



ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
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Dearest Sisters

This morning, at 8 a.m., (local time), the Divine Master visited again the Giacomo Alberione community in Albano, to take with him to Heaven, a sister whose life was marked by the great mystery of suffering:

**LAURIA PANTANO DOMENICA Sr MARIA LILIA
born in Santo Stefano Quisquina (Agrigento) Italy on 8 March 1924**

In 2002, Sr M Lilia was transferred to this community to obtain the assistance needed due to a serious bone disease, rheumatoid arthritis, which often made her cry out in pain and which, over time, made her body become completely stiffened. Perhaps the deeper explanation for this chronic inflammatory disease can be found in one of her writings from the year 2000. In an unsteady handwriting, Sr M Lilia expressed her offering: "I thank the Lord for the grace of making Him known and loved through the spreading of His word, with love and sacrifice. In this time that He still wishes to grant me now, I will pray and offer for vocations and for the sisters who are on the front lines, for the missionaries, so that they may be the transparent reflection of the face of the Master." Sr M Lilia suffered indeed and offered herself for the Gospel, for all missionaries, for vocations. When she was still in the book center in Salerno, in the year of the Great Jubilee, she described her own experience with expressions that have a mystical flavor:

"I have always wanted to be a missionary and even today I carry the mission in my heart, in my daily life, in the people I meet. I try to be close to some missionaries through writing letters. Now I am in the final stretch of the road; the Lord knows how long it will be. I try to live my days in silence and in prayer, making the counter – where I open the packages – the altar of my offering to the Trinity who lives in my soul. I ask the Divine Master to experience his intimacy, and I ask Our Lady to help me to walk in his presence. I have always wanted to be a piece of the large Host, and sometimes I feel I am one, because I live and work for Christ the living Word, Jesus Way, Truth and Life."

A hymn of thanksgiving constantly burst forth from the life of this dear sister: "Every day I thank the Lord for the gift of the great Pauline vocation, for the grace of having met and communicated with our saints: Primo Maestro, Prima Maestra, Blessed Giaccardo who offered me so many spiritual riches. Often in front of the Tabernacle, I say to Jesus: why have you called me, so poor and wretched, into this wonderful congregation? He revealed himself [to me] in an hour of adoration, as He was solemnly exposed in my parish. I was still an adolescent, but I loved the Lord and I learned to pray much with the help of my spiritual director who was not in favor of my choice because of my frail health. But the Lord called me and gave me the necessary strength and I tried to give everything I had. I have always wanted to be a missionary and even today I carry the spirit of mission in my heart, in my daily life, and among the people I meet."

She entered the Congregation in the house in Palermo, on 27 September 1940, at the age of sixteen. She spent her time of formation (which coincided with the period of the Second World War) in Rome, Chiavari and Brescia and, then went to Alba for her novitiate where she made her first profession on 29 June 1946. As a young professed sister, she was assigned to the community of Palermo to learn how to serve in the book center and then, in Rome, Alba and Milan she carried out propaganda to families, parishes and institutions.

From 1954 to 2002 – except for a period when she had to care for her seriously ill parents– she carried out her mission in the book centers of Milan, Messina, Agrigento and Salerno, where she felt totally fulfilled as a Pauline apostle. She constantly nourished a profound intimate desire "not to run in vain, to know how to live life day by day, to deeply love the sisters, to seek the essential, giving of self with the generosity of Paul and consuming [herself] in service as a docile Daughter of St Paul." Indeed, Sr M Lilia was consumed with pain, in the solitude of her room, from which, however, she travelled around the world, feeling close to all the missionaries of the Gospel.

We thank the Lord for having given to the Pauline Family these "pearls", these treasures that have enriched our journey through history and now, before God, continue to intercede for us all.

Affectionately,


sr Anna Maria Parenzan

Roma, 6 March 2021.