

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

On this first Sunday of Lent, after a long period of illness, at 5 p.m. (local time), in the Regina Apostolorum hospital in Albano, the merciful Father called to himself our sister:

**CARELLA VINCENZA Sr RAFFAELLA MARIA**  
**born in Lecce on 13 June 1935**

About ten days ago, Sr. Raffaella had to be admitted to the *Covid* unit of the hospital because—following the serious contagion which had occurred in the “Giacomo Alberione” community in Albano and, as she herself was positive for the virus —she was unable to receive the care and therapeutic support she needed, in the community, due to the terminal cancer from which she was suffering.

Sr Raffaella had been in the Giacomo Alberione community of Albano for about three years, having been forced, for health reasons, to leave the community in Rome where she had lived for the last forty years of her Pauline life. It was a very painful transition for her, but the Lord, in his paternal benevolence, granted her the grace to gradually abandon herself into the hands of the sisters and nurses who accompanied her with great tenderness in this last stretch of her life.

She entered the Congregation in the house in Rome on 6 October 1958, after having obtained her teacher's diploma and having spent some time teaching. Her cultural preparation enabled her to help right from the start at the "Centro Altre Edizioni" and to complete her studies by attending philosophy courses in the Congregation. After a period of itinerant missionary work in Naples, she returned to Rome for her novitiate, which she concluded with her first profession on 30 June 1962. The time of juniorate was a joyful experience for her, during which she helped in the offices of the Apostolic Center in Rome and in the Catechetical Office in Naples.


In 1967, on the occasion of her perpetual profession, she wrote to the Superior General: “I love the Congregation as my new family and I want to give it all my strength... The God who called me despite my weaknesses sustains me and encourages me to continue on this path, which I feel, with conviction, to be mine... I am ready to do the Lord's will, *however* and *wherever*.”

After her perpetual profession, she was assigned to the communities of Bari, Foggia and Lecce. In Naples, she was again engaged for some time in the diocesan Catechetical Office. In 1975, she had the opportunity of a brief experience abroad, in the communities of Bogotá and Cucuta (Colombia). On her return to Rome, she underwent treatment for a breast tumor, but as soon as it was possible, she continued to dedicate herself with passion to the "Centro Altre Edizioni", where she felt she could give the best of herself. For a few years, she stayed in the community infirmary before being called to work in the Vatican offices. From 1993 to 2002 she worked as an archivist in the administrative offices with competence and discretion, and from 2007 to 2011 she helped in the Vatican Apostolic Archives.

She carried within herself an insatiable desire for God's love, which she wanted to “touch” and “experience”. She was always searching, always willing to help people in need, sharing homeopathic cures and natural remedies, being an expert in this realm. Suffering for many years from “Paget's disease”, which causes one's bones to become particularly fragile, she faced this disease and the metastases that was invading her body with great fortitude and determination, maintaining her independence as long as she could. About three years ago, in a spirit of surrender, she joined the Giacomo Alberione community to receive the treatment she needed. The Lord, the faithful and merciful God, accompanied her also in this last stretch of her journey, a long period of time in the desert, that today has opened before her and welcomed her into the light of the Promised Land.

Affectionately.

Rome, 21 February 2021.

  
sr Anna Maria Parenzan