

I CHOSE TO SAY YES TO GOD—ALWAYS!



I was born in Montegrosso d'Asti, Italy. My father was a farmer and I was the sixth of his eight children. Why did I choose to enter the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Paul? One day two FSPs visited my parish and I saw that they were very spontaneous and full of enthusiasm. They didn't scold us girls because our dresses were too short or too long.... "If a person can become a nun without having to give up her unique identity," I mused, "then I might consider the religious vocation...."

I entered our Congregation while I was still a high-school student. In Alba, I came in contact with Fr. Alberione and the first Sisters who followed him. I was impressed by their fervor, style of life and family spirit.

Fr. Alberione was a small man with a stooped back. When I first saw him, I was disappointed because I had grown up on a farm and all the men in my family were big and robust. But soon after this, while listening to one of the Founder's sermons, I came to understand why everyone said he was a person who inspired and drew others to the religious life. I was fascinated by the Pauline apostolate, which involved visiting families and finding new ways to approach people.

As my time of formation drew to a close, I was suddenly plunged into a state of interior crisis. I couldn't remember why I had ever decided to become a nun. This crisis lasted almost a year. What was I to do? I began to reflect more seriously on what I could offer God so as to feel fulfilled in the religious life. I decided to give him what was dearest to me: my capacity to love and my freedom. In offering him these gifts, I finally felt at peace and after my perpetual profession I felt a new energy within me.

AMONG THE NON-CHRISTIANS OF TAIWAN

The Superior General needed 22 missionaries for Latin America, Africa and Asia. I was told: "You will be going to Taiwan." My initial reaction was: "Taiwan? Where on earth is Taiwan?!" But aloud I simply said yes to this call of the Lord.

I arrived in Taipei (the capital of Taiwan) 45 years ago: on 1 December 1972, to be exact. I was not afraid when I left Italy but when I reached my destination and left the plane, my first thought was to turn around and go home. I didn't understand anything that the people around me were saying and I asked myself: "What on earth is happening to me?" But the Lord knows me better than I know myself and I soon came to feel very much at home in the Far East. I found the art and music of this part of the world very appealing, and the calligraphy in Chinese paintings consoled and inspired me. Living among non-Christians was a big challenge to me because I was forced to answer questions no one had ever asked me before. But this helped me discover even more profound reasons for my faith—motives I probably would never have bothered to search for if I had remained in the predominantly Catholic environment of my homeland.

My apostolic and pastoral experiences in Taiwan were very beautiful. The Pauline apostolate brought me face to face with the local people and their concrete situations. In carrying out my mission, I also visited Buddhist temples so as to understand how to approach the members of other faiths and share my experiences with them. I noticed that when individuals had problems, they came to pray with us, and on those occasions we would use not only the Bible but also texts of Eastern wisdom.

INVITATION TO GO TO PAKISTAN

Now I am beginning a new chapter of my life. A couple of months ago, I received a phone call from our Superior General, Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan, who said: "Since you've been in Asia for many years and are currently free [of governing responsibilities], it occurred to me to send you to Pakistan...."

I never thought such a radical change would be asked of me. Listening to her appeal, I was interiorly shaken. I felt like Nicodemus: "How can anyone who is already old be born all over again?" But I am placing this new adventure in the hands of Jesus. I know that the life of the Daughters of St. Paul in Pakistan is not easy, but how could I refuse this request? I don't know how things will turn out but I am ready to offer God even my failures as a human being. I will be bringing with me from Taiwan a wealth of apostolic experiences. Although I was initially apprehensive, I now feel more interiorly free and less worried about the future. I know that God will never abandon me!

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