

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 about 6:00 a.m. today, God our merciful Father visited the infirmary wing of our Divine Providence community, Rome (Antonino Pio), Italy to call to himself our sister:

**BALESTRA ANNA – SR. GIUSEPPINA MARIA
born in Ancarano (Teramo), Italy on 20 April 1915.**

Sr. Giuseppina returned to the Lord with a Pauline life rich in years and experiences. She celebrated her 100th birthday earlier this year and had served Fr. Alberione and Maestra Thecla for decades as their personal driver. She entered the Congregation in Rome on 8 September 1931. After a time of apostolic experience in Naples and Rome, she made her novitiate in Alba, concluding this stage of her formation with her first profession on 21 August 1936. Immediately afterward, she obtained a driver's license. In fact, she and Sr. Timothy Jovine were among the first women in Italy to drive cars.

With a century of life to her credit, Sr. Giuseppina had many beautiful memories of M. Thecla and probably had a lot to say to her when she reached heaven. Perhaps she reminded Prima Maestra of the many trips they had taken in the 40 years in which she had accompanied her on visits to the FSP communities in Italy and Europe. Perhaps she mentioned the many games that she had helped Prima Maestra organize to entertain the sisters in the branch houses. Perhaps she spoke about the many pictures of Prima Maestra she had taken on these visits to preserve the face of our "Mother" for future generations.... In regard to the latter, Sr. Giuseppina always remembered in particular the day on which she asked Prima Maestra if she could take a picture of her at prayer to be included in a short vocational documentary. M. Thecla obediently knelt down and immediately became recollected in contemplation. Recalling that incident, Sr. Giuseppina said, "I took at least 12 pictures from every angle without any problem.... She was completely unaware of me."

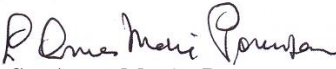
Their trips often consisted of long stretches of road through sparsely populated areas, dotted with hamlets and scattered farmhouses. On those occasions, Maestra Thecla would share with Sr. Giuseppina the preoccupations she carried in her heart. For example: "I wonder if any FSPs have reached these places with the Word of God? Let us pray that they have!" And she would immediately recite a few prayers for the people of that area and for vocations. One day, while Sr. Giuseppina was driving Primo Maestro to his destination, she asked him curiously: "Why is it that so many Daughters of St. Paul were born in 1915?" And he promptly replied: "At all the Masses I celebrated that year, I asked the Lord that many of the little girls born that year would become Daughters of St. Paul, and I put that intention in the chalice." Sr. Giuseppina was delighted to think that she was one of the baby girls who wound up in his chalice!

In 1955, while still continuing to accompany M. Thecla on her long car trips, Sr. Giuseppina was assigned to Grottaferrata to work in the apostolic sector that produced catechetical filmstrips. One day she asked Prima Maestra if this work was not a step backward since the cinema apostolate had already been launched. "Oh no!" M. Thecla exclaimed. "It is an excellent apostolate, especially for schools and catechism classes because the teacher can pause at each picture and explain it better. We also have to keep in mind people who can't read and those who do not have access to a movie projector."

In 1971, Sr. Giuseppina was transferred to San Benedetto to serve as a driver and afterward to the FSP graphics department in Rome. In 1995, she relocated from the Divine Providence community to the Queen of Apostles community (both part of the Via Antonino Pio complex). Here she carried out various household services and also used her creativity to produce many handcrafted items which she then gave to others. Last year, as her 100th birthday approached, she was obliged to leave the Queen of Apostles community and move to the infirmary. It was a difficult transfer for her but through it all she continued to praise and thank God for her Pauline vocation. She wrote: "I am happy with my life and above all for the grace of being able to serve the Founder and M. Thecla as their driver and get to know them better. Now I am at the sunset of my life and I hope it will be a beautiful one, like the beautiful Roman sunsets...."

We want to thank Sr. Giuseppina for having passed on to us her testimony to our charismatic heritage in a thousand different colors: not only through the many pictures she took but also through her humorous and simpatico witness of life.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parezan
Superior General

Rome, 18 October 2015