

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

With deep emotion, we want to inform you that at 8:15 this morning, God the Father visited the infirmary of our Albano, Italy community, to call to himself our sister:

ATTARDO VINCENZA – SR. MARIA DOMENICA
born in Aragona (Agrigento), Italy on 8 June 1940.

In the simplicity of her life, Sr. M. Domenica was a great Pauline missionary, who dedicated all her energy, talents and above all her great heart to Africa for 35 years.

She entered the Congregation in the house of Agrigento on 5 Sept. 1962 but soon joined the large group of young women in Rome who were undergoing their initial formation to the Pauline life. After a time of apostolic experience in Naples, she made her novitiate in Alba, concluding it with her first profession 30 June 1966. She spent her time of temporary profession in Alba, working in the bindery and also helping out in the kitchen. After making her final vows in Rome on 29 June 1972, she left for the Congo. She herself had asked to be sent as a missionary to Africa and even though she did not feel equal to the requirements of this demanding work, she was nevertheless convinced that she could rely on the grace of her vocation.

Our Congolese communities of Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Kisangani can testify to her missionary fervor, courage, amiability and above all the great faith that allowed her to live, even during the difficult periods of war, in a spirit of self-surrender to the Lord.

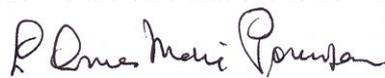
Sr. Domenica loved children very much and was happy when, almost disappearing behind the wheel of her big jeep, she was able to penetrate the jungles and other remote areas of the Congo, bringing schools and parishes the books the people so eagerly awaited for their human and Christian formation. A very cordial and kind person, Sr. Domenica found it easy to relate not only to children but also to interact comfortably with well-regarded people, ranging from school principals to military generals. She dedicated herself wholeheartedly to assisting the development of the Pauline mission in the Congo in many ways, including book center renovation and fostering the formation of our young African candidates to the Pauline life.

At various times, she served as superior of the Kisangani, Kinshasa and Lubumbashi communities and also served several terms of office as Delegation councilor and secretary. She was very happy to see the circumscription's progress in different areas of the apostolate and to have the chance to inaugurate beautiful, spacious book centers that proved to be true beacons of light in a culture thirsting for knowledge of the truth. Sr. Domenica was an eyewitness as to how the Blessed Mother safeguarded our sisters during the very difficult times of the Congo's first and second civil wars. In 1993, she wrote from Africa: "Our Lady is protecting us in the truest sense of the word. Several times military trucks have stopped at our front gate, preparing for a takeover of our compound, but each time there was always someone in the group who said: 'No, not here. Let's skip this property.'" And she concluded with joy, "Despite all the anxieties and miseries, our bookstores are always packed with people and are doing them great benefit. We fervently thank the Lord for this."

Since Sr. Domenica's health was always very fragile, in 2007 she accepted our Superior General's proposal that she move to the Generalate community in Rome to accompany its new kitchen staff and serve as a liaison between the cooks and the sisters in charge of dining room services. Over the next 13 years, she did her best to carry out her role as intermediary between the alternating lay staff and the sisters, striving to establish a serene, relaxed and familiar relationship with everyone. She was also always ready to contribute her expertise to preparing food items that she knew the sisters enjoyed very much, like limoncello, vegetables such as eggplant, olives, tomatoes, etc., preserved in oil, and a wide variety of homemade jams....

However, Sr. Domenica's health continued to deteriorate, primarily because of a serious heart ailment for which she had undergone major surgery. A few weeks ago, she spent some time in our Albano community in an effort to rebuild her strength, but she missed the Generalate and longed to return as quickly as possible to the community she loved so much and in which she was much loved. This morning an unexpected heart attack hastened her meeting with our Divine Master.

Recently, Sr. Domenica revealed with joy: "I feel like I am in the hands of the Lord!" It was in that attitude of peace and serenity that he took her home to heaven today and we are sure that she is now rejoicing in his presence forever. Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 18 December 2020