

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

We received the news that at 4:15 p.m. today, the Lord visited the infirmary of our Alba, Italy community, to call to new life in the kingdom of heaven an ardent Pauline missionary:

MEI BERNARDETTA – SR. MARIA CRISTINA
born in Sant’Antioco (Cagliari), Italy on 23 December 1935.

From the very beginning of her Pauline life, this dear sister expressed a deep love for her vocation and an untiring apostolic dynamism in her desire to bring the Word to all, overcoming all barriers. A native of Sardinia, she entered the Congregation in the house of Cagliari on 12 Nov. 1958. A few months later, she was sent to Rome and then to Siena to carry out the diffusion apostolate. She returned to Rome to make her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 30 June 1962. During her Juniorate, she had the chance to perfect her cultural formation and carry out the Pauline mission in Udine. Yearning to be available and docile to the will of God, she wrote to the Superior General on the occasion of the renewal of her vows: “I want to be a docile instrument in your hands, which are the hands of God.... I am ready to go wherever obedience sends me.”

After her perpetual profession, made in Rome in 1967, Sr. Cristina was inserted in the Verona community and had the chance to spend a few months in the Center for Non-Pauline Editions in Rome—an experience that would be very useful to her in the future. She expressed her joy and pride at being a Daughter of St. Paul and felt very ready for her upcoming mission *ad gentes* because she had an open and frank character, together with robust health and a lot of good will.

Her first destination was Caracas, Venezuela, where she arrived in 1976. With enthusiasm, she threw herself into the diffusion apostolate, favoring the book center as a place of evangelization and cultural promotion. In 1984, she was appointed superior of the Rio Piedras community (San Juan, Puerto Rico), while simultaneously working full time in the book center and in the preparation of radio programs.

She was then transferred to Barquisimeto, Venezuela, where once again she worked in the book center and as the community’s bookkeeper. In 1992, in Rio Piedras, she continued her apostolic commitments while also serving as councilor of the Venezuela-Puerto Rico Delegation, to which the Dominican Republic was soon added. In 1996, she helped to open the “Dos Caminos” community, Caracas, of which she was appointed superior. Because of her vast knowledge of the book center mission, she concentrated on distributing our products to parishes, secular bookstores, etc.

Looking back over the years, she wrote to the Superior General in 1999: “I have re-examined my experiences in these 23 years in the missions and I think I can say that they have been years of unconditional self-donation, without half measures. But I am ready and willing to carry out another mission, if that is what you want.... I feel the need to tear myself away from Venezuela as an act of love toward the One who guides my life. It would be a death for me—a radical change, a total detachment from myself and a constructive fresh beginning.” As bursar, superior and book center manager, she accompanied the development of the Pauline mission on this Caribbean island, famous for the warmth of its people. Her apostolic service was truly full-time: even during her brief periods of vacation in Italy, she was always busy selecting material for catechists, priests and lay people.

With suffering, Sr. Cristina returned to Italy in 2017 because of health problems. She was assigned to Alba but her heart was still in the missions and she never forgot the people she had loved so much. The Lord’s visit came suddenly: a heart attack opened the doors of heaven to her and now she contemplates the face of God and has received the reward of those who believed his promises.

Affectionately,

Rome, 30 December 2020


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan