

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
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Dearest Sisters,

The Lord has once again visited our Alba community. At about 3:00 p.m. today one of its members was called to contemplate the face of our Father forever:

TURCATO SR. BERTILLA
born in Villaverla (Vicenza), Italy, on 18 May 1937.

Here is another sister about whom we can recount only good things, only the love that oriented her existence beginning with the moment she entered the Congregation in the community of Alba on 11 October 1954, motivated by a deep yearning for holiness. The letters she wrote requesting admission to the various stages of the formation process all witness to her sole desire: “to become holy and to do great good through the Pauline apostolate.” *Holiness* and *mission*: these were the two flames that Sr. Bertilla cultivated and rekindled throughout her life. On this journey, she was accompanied, like a sweet secret, by one of the many little handwritten notes she received from Prima Maestra Thecla, who wrote: “See the will of God or his permission in everything. Do his will well. Ask the Blessed Mother to help you.”

After a period of apostolic experience in Novara, Bertilla was sent to Rome to make her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 30 June 1958. She spent her Juniorate in Novara, where she visited families and businesses, toting heavy bags of books into alpine valleys as far as the Swiss border. She wanted to give her *all* to Jesus and to the Pauline mission, nourishing in her heart the words the Founder had spoken on the occasion of her perpetual profession in Rome in 1963—words that gave profound significance to the vows she made: “I offer, give and consecrate all,” he emphasized. “*All*: that is the key word. Your holiness depends on that *all*. If we give ourselves entirely to the Lord, if we give him our mind, will, heart, body, everything we have or ever will have, then we will truly belong to him.”

Aflame with this desire, Sr. Bertilla then went on to disseminate the Word of God in the diocese of Trent. The sisters who shared parts of her journey over the years underscore that she *poured her heart and soul* into her mission. They say that she had a wonderful ability to empathize with people so as to help them get to know and love Jesus Word. She took advantage of the summer months in particular to disseminate books for every category of people in the mountain villages, particularly in the Val di Fassa, which she knew down to the most remote homesteads. The people of that region looked forward eagerly to her annual visits as they would to the arrival of a dear friend.

In 1977, Sr. Bertilla was transferred to Pordenone to work in the book center. With true apostolic passion, she made the most of every opportunity to express her creativity, become familiar with the Center’s publications and audiovisuals, and enter into the hearts of people through the material she offered them. She was an attentive, thoughtful and competent promoter of books, perfecting her skills in this art over the years in the diffusion centers of Mantua, Cremona, Bologna and the Via Albani center in Milan, which she herself had the joy of launching.

In Como, the community in which she lived from 2005-2017, the people still remember her very fondly. Although her health had begun to give her problems, she continued to dedicate herself to the apostolate in countless ways, even making little pearl rosaries to give to the book center customers. If they insisted on recompensing her for the gift, she happily told them that she would send their offerings to the missions. Her *hands of gold* were tireless.... But like a true Pauline, she never neglected any opportunity for study and updating. She continually watched films and other audiovisuals so as to be able to present them to the book center’s clients.

Three years ago, dementia and Alzheimer’s disease made it necessary to transfer Sr. Bertilla to the infirmary of Alba, where the Lord prepared her for her definitive encounter with him as a result of contagion by covid-19. But Sr. Bertilla was ready to respond to his call and hastened to meet him with her lamp lit, her life adorned with all the good she had accomplished.

Affectionately,

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 11 December 2020