



ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
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Dearest Sisters,

We received the news that at about 9:35 a.m. (local time), the Divine Master visited our Cidade Regina community in São Paulo, Brazil, to call to live in intimacy with him forever our sister:

MENEGAT GEMMA – SR. MARIS STELLA
born in Nova Padua (Caxias do Sul), Brazil, on 20 March 1929.

Following the example of her older sister, Sr. Assunta, Gemma entered the Congregation in the house of Porto Alegre on 24 March 1945 at the age of 16, bringing with her the gift of her genuine faith and spontaneous, joyful spirit. With great enthusiasm, she dedicated herself to the itinerant apostolate in Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo. She made her novitiate in the Divine Master community, São Paulo, concluding it with her first profession on 8 Dec. 1949, Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Afterward she continued to spread the Word of God in the regions of Porto Alegre, Curitiba and Lins. The name she received on the day of her profession was, from the very outset, a concrete program of life for her because she was truly a *star*, radiating everywhere the light of God that emanated from her own life.

As the person responsible for the bookbindery in the houses of Porto Alegre and São Paulo DM for more than twenty years, she played an important role in the formation of large numbers of young women who wanted to share the Pauline life, fostering their training in the technical apostolate and communicating her zeal for the Institute's mission with simplicity and conviction. In 1978 and for the next 8 years, she dedicated herself with warmth, refinement and discretion to the hospitality apostolate and various other services in the provincial house. She had the gift of being able to unknot thorny problems, make difficult things easier and resolve even the most complicated situations in the light of God.

At the end of this period, Sr. Maristella joyfully returned to book center work in the communities of São Paulo DM, Niteroi and Brasilia. Our centers' clients were attracted by her simplicity and friendliness, her sensitivity on the human and religious levels, and her desire to help every person meet the Lord through his Word. Like a true star, she radiated joy, hope and communion to everyone around her.

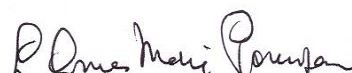
From 1990-1993, she once again enlivened the provincial house with her attentive and caring presence. Following this, she was assigned to the shipping department in the Alberione Institute community, São Paulo, where she remained up until 2001, when she was asked to use her wisdom and experience to integrate the community of postulants, who at that time resided in the Queen of Apostles house. Sr. Maristella joyfully and spontaneously made herself "young with the young," enriching the formation community with her industriousness, spirit of prayer and the beauty of a life that communicated order, harmony and great human warmth. Without realizing it, she was a true "icon" for our young women, who discovered in her the secret of Pauline mysticism.

In 2009, Sr. Maristella returned to the provincial house in São Paulo, where she was asked to offer hospitality to visiting FSPs and see to their needs, and to also serve as a point of reference for the lay staff who performed general household services—responsibilities that she carried out with kindness and solicitude. In addition, she was requested to take on the role of sacristan and under her care the chapel dedicated to the Divine Master sparkled with cleanliness and was embellished with her artistic flower arrangements. About 6 years ago, Sr. Maristella's declining health made it necessary to transfer her to the Cidade Regina community, home to the province's senior and sick sisters. Afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, she was no longer able to communicate but her smile was worth a thousand words...

The words of today's Liturgy, brimming over with trust, proclaim the miracle that the Lord is about to perform: the energy of the Spirit will re-assemble dry, scattered bones, infuse new life into them and throw open the doors of tombs. May Sr. Maristella, who has now been gifted with new vitality, continue to intercede for our Institute's young women, asking the Divine Master to give them the courage to leave everything so as to become *stars* in their turn: bright lights that spread the joy of the Gospel.

Affectionately,

Rome, 21 August 2020


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan