

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

At 11:30 this morning, the Lord once again visited our James Alberione community, Albano, Italy, this time to call to himself our sister:

ZUCCHERINI PAOLA – SR. FRANCA
born in Mirano (Venice), Italy on 31 July 1935.

Sr. Franca entered the Congregation in Rome, Italy on 13 June 1961. After a period of initial formation and a time of apostolic experience in Siena, she was sent to Milan to make her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 30 June 1964. As a young professed, she was sent as a missionary to Montreal, Canada, where she learned French and worked in the bindery and promotion office. Following this, she lived for 15 years in the FSP Workman community, where she divided her time between book center activities and animation/formation of the public (especially women and the poor) to the use of the instruments of social communication. She herself confided that she needed to be in contact with the daily life situations of the poorest of the poor so as to rediscover prayer and the face of God. With simplicity and great faith in the grace of her vocation, she provided guidance for a group of women, helping them to realize the importance of their feminine condition by giving them conferences, even though she had no special training or higher studies in the subject. With the help of this group, she even succeeded in making a short TV spot.

Sr. Franca served as superior of the FSP Workman community for two non-consecutive terms. In 1993, as she was concluding her time as a missionary in Canada, she wrote: "We have to close the Workman community and I am preparing to leave, but not without suffering because I am leaving behind individuals and groups with whom I have collaborated for 15 years. I have to 'die' to many things, but at the same time I am looking ahead to new ones. I feel like I am 18 years old, not 57.... I read the [Superior General's] invitation to collaborate in the opening of new communities [the Institute's Missionary Project]. I would be happy to contribute to this initiative for either a short or long period...."

In response to her desire, Sr. Franca was sent to Antananarive, Madagascar in 1993. Two days after her arrival, she joyfully wrote: "I got here on Friday and on Monday I was already in the book center, ready to serve about 1000 people.... I truly felt useful and it seems clear that this is where the Lord wants me to be."

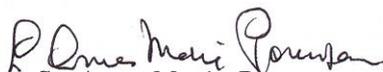
But Sr. Franca soon began to show signs of Parkinson's disease and in 1996 her deteriorating health made it necessary for her to return to Italy, where she could also be closer to her seriously ill mother. Assigned to the Arezzo community, she devoted herself to book center work and household services, even though it was becoming more and more difficult for her to walk. By nature a cheerful person, Sr. Franca did not let her worsening physical condition defeat her. She was ever-ready with a humorous story and comment, and in spite of her poor health she continued to radiate a joyful spirit around her. However, in 2007 her health took a sharp turn for the worse and she was transferred to the infirmary wing of the Via Antonino Pio community. From there, it was necessary to move her to the James Alberione community, Albano, in 2011.

Blessed with great creativity and artistic talent, Sr. Franca enriched the life of the community with her unusual hand-made dolls, crafted out of paper, fabric, eggshells and other materials that inspired her artisanship. She also used dried flowers to make very colorful greeting cards. And for Christmas several years ago, she created a beautiful and original manger scene for the community.

But the progression of Sr. Franca's malady gradually stiffened all the muscles in her body and toward the end of her life she was no longer able to swallow or speak, making it necessary for her caregivers to try to guess her desires and needs.

As we begin the Advent season, let us place our sister to the arms of our heavenly Father, asking him to fulfill all his promises to her, to bless her with his mercy and to allow her to experience his salvation.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 28 November 2015