

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

At 2:00 p.m. yesterday, Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist, God the Father visited the intensive care unit of the Siro-Lebanese Hospital, Buenos Aires, Argentina, to call to himself another fervent Pauline apostle:

BERRA USTOLIA DEL CARMEN – SR. MARIA CECILIA
born in Plaza Huincul (Neuquien), Argentina, on 18 June 1931.

Everything happened very suddenly: when the sisters did not see Sr. Cecilia in chapel yesterday morning, they went to her room and found her on the floor in a catatonic state. She had suffered a stroke and fallen to the floor, breaking her leg. At that point, she was still alive but her blood pressure was extremely low. She was rushed to the hospital but died a short time later in serenity and peace, without any suffering.

Sr. M. Cecilia entered the Congregation in the community of Buenos Aires on 16 April 1956, together with her sister, Sr. Estela del Carmen, who was several years younger. The two had “discovered” the Daughters of St. Paul through a vocation brochure that had been left on a table in the parish sacristy, which they were in the midst of cleaning. They were both very impressed to read about the important mission being carried out by the Daughters of St. Paul. “From that moment on,” Sr. Cecilia said, “I began to beg the Lord to give me the grace to enter that Congregation so as to participate in a mission so necessary for our times.”

She made her novitiate in Buenos Aires and, together with her sister, made her first profession on 8 December 1959. Sr. Cecilia lived among us radiating simplicity, wisdom, perseverance, a sense of responsibility and a profound love for the Pauline mission, which she carried out in many different forms: from the St. Paul Film Agencies in Buenos Aires and Tucuman, to the shipping and promotion of books and magazines in Buenos Aires, to bookkeeping services in the communities of Resistencia and Buenos Aires, to the book apostolate in Resistencia, Santa Fe and Mendoza. She also produced slides and videocassettes, and then went on to manage the *Solidarity radio station* of the Anatuya diocese in the province of Santiago del Estero. The radio apostolate left a deep impression on her heart because it gave her daily contact with the hundreds of poor people who sent “their” radio station letters on a wide range of subjects. In fact, in that region, the radio was a very important instrument that, besides everything else, fostered communication within the country.

Sr. Cecilia also served as local superior for several terms of office in the Resistencia community and then in Anatuya and Asuncion (Paraguay). The sisters deeply appreciated her goodness, serenity, kindness, ability to downplay tense situations, and the warm hospitality she offered young women who visited the community. Although quiet by nature, her witness of life spoke more eloquently than a wealth of words.

In these last years, Sr. Cecilia was stationed in the Nazca (Buenos Aires) community, where she continued to be an attentive, patient and quiet member of the community, guiding the choir and collaborating with various household duties, especially service at the reception desk, and making lovely rosaries and rosary bracelets. Although she had a number of health problems, she bore them without complaint. She could often be found recollected in prayer, the beads of the rosary slipping continually through her fingers. It is wonderful to think that the Blessed Mother came to take her to heaven on a day on which the people of Argentina venerate Mary under the title “Our Lady of the Valley,” a national holiday dear to the whole country.

May the words of this Third Sunday of Easter fill us with consolation and the certitude that the Risen Christ has filled Sr. Cecilia with the joy of his presence, that he will allow her body to rest in hope, and that she is now experiencing the fullness and sweetness of his love.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 26 April 2020