

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

At 8:15 p.m. today, one of our sisters in the San Raffaele (infirmary) wing of our community of Albano, Italy, said her eternal *yes* to the Lord:

**TAKEUCHI MACHIKO GEMMA – SR. MARIA FATIMA**  
**born in Nakatsu (Oita-ken), Japan, on 6 August 1929.**

Our hearts still echo with the many *thank you's* that our sister voiced continually—indeed, almost shouted in moments of intense suffering. Even though, in her last few months on earth, she could no longer speak, her mute but eloquent gratitude for every act of kindness and word of encouragement she received manifested the refinement and nobility of spirit characteristic of her throughout her life.

Sr. M. Fatima was baptized in 1949, at the age of 20. Two years later, on 23 May 1951, she entered the Congregation in the community of Fukuoka, Japan. As a postulant, she worked in the radio station run by our Pauline brothers. She made her novitiate in Tokyo, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1954. As a young professed, she carried out the diffusion apostolate in the dioceses of Osaka, Nagoya and Sendai. After her final vows, made in Tokyo on the Feast of St. Paul 1959, she was appointed superior of the community of Nagasaki, which was in the midst of its very challenging foundation period.

In 1961, Sr. M. Fatima was called to Rome to learn the Italian language, after which she was assigned to the Congregation's central apostolic offices. She returned to Tokyo two years later, enriched by this experience, which proved very useful to her in carrying out her new responsibilities as a formator and vocation directress. But the Lord called her to once again leave her native land for Italy, where she was assigned first to our Alba community and soon after to the Vatican in order to collaborate with the Japanese sector of Vatican Radio and also with the Congregation for the Clergy. Sr. M. Fatima's competence, discretion and kindness were all qualities that contributed very positively to her almost 30 years of faithful service (from 1970-1999) in these offices of the Holy See—a period during which she lived in our Generalate, Via dei Lucchesi (4<sup>th</sup> floor) and Borgo Angelico communities. During this time, she also honed her professional skills, receiving a diploma from the Vatican's School of Diplomatic and Archival Paleography and also a diploma from its Practical School of Theology and Canon Law.


When Sr. M. Fatima retired from her mission in the Vatican, Cardinal Dario Castrillon, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, said in his farewell speech: "As you close almost thirty years of truly exemplary service to the Primate of Peter in the Archives of this Dicastery, I feel a profound desire to express my heartfelt gratitude to you. You have brought intelligence, sensitivity, professionalism and a sound religious spirit to your service of the Lord in this sacred ministry. This Dicastery will always be your family and your many years of quiet industriousness will remain as precious 'stones' cemented into the ecclesial edifice for the building of the Kingdom of God." The Prefect then went on to emphasize Sr. M. Fatima's ardor, her dedication to her work, her gentle demeanor, her example of fervent religious spirit and her witness to the Gospel. On her part, our sister acknowledged all the good she had received from the Holy See throughout the years, confiding: "Buried under a mountain of paper, I felt myself to be spiritually associated to the mission of priests all over the world. I felt truly associated to priestly zeal."

In 1999, Sr. M. Fatima was assigned to our Albano community, where she worked for about 15 years in administrative roles and other hospital sectors. She enriched the community with her artistic abilities, skillfully crafting many decorations, and also assumed responsibility for the community bulletin board, which she used as a "show window" to present the Congregation's many initiatives to guests and visitors. She loved to sing and willingly accepted the request to serve as the community's "choir director."

About 5 years ago, Sr. M. Fatima was transferred to the San Raffaele (infirmary) wing of the community due to declining health, which was the result of advancing age and related complications. Aware that her earthly "race" was nearing its end, she lived the last stage of her life serenely, quietly waiting for her Spouse to call her to himself. And today the doors of heaven opened wide to welcome her to full communion and contemplation of the One she had always sought with great love.

Affectionately,

Rome, 8 October 2020

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan