

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

Just after midnight tonight, the Divine Master visited the San Raffaele wing of our Albano community, Italy, to call to the eternal wedding feast our sister:

GUARDA TERESINA – SR. VITTORINA MARIA
born in Brendola (Vicenza), Italy on 5 July 1920.

The life of this dear sister was a miracle of divine Providence, who guided her by mysterious paths. She entered our Congregation in the community of Vicenza on 27 July 1948 after spending several years among the Pastorelle Sisters, although there is no official record of this transfer. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1950. In her letter requesting permission to make her vows, she wrote: "I have been waiting for this grace for a long time! Just the thought of such a great gift fills my heart with joy. But even though on the one hand I am overflowing with enthusiasm, on the other hand I feel humiliated to see how poorly suited I am to my beautiful apostolate." As a young professed, Sr. Vittorina worked in the Cremona and Piacenza book centers. In 1952, she was transferred to our Albano clinic, which had been built to take care of FSPs suffering from tuberculosis. With great generosity and love, Sr. Vittorina spent almost 50 years carrying out various nursing duties, including the long, hard night shifts. She also lived through the period in which the clinic was transformed into a general hospital. In 1978, she earned a nursing degree from the Fatebenefratelli Hospital in Rome. But many people remember her best for her truly maternal presence in the hospital mortuary, where she worked for many years. Sr. Vittorina had a rare ability to console grieving families, pray with them, offer them hospitality, or lend them her supportive presence on walks through the hospital gardens. She often got up in the middle of the night to go to the mortuary and pray for the deceased, another sign of her warm and spontaneous personality.

Without a doubt, we can say that Sr. Vittorina lived her daily self-offering to God in a simple yet heroic way, but recently a fact, hidden until today, came to light—one which casts an even more brilliant light on her personality. As a matter of fact, from 1954-1971, Sr. Vittorina lived among us as a fervent Daughter of St. Paul even though she was aware that she was not an effective member of the Institute. For reasons known only to the Lord, in 1954 she did not renew her vows when they expired. At that point, the card recording these renewals is blank except for a note, written in her own hand, stating that these renewals and her perpetual profession were accepted by Jesus Master, with the Blessed Mother and her guardian angel as witnesses.

Thus it was with immense joy that Sr. Vittorina finally made her official perpetual profession on 7 Oct. 1971. On that occasion she wrote: "I can't hide the fact that I suffered deeply over these past years, but at the same time I thank the Lord for having given me this chance to earn merits. I have always loved my dear Congregation and will always love it." Those eighteen years of "waiting" to officially make her perpetual profession left a deep mark on Sr. Vittorina's heart. A few years ago, before Alzheimer's disease clouded her mind, she asked that when she died 18 red roses be given to her as a gift. It is moving to think that those roses symbolize the fidelity and unconditional love with which she waited to fulfill her immense desire to be a member of the Congregation "forever." Now Sr. Vittorina is a Daughter of St. Paul for all eternity and we are sure she was welcomed into heaven by the many sisters and brothers she accompanied with great love and goodness here on earth as they prepared for their own definitive meetings with the Father.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 11 December 2009