

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

At about 2:30 p.m. on this 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Divine Master visited the infirmary wing of our Divine Providence community in Alba, Italy to gently call to himself our sister:

CASAMASSIMA PAOLA FRANCESCA – SR. M. LAURENTIA
born in Matera, Italy on 15 July 1922.

Sr. M. Laurentia was a great Pauline missionary. She lived outside her own country almost without interruption from 1946-2007, when failing health obliged her to leave her beloved Great Britain and return to her homeland, where she was assigned to the FSP Motherhouse in Alba.

Sr. M. Laurentia entered the Congregation in Rome on 19 September 1941 and immediately placed her talent as a seamstress at the service of the community. After carrying out the “propaganda” apostolate in Lecce, she returned to Rome for her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 20 August 1945. On 15 September 1946, she was asked to leave her work as a propagandist in Taranto to go to Staten Island (U.S.A.), where she carried out the same apostolate in that huge city in preparation for her new mission in the Philippines. When she arrived in the United States a note from Maestra Thecla was waiting for her. The message read: “Here are my first greetings to you on American soil! By now you have glimpsed the skyscrapers of New York; you have heard people speaking a language you don’t understand, and perhaps you are feeling a little homesick. Be courageous! Have great confidence in God and in the help of the Blessed Mother. I am thinking of you; I am with you. When you are feeling melancholy, think of heaven, our true homeland.”

On 13 March 1947, Sr. M. Laurentia arrived in Lipa, Philippines and by 1953 she was already local superior of the Pasay community. But her time in the Philippines was brief. On 13 May 1955, she was asked to help open the first FSP community in Australia. Her trip there, made in the company of Fr. Alberione, Maestra Thecla and Sr. Redenta Commentucci, was a memorable one. Upon reaching Sydney, Srs. Laurentia and Redenta immediately began to carry out the propaganda apostolate. This mission was both demanding and exhausting due to the fact that Catholics were a minority in the city and most of the homes they visited were empty since the occupants were at work. Sr. M. Laurentia was the first superior of the Sydney community. But in 1958 obedience sent her to Great Britain, where she carried out the service of assistant formator in Langley. Three years later, she was appointed superior of the Widnes community. Following this, she worked in the Langley book center, served as superior of the Glasgow community and then was assigned to the Birmingham book center.

In 1975, she returned to Australia as Delegation Superior, after which she served as delegation counselor and then as delegation bursar for two terms of office. In 1987 she returned to Great Britain, where she worked in the administration department and secretary’s office.

The life of this dear sister was filled with apostolic experiences. She literally never rested. Thinking back on the many projects she was called to animate, she wrote: “With regard to the apostolate, we did not engage in a lot of lengthy reasoning nor did we have the necessary preparation [for our mission], compared with other Institutes. But we were sure that our apostolate was very beautiful and important, and it satisfied our longing to do good to souls.”

The Lord called Sr. Laurentia to fecundate her intense apostolic activity through many years of silence and immobility. Suffering from Parkinson’s disease, she was transferred to Alba, Italy in 2007. Her condition slowly declined. She was not able to speak during the last years of her life and she had trouble swallowing food but her bright eyes continued to communicate to everyone the beauty of the life she had led and her joy at remaining in the hands of the Lord, ready to do his will wholeheartedly at all times. Up until a few years ago, she loved to sing to the Blessed Mother, her frail voice repeating the words: “I’ll go to see you one day....” Sr. M. Laurentia has at last” gone to see” Mary. She is the 1000th member of the Daughters of St. Paul to join the Pauline Family in heaven. We want to entrust to her prayers above all our Delegations of Australia and Great Britain, which always held a special place in her great, apostolic heart.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 23 August 2015