

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

At 3:00 a.m. last night, the Lord visited Ramon y Cajal Hospital, Madrid, Spain, to call to his eternal wedding feast our sister:

**FORNAS NAVARRO MARIA AMPARO – SR. M. RAFAELA
born in Toga (Catellon de la Plana), Spain, on 28 September 1929.**

Sr. M. Rafaela entered the Congregation in the community of Barcelona on 28 June 1952. In 1954, she was sent to Italy to make her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 19 March 1955. She spent her Juniorate in the large Madrid community, which at that time was located in the vast fields of the San Fernando Coslada quarter. With the help of a faithful mule, Sr. M. Rafaela tilled the fields with great industriousness, energy and enterprise. Many of the sisters still remember those rich fields overflowing with fruit and flowers—the little “kingdom” of dear Sr. M. Rafaela.

In 1960, she returned to Rome to make her perpetual vows, after which she was sent back to Madrid. There, she carried out various community services, but above all she once again tended the vegetable and flower gardens. She also worked for several years in the typography of the Las Rozas community.

In 1975, she was transferred to Vigo, but two years later she returned to Madrid, where she remained up until her death, first in the Las Rozas community and then, for the last 20 years of her life, in the Delegation house of Carril del Conde.


Although Sr. M. Rafaela possessed a strong, explosive and somewhat original personality, this did not prevent her from manifesting great tenderness and affection toward others. A good-hearted person, she found it easy to “forgive and forget” any wrongs received. Intensely active by nature, she was also very practical, dynamic and courageous. A few years ago, when asked to express her vocational journey in the light of the Bible, she wrote: “An important stage of my life began when I came to realize that compared to God’s love, nothing is of any importance. As a result, I am striving to seek him alone, like my father St. Paul did. Everything depends on God, on his grace. He is the one who urges me on and who gives me the strength I need for my journey.”

Sr. M. Rafaela cultivated an intimate relationship with the Lord—a vital prayer, in which she sought to respond to him generously. Aware of the urgent need for vocations, she carried this intention in the depths of her heart and offered her life for it. She was devoted to the rosary and did not want to be disturbed while offering herself and all her intentions to Mary through this prayer.

During the last year of her life, Sr. M. Rafaela’s health steadily declined as a result of many small strokes and a number of falls due to her weakened condition. All this drained her already fragile physical resources. She found it hard to speak but maintained a clear mind up to the end, taking care of her personal needs and even choosing the clothes to wear when she left for the hospital last Sunday to undergo a minor operation that it was hoped would help her swallow her food better. But the routine operation had fatal consequences for her due to the onset of an unexpected infection that abruptly ended her life.

Sr. M. Rafaela’s sweet expression and luminous gaze, which rested with gratitude on each of the sisters gathered at her bedside, is certainly the best witness to her life and it was the gift she left to the community that loved and accompanied her toward her final “hour”—the hour of peace and eternal rest.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 8 October 2016