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Dearest Sisters,

News has reached us on this Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, that just after 11:00 AM, the Lord called to himself from the Infirmary of Alba another sister:

**Sr. MARIA NORBERTA (Ilde) ZINI**

Born in Limizzone (Reggio Emilia) February 22, 1924

Sr. Norberta was a co-novice of Sr. Elisabetta, who also died today in Alba, and with her shared more than 33 years as missionaries in France. A mysterious design of Divine Providence united them, in life and in death.

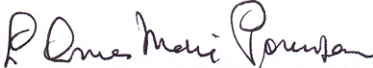
Last November, she became aware that the cancer which had appeared two years before had metastasized throughout her body. Sr. Norberta wrote to the Superior General "I crossed the threshold of the Mother House on August 15, 1941. From that blessed and unforgettable day on, the Divine Master has grasped my hand and always protected me, never abandoning me. Now I am at the sunset, and when the evening has come, and the Master will gesture to me to pass to the other shore and throw myself into his arms, "sandwiched" in the Divine Love. I ask you all to praise, bless and thank the Lord for the immense gift he has given me in calling me to the Daughters of St. Paul... the most beautiful Congregation that there is!" These lines describe well the communicative joy of her open and sincere character. From her entrance into the Congregation, her life has been truly rich in apostolic and missionary experiences. "I went where I was sent with joy": this synthesizes well the availability and enthusiastic apostolate of Sr. Norberta.

After the years of formation, on March 19, 1948, she made her First Profession at Rome. In Italy she was able to experience the efficacy of the film apostolate in the film agencies of Rome, Naples, Verona, and Cagliari. In 1958 she began a long journey as a Pauline missionary. First at Paris, and then in the Communities of Lubumbashi and Kinshasha (Democratic Republic of Congo), she lived through the difficult years of foundation, right in the midst of wars. From the ex-Leopoldville, she wrote in 1963: "we are seven, but we would need seventy sisters to respond to all the requests made of us. The people stop us on the street to get the Gospels from us... The Book Center is always crowded. And yet, it is the books that are not sufficient. Every morning about ten children are waiting to help us, and they are unbeatable in diffusion..." The years in Africa were years that she described as "an unmerited gift, when we had nothing and knew nothing".

In 1972, Sr. Norberta returned to France, to Paris, to take over the administration and shipping duties. She was then transferred to Lyons where she stayed, with the exception of two years in Marseilles, until March of 2009. She loved the people and the apostolate of the Book Center, where she was entrusted with the mini-media and religious articles sections. She loved to read, to instruct herself, and to understand the culture of our times so as to carry out the apostolate with greater professionalism. In these last years, after reading the information from the Seminar on Communication, she began to be interested in the Information highway and wanted to learn to use the Internet. She knew how to make friends with people – she was a good and open person.

When a transfer to the house of Alba was suggested to her so that she could receive the necessary treatments, she struggled to accept the proposal. But, in the Mother House, she spent unforgettable months: she exploded with joy as she felt herself at the "roots" of the Charism, as she discovered anew the riches of Pauline prayer, and the preaching and witness of the priests of the Society of St. Paul. She loved everything, ...even the good wine that reminded her of the good wine of her native Emilia.

We think that the assurance that accompanied St. Paul was the same that Sr. Norberta enjoyed during her last days, an assurance founded in fidelity: "I know him whom I have believed, and I am certain that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until the last day" With affection,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan,  
Vicar General

Rome, January 25, 2010  
*Conversion of St. Paul*