

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

At 10:20 this morning, the Lord visited our Divine Providence community of Alba, Italy to call to "hide under his wing forever" our sister:

**ROCCA SR. ANNA MARIA  
born in Canelones, Uruguay, on 16 January 1912.**

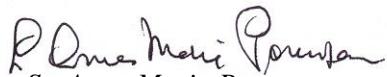
It all happened very unexpectedly, in keeping with Sr. Anna Maria's usual style. A sudden feeling of sickness, which at first seemed to be just a passing sensation, instead opened the gates of heaven to her. A few years ago she wrote: "The graces I have received have been like the air I breathe and my inadequacies are countless.... I feel my nothingness in the hands of God but he loves me, understands me and forgives me. The Lord has been very generous with me and I want to be the same with him by accepting everything he allows to happen as his way of purifying me." These simple words reveal the life of our dear sister, who always sought to respond to the great Love of her life with humility and simplicity of heart.

Anna Maria entered the Congregation on 30 October 1925 in the community of Alba, her 13-year-old heart fired by the yearning to give herself totally to the Lord. It was the heroic time of the beginnings of our Institute, during which abject poverty nourished radiant ideals. On 18 July 1929, Anna Maria and 7 other young women made their private vows. Almost immediately afterward, on 27 September, she and another sister left for northern Italy to open the community of Udine. In 1931, she returned to Alba to make her canonical novitiate, concluding it with her first profession on 30 Nov. 1932. Afterward, she carried out the Pauline mission in the communities of Salerno, Rovigo, Turin and Rome. On Christmas Day, 1938, M. Thecla asked Sr. Anna Maria if she would be willing to go to Brazil to form the young women the Lord was calling to our Institute there. Her reply was a prompt and enthusiastic "yes." She left on the ship "Neptunia" on 12 March 1939 and arrived in Brazil on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the same month. Several days before her arrival, Maestra Thecla wrote with maternal solicitude: "I received the letter you wrote to me while you were at sea. I thank God that you are well and serene. We traveled with you in prayer, thought and heart. Have courage! Don't be afraid of the initial difficulties of language, environment and persons."

Sr. Anna Maria's years in Brazil were happy ones, filled with apostolic and vocational initiatives. She was entrusted with many responsibilities: the formation of the "Little Immaculates," the launching of a new house of aspirancy in Porto Alegra (where she also held the office of superior), accompaniment of the Curitiba community and the purchase of a large tract of land to build a new house for vocations. She also began the St. Paul Film apostolate in Sao Paulo and later was placed in charge of the province's International Catechetical Center. She opened the community of Recife and also served as its superior. In 1968, due to a succession of deaths in her family, Sr. Anna Maria returned to Italy but soon afterward was transferred to Portugal, where for almost 10 years she dedicated herself with great missionary zeal to the diffusion apostolate in our book centers of Porto, Lisbon, Faro and Funchal.

Sr. Anna Maria's great heart knew no boundaries: her sole desire was to do the will of God as fully as possible. Thus in 1977, she accepted a transfer back to Italy, where she first worked at the switchboard of the Generalate community and then carried out various household duties in the Via dei Lucchesi and Borgo Angelico communities of Rome. In 2000, she was sent to Alba, where she continued to serve the Lord and her sisters in all simplicity in the laundry. To the end of her life, she was a person "in love" with her God, and the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity were her constant companions. At the end of a course of spiritual exercises, she wrote: "This profound meeting with the Lord and with myself makes me want to work all the harder to purify my life and carry out the divine will as fully as possible." Now Sr. Anna Maria's desire to meet the One she sought all her life by "preparing her heart for the paschal banquet in intimacy and joy" has been fulfilled.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Vicar General

Rome 9 September 2009