

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
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Dearest Sisters,

A little after midnight tonight, the Divine Master visited our Divine Master community, Alba, Italy to “open the eyes” of one of our sisters to eternal life:

CASTELLINO CATERINA – SR. MARIA CARLA
born in Cuneo, Italy on 12 May 1938.

The life of this dear sister, marked by simplicity and faith, is shrouded in the grace of the mystery of God. She entered the Congregation in Alba on 24 October 1959, following in the footsteps of her older sister, Sr. Magdala. She underwent her initial formation in the Motherhouse and after a short apostolic experience in Alessandria was sent to Rome to make her novitiate. This stage of Sr. Carla’s formation journey ended with her first professed on 30 June 1963. She spent her Juniorate in Rome, working zealously in the very busy shipping department, and afterward was assigned to Alba to help in the infirmary. Taking into consideration her kindness and discretion, Sr. Carla’s superiors offered her the opportunity to train as a nurse and we are sure that our sister never imagined how great an impact this orientation would make on her whole Pauline life. She obtained a diploma as a registered nurse in 1969.

In 1973, while in the community of Albano where she was receiving treatment for a serious illness, her sister, Sr. Magdala, suffered a brain aneurysm during a course of spiritual exercises. From that moment on, the two sisters were called to unite their lives to that of the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. For over 30 years, Sr. Carla’s cot alongside Sr. Magdala’s bed became the altar from which she offered her life on a daily basis to the Lord because she was one of the few people who could understand what her sister was saying and facilitate her communication with the outside world. While sharing her sister’s sufferings, Sr. Carla continued to dedicate herself tirelessly as a nurse to whole community, especially its most needy members, first in Alba and then in the Thecla Merlo community of Albano from 1992 until Sr. Magdala’s death in 2005. From this community, Sr. Carla worked with great dedication in the pharmacy of Queen of Apostles Hospital. Quietly and with smile, she walked the short distance between the two edifices numerous times a day to carry out her duties. And in spite of her responsibilities toward her sister, she found time to actively participate in community meetings and events.

Sr. Carla’s silence, kindness, goodness and sweet smile—all integral elements of her personality—continued to be her defining features after she returned to Alba in 2006, first to the St. Joseph community and then to the Divine Providence community in the same compound. In 2007, she wrote: “Everything is a gift of God: my life is entirely in his hands and I want to offer every atom of myself to him in union with Jesus. May my presence and my service, whatever form this takes, be an expression of peace and true benevolence. I thank the Lord with all my heart for everything...”

A few years ago, Sr. Carla had to withdraw from frontline apostolic service due to the onset of Alzheimer’s disease. Transferred to the Alba infirmary, she carried out the various duties entrusted to her with precision, attention and great love. By now, her many experiences had literally consumed her. The last stage of her Pauline journey was marked by her customary lifestyle of moderation, discretion and concern for others rather than for herself. About a week ago, she tested positive for Covid-19, along with other members of the Alba community, and her already fragile health was not able to overcome the virus. The Lord Jesus, Light of the world, visited her in the middle of night and with his salvific and regenerating “touch” opened her eyes so that she could rejoice in his presence forever.

While we thank this dear sister for all the good she disseminated around her, we are particularly close to our Motherhouse community, whose members in this moment are called to suffer and offer themselves to the Lord with a truly maternal attitude in order that the Word might race ahead and spread to the ends of the earth.

Affectionately,

Rome, 4 December 2020


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan