

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
CASA GENERALIZIA
Via S. Giovanni Eudes, 25
00163 Roma
Tel. 06.661 3039 - Fax 06.661 57 208



Dearest Sisters,

On this festive day on which we are celebrating the memory of our Founder's holiness, the Divine Master visited the infirmary of our Alba community, Italy, at 5:00 a.m. to call to himself our sister:

SANTINI MAFALDA – SR. MARIA IDA
born in Pianello di Ostra (Ancona), Italy on 26 June 1928.

Sr. M. Ida entered the Congregation in the Motherhouse in Alba on 17 December 1941 at the age of 13, blazing the trail for her younger sister, Sr. Graziana, a fondly-remembered FSP who died in a car accident in Padua in 1963 at the end of a 2-week Bible mission.

Love for the Word of God also marked the life of Sr. M. Ida, who was well known for her intense apostolic commitment, her uncommon ability to weave relationships that enhanced the Pauline mission, and her sobriety of life, characterized by a search for the essentials. On her 60th anniversary of profession in 2008, she confided: "My journey in the religious life has been long and beautiful, lived in simplicity and serenity.... Looking back over it, I feel like I am watching a short documentary.... I want to thank my Spouse and ask his forgiveness for my many weaknesses, trusting in his infinite mercy."

The "short documentary" of Sr. M. Ida's Pauline life starts with her time of formation in Alba as a teenager. From there she was sent to La Spezia, where she had the chance to experience the joys and fatigues of the itinerant mission, and then to Rome to make her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 19 March 1948.

After her profession, Sr. M. Ida traveled the streets of Modena, Cremona, Ravenna, Naples and Livorno, her heart aflame and her bags overflowing with books, intent on reaching even the most remote houses in order to leave everyone a word of light and hope. How many Bible Weeks and Gospel Days she helped to organize and how many young women were attracted by her zeal for the Word of God! Her wonderful ability to communicate with others inspired families to lead a more fervent Christian life and invited young women to follow her example in the Pauline religious life.

From 1965-1979, Sr. M. Ida made a valuable contribution to the St. Paul Film Agencies of Bologna, Livorno and Salerno, where she enthusiastically learned the importance of cinema in the work of catechesis and the communication of Gospel values. Afterward, she spent about 10 years in the community of Alba where, with great zeal, she worked in the bindery, concretely preparing the "bread of the Word" by helping to bind and package thousands of Bibles that were then sent to every corner of Italy.

In Cremona, she was asked to dedicate herself to household services, which she readily did, but she also took every opportunity she could to go out to meet the people and share with them the wealth of her heart. She joyfully welcomed the Congregation's *Missionary Project*, launched in the 1990's, and was especially struck by the invitation to reflect on the Gospel story of the "widow's mite." When the Superior General urged every FSP to collaborate with the Project in the way possible to her, Sr. M. Ida wrote to her, saying: "It is too late for me to leave my own country but I want to commit myself to 'leaving' in a different way, that is, by replacing here at home a sister who offers to go abroad." And soon she was given the chance to do just this, even though it cost her a lot. In fact, in 1996 she was assigned to the community of Milan, where for the next 20 years she devoted herself with precision and love to the laundry, ironing and hospitality apostolates. About 3 years ago, due to the onset of Alzheimer's disease, she was obliged to leave "the city of the Madonnina," which by then had become her own city, and return to the Motherhouse in Alba—the community that had welcomed her in her youth. She lived the last stage of her life as a *strong woman*, never complaining about anything but instead thanking God for everything.

Last Saturday, Sr. M. Ida unexpectedly felt very unwell—a worrisome sign in these times because of the rapid spread of covid-19. She was concerned that the virus might enter the community through her and infect the other sisters in the infirmary. But her Spouse resolved the situation by calling her to himself to bestow on her the "crown of glory" prepared for all his apostles who await his coming with love.

Affectionately,

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 26 November 2020