

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

At about 6:15 p.m. today, the Lord once more knocked on the door of our Queen of Apostles Hospital, Albano, Italy to call to himself our sister:

PAOLICELLI SR. MARIA ROSARIA
born in Matera, Italy on 18 October 1925.

A simple and good sister who was always ready to lend a hand wherever she could, Sr. M. Rosaria strove to do the will of God and to remain docile to him at every moment of her life. She entered the Congregation in the community of Rome on 12 July 1942, at the height of World War II. In presenting her request for admittance to the major superiors, the local superior of Matera wrote: "This is a very good young woman, with a great spirit of self-sacrifice." While at home, Sr. M. Rosaria had learned the art of knitting and she found many opportunities in the Congregation to put this skill to good use. Her fragile health obliged her to return to her family for a time during her postulancy, but she refused to renounce her vocation. As soon as her health improved she resumed the propaganda apostolate, traveling the highways and byways of Calabria with a bag overflowing with books. She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first vows on 19 March 1947. Sr. M. Rosaria's great love for the Pauline vocation was fortified by the words of the Founder, who that year shared with the Daughters of St. Paul one of his great worries, saying: "I am very concerned that we are not doing what we should do for the Church, that we are not yet corresponding to God's plan.... A vocation like yours, when explained even a little, immediately attracts vocations."


Fired by these words, Sr. M. Rosaria carried out the propaganda apostolate in Caltanissetta and Bari with the intention of also drawing other young women to the Pauline life. In 1952, she returned to Rome to prepare for her perpetual profession. This was a special year for the Institutes of the Pauline Family, which frequently gathered in the crypt of the newly-inaugurated Queen of Apostles Sanctuary to listen to the words of the Founder. Fr. Alberione pointed to the young members of the PF as powerful examples of what it means to be a Pauline apostle. Just a few days before Sr. M. Rosaria's profession on 19 March 1952, he held up Sr. Amabile Lombardi, a blind FSP who had continued to carry out the apostolate up to the last day of her life, as a model for all our propagandists.

Rejoicing that she was now a Daughter of St. Paul "for all her life," Sr. M. Rosaria carried out an intense apostolate in the book centers of Foggia, Trapani, Trent, Avellino, Potenza and Matera successively. She also worked for a number of years in the St. Paul Film Agencies of Salerno, Catanzaro and Cosenza, where she double-checked the film reels returned by parishes and movie theaters. A member of the Salerno community for more than 20 years, while there she first worked in the St. Paul Film Agency and then carried out many different household services.

In 1998, Sr. M. Rosaria's declining health made it necessary to transfer her first to the Naples Capodimonte community and then to the Thecla Merlo community of Albano. Confined to a wheelchair by crippling arthritis, but she patiently accepted her need for ongoing care and offered herself to the Lord through the apostolate of suffering. She realized that her life continued to be apostolically fruitful even in this situation and that her self-offering, day after day, was pleasing to God.

About a month ago, Sr. M. Rosaria was transferred to the IV Novembre community of Albano, together with several other seriously ill sisters. This past Monday her situation took an unexpected turn for the worse as the result of a brain hemorrhage. Like the apostle Barnabas, Sr. M. Rosaria had lived her Pauline life with her gaze "fixed on the Lord" and now she awaits the crown he promised to all good apostles.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Vicar General

Rome, 11 June 2009