

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
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Dearest Sisters,

We received the news that at 6:12 a.m. today (local time), the Lord visited Mutual Help Hospital in Hiratsuka, Japan to call from there our sister, who was suffering from aortic stenosis and other heart complications, to live in peace and joy with him forever:

**KOYAMA ETSUKO – SR. MARIA CLEMENS
born in Tokyo, Japan, on 1 September 1929.**

The photo chosen for this obituary radiates her personality, which was characterized by simplicity, joy, good humor and generous self-donation.

Sr. M. Clemens, who came from a family of Christian origins, entered the Congregation in Tokyo on 24 Dec. 1954 at the age of 25. Her vocation was closely linked to the presence of our Pauline brothers in Japan, in particular to the support of Fr. Paolo Marcellino. In fact, she received instruction in the Catholic Faith through the SSP mission in Oji, Tokyo, which had been entrusted by the Archbishop to the first members of the Society of St. Paul, who had arrived in Tokyo in 1936 to open a community and launch the Pauline apostolate. After World War II, and following the burning of the Catholic church in Oji, Etsuko began to attend church in Akabane, where she met a young woman whom she asked to accompany her on her baptismal journey. This friend, the future Sr. Arcangela Kanazaki, became Etsuko's godmother and together both young women cultivated their interest in the Pauline vocation. Sr. Arcangela truly proved to be an "angel" through whom God manifested his will for Etsuko. After their initial formation, the two FSP candidates entered the novitiate in Tokyo, concluding the year with their first professions on 1 July 1958.

As a young professed, Sr. M. Clemens carried out the itinerant Pauline mission in the Nagoya region, and after her perpetual profession, made in Tokyo on 30 June 1963, she continued this apostolate, travelling the streets of Fukuoka in a car filled with books and a big smile on her face. With other sisters, she visited many towns to carry out pastoral work for vocations, organizing retreats for young women who were attracted by the Pauline mission and by the zeal and spontaneity of our first Japanese sisters.

Afterward, Sr. M. Clemens was placed in charge of our Tokyo stockroom and then the Hiroshima book center. It was in Hiroshima that she began a very significant collaboration with the Jesuits for the production of books in braille. She later extended this experience to Kobe, where it matured and grew through the help of the many lay collaborators whom she guided and involved in this mission.

Sr. M. Clemens' desire for self-donation was fully realized in the long period (1986-2015) in which she dedicated herself to the service of cook in the communities of Tokyo, Fukuoka and Nagoya. She is remembered especially in Fukuoka for her great help to our Pauline brothers in "feeding" the young SSP aspirants who flocked to that community in large numbers.

Her very presence, which could not go unnoticed, made the house serene and welcoming. She loved celebrations and took advantage of every opportunity to enhance those occasions by carefully preparing special Japanese delicacies and fostering an atmosphere that made living together more joyful. Her whole personality exuded enthusiasm for the Pauline charism and filial affection toward Fr. Paolo Marcellino, the Founder, Maestra Thecla and many other brothers and sisters she had met.

It was not easy for her to withdraw from the active apostolate, but about 5 years ago failing health made it necessary to transfer her to our assisted-living community of Hiratsuka, where she continued to dedicate herself to small community services while at the same time receiving care for her increasingly fragile health. Yesterday, her birthday, the urgent need for hospitalization marked the Lord's final call to her, to which she responded with her characteristic docility.

May the words of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, which guided her entire life, now accompany her at her meeting with God the Father, who is always close to us. May she already be rejoicing with him forever, surrounded by the sisters and brothers of the Pauline Family and the many other people who were blessed by her gentle gaze and kind words, brimming over with wisdom, hope and great love.

Affectionately,

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 2 September 2020