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Dear Sisters,

This morning, at 6 a.m. (local time), in the Covid wing of the Regina Apostolorum Hospital in Albano, one of our sisters entered into the light of the kingdom of the saints and the life that never ends:

SPINUCCI NEDDA sr IDA PAOLA

born in Comunanza (Ascoli Piceno), Italy on 20 January 1924

To speak of Sr Ida Paola is to recall very fruitful years of the Pauline mission, in which the Daughters of St Paul, guided by the far-sighted wisdom of the Founder and Maestra Thecla, were able to develop, with courage and great faith, apostolic expressions that had the flavor of prophecy.

Sr Ida Paola entered the Congregation in Rome on 8 November 1945. She spent her time of initial formation in Rome and Grottaferrata, and at the end of her novitiate, made her first profession in Rome on 25 January 1949. During the period of temporary vows, she had the opportunity to complete her classical and theological studies, and to gain experience in the offices of the “centro apostolico”. After her perpetual profession in 1954, she was transferred to France as the postulant formator. But providentially, for health reasons, she had to return to Italy and was soon involved in the preparation of the women's magazine *Così*, whose first issue came out for Christmas 1955. It was a new and courageous initiative that required creativity, taking risks, openness to collaboration with lay professionals and a great deal of faith in the grace of vocation. In the mind of the Founder, the magazine was to be aimed at young women and to reach them in their concrete situations in life. The varied content, presented in a light-hearted and modern way, ranged from fashion to etiquette, from fiction to “letters of the heart”, from current events to suggestions for raising children. There were also investigative, cultural articles and presentations of biblical figures. A much-appreciated section, almost always edited by Sr Ida Paola, with a fresh and youthful style, was the commentary on the Sunday Gospel.

She was the first editor-in-chief of the magazine *Così*, and she became its director in 1961. By the conclusion of 1966, this beautiful and incisive but also very painful and difficult initiative had to come to an end because of financial difficulties. However, Sr Ida Paola was ready to start another project, together with Sr Filippina Busso: the promotion of the recording department, with the help and support of world-famous musicians, first and foremost Ennio Morricone. The *Centro Dischi*, which had already begun in the early 1950s, opened up to collaboration with the most talented professionals in the field of music and, in the wake of the liturgical reform promoted by Vatican II, new series were launched that brought prestige to our publishing house.

In 1970, a new and perhaps unexpected “parenthesis” opened up for Sr Ida Paola fully placing her among the beloved major superiors. In a period of experimentation and subsequent redesigning of the circumscription of Italy, she was appointed Provincial Superior for two consecutive terms of the Province of Southern Italy, later called the Province of Naples. Although she had no experience in government, she knew how to accompany the sisters in a time of particular uncertainty through dialogue, presence and a wise openness to the “new”. She herself described the task of the superior as one who “knows the art of repairing holes, of mending, of gathering the worn-out clothing, gently taking them in hand and, with the use of gloves, patiently placing them back where they belong...”.

At the end of her term of office, in November 1979, a new, important challenge awaited her: to restart and unify the Editorial Center in its new location in Milan, Via Paolo Uccello, after years of dispersion in various cities throughout Italy. It was a genuine adventure for her and for the other sisters who were called to take on this task. With profound sensitivity, intuition and apostolic flair, she was able to reorganize, solidify and qualify the publishing house, which in 1991 expanded to new premises in Via Albani, moving from a family-run business to a well-defined organizational structure.

She was convinced that a publisher should “hold the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other” because, as she herself said, “the Word illuminates history and urges the Pauline editor to read it with the wisdom of God”. She wanted to “keep her eyes open to everyday realities, marked by ever-new trends and phenomena, to take an interest in every small and large historical, social, religious and human event”. She had fully embraced Alberione's principle of “speaking about everything in a Christian way” and was convinced that “the fatigue of editorial work is amply compensated by the certainty that in preparing and breaking the bread of the Word, people grow in the sphere of God.”

In 2003, she left the Milan Publishing Center and continued her apostolic service in the mini-media sector in Rome for a while. However, she soon withdrew from all editorial duties to dedicate herself, in obedience, to the switchboard (centralino) of the provincial house in Via Vivanti (Rome), and then the Divine Master house in Via Antonino Pio. She never lost her vitality nor her desire to look beyond. In poetic tones she confided to a friend: “The roots guarantee solidity and offer a certain kind of consolation-comfort to those who walk on the last stretch of road that will flow into the light.” And she gave thanks to the Author of life and friendship while she “awaited the new sun, where colors in harmony will reveal the tender face of the Father”. She cherished in her heart and loved to share the unforgettable experiences she lived in contact with Maestra Thecla, particularly remembering her maternal delicacy.

A few months ago, due to her advancing age, she joined the Giacomo Alberione community in Albano. It was here that she was exposed to *Covid-19* which, after a short stay in the Regina Apostolorum Hospital in Albano, became the “doorway of light that led her into God”, as she had described the image of the moment of her death.

We thank Sr Ida Paola because, in the different tasks entrusted to her, she kept the flame of our writing and editorial vocation alive and brightly shining, urging us to be "antennae" ready to catch the seeds of life, newness and good that the Spirit also awakens in our time.

Affectionately,


sr Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 18 February 2021