opened her big heart to everyone, especially when faced with the needs of the people she met.

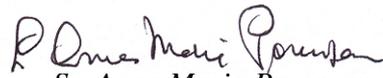
Sr. Bernarda entered the Congregation in the community of Rome on 29 Sept. 1955. After spending some time diffusing the Word of God in Naples, she returned to Rome for her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 30 June 1960. Afterward, she resumed the diffusion apostolate, this time in the diocese of Reggio Emilia. After her perpetual profession in 1965, she was asked to go to Zaire (now the Congo) as a missionary.

There Sr. Bernarda carried out the Pauline mission in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Kisangani. The people of this nation opened their hearts and their doors to the visits of our missionaries, who arrived with bags overflowing with copies of the Gospel and other books that would help them grow in the faith.

In 1983, Sr. Bernarda returned to Rome for a period of updating in Asti. Afterward, she was re-assigned to Kisangani, often called “the house in the forest” because of the vast jungle that surrounds the city. Sr. Bernarda traveled the highways and byways of this large diocese, carrying out pastoral work for vocations. Her enthusiasm for the Pauline vocation prompted many young women to ask to get to know our Institute better. In 1986, Sr. Bernarda once again returned to Italy where, for the next two years, she worked in the Pauline Mission Center located on the grounds of the Generalate. But her heart and thoughts were continually fixed on Africa so, in 1988, she went back to Kisangani, where she worked in the book center for a few years before returning permanently to Italy. In Italy, she worked in the communities of Campobasso and Sulmona. After another period of updating, this time in Rome, she was assigned to our Aquila community, where she immediately established a vibrant relationship with the people, whom she came to love very much. In the years that followed, Sr. Bernarda worked in the communities of Naples/Capodimonte, La Spezia, Lecce and Rome (Castro Pretorio). Slowly her health began to decline, even though the doctors she consulted could find no reason for this. Her only apparent medical problem seemed to be acute anemia. It was only recently that they discovered she was suffering from a malignant tumor, which had infected her blood. Sr. Bernarda spent the last months of her life in and out of the hospital but not even pain and suffering robbed her of her good humor or her burning desire to return to her work among the people. She felt this lack of contact very much and tried to make up for it by visiting other patients in their rooms, offering them words of consolation, serenity and peace.

A few days ago, Sr. Bernarda said that she felt death drawing near. Her strength rapidly ebbing, she surrendered herself with childlike trust into the hands of the Father. And today, the fire of the Spirit descended to encompass her and transformed her into his dwelling place forever.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 22 May 2010