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Dearest Sisters,

The Lord has visited us again. At 9:20 in the morning (local time), in the community of Hiratsuka (Japan), the night has come, that is, the hour to pass from this world to the Father, for our sister

**YAMASHITA SHIZUKO Sr MARIA RAFFAELLA**  
**Born in Nagasaki (Japan) on September 1, 1932**

Everything happened very quickly. Sr. M. Raffaella had gone to chapel for the Eucharistic Celebration, just as she did every morning, but because she was not feeling too well, she left even before the Mass began. When the superior of the community followed her to see how she was doing, Sr. M. Raffaella had already died, without making any noise.

Sr. M. Raffaella was a silent, smiling and sweet sister. She had weak health, but did not complain about her difficulties or speak of her sufferings. She entered the Congregation in the house of Fukuoka, on August 21, 1952, and was one of the first Japanese vocations.

She lived in Tokyo during the time of her formation and novitiate, concluding it with her First Profession on June 30, 1955. Her talent and skill in dressmaking were quickly valued in the houses of Osaka, Nagasaki and Tokyo, where she dedicated herself above all to sewing the habits, and also to do any kind of service necessary in community. For some time she had the joy of working in the technical apostolate with true zeal, and to lend a hand in the shipping department in the main house of Tokyo.

In 1993, Sr. M. Raffaella was transferred to Hiratsuka to assist as nurse and sacristan. Afterwards she returned to the community of Nagasaki then to Hiroshima, especially to help with sewing and the work in the sewing room; this lasted until she began to have serious problems with her eyesight due to an internal hemorrhage in the eye.

In 2006, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and was transferred to the house of Hiratsuka where she was able to help for some time in the stock room, and doing many small services compatible with her health condition. Since December 2010, she spent some weeks out of the month in a specialized clinic to receive treatment for her illness.

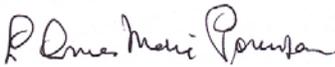
Everywhere she went, Sr. M. Raffaella demonstrated her good and serviceable character, her desire to support the sisters, and not weigh on anyone or cause any difficulty because of her illness. In fact, some time ago, she had confided the desire that the Lord should call her quickly, so that she would not disturb others, or be confined to bed for a long time.

Our good Father, in his infinite goodness, even granted her aspiration. He called her on a Sunday—the weekly Pasch—during the liturgy in which we contemplate the beautiful and consoling words that rise from the burning hearts of the two pilgrims of Emmaus: “Remain with us, Lord, remain with us because it is evening. Remain with us at the end of our day, at the end of our life.” And in the silence that always characterized her, Sr. M. Raffaella finally met her Master; she had recognized him along the journey of her life, and she had held onto him. Now Jesus entered her house to remain with her forever.

We are especially close to the sisters in Japan who have been tried by much suffering lately. We want to believe, and we are certain, that the sisters who keep returning to the Father are interceding for all of us so that we may obtain the gift of a faithful and fruitful life that will attract new vocations. May all these beautiful witnesses of Pauline life be an encouragement to young people to allow themselves to be fascinated by the gaze of Jesus Master, and then seek him every day, without rest.

With affection,

Rome, May 4, 2014.

  
Sr Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General