

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
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Dear Sisters,

Almost on the eve of the World Day of Social Communications, the Divine Master has called to Himself a wonderful Pauline apostle, an expert communicator. At 1.45 p.m. (local time), in the Santa Isabel Hospital of São Paulo (Brazil), one of our sisters quietly went home to the Lord:

VEGA GARCIA PURIFICACION sr M. ALBA
born in Rial (Spain) on 30 April 1944.

Sr M. Alba gave to the Church and to the Congregation the human and spiritual richness of her personality, always open to the new, to encounters with others, and to the search for new horizons for the mission. As a young professed, she expressed the desire to be a missionary *ad gentes*. Although always remaining in Brazil, she cultivated a universal, missionary heart, concerned with communicating the fascination of the Gospel to all. At this moment of Sr Alba's death, the whole Church in Brazil, represented by the bishops of the various dioceses, is united in her memory, and there are countless messages of condolence being shared, remembering her as an extraordinary woman of vigorous strength and extreme delicacy, a true pioneer in the field of communication and an authentic sister for pastors and those working in the field of evangelization.

Sr M. Alba entered the Congregation in Porto Alegre (Brazil) on 18 March 1962. Four years later, she went to São Paulo DM for her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 30 June 1967. She had the opportunity of deepening her cultural formation for two years of study and she was then assigned to the communities of Pelotas and São Paulo DM, where she carried out propaganda and worked in the book center. In Pelotas, she worked in the diocese's public relations office, a vast field of apostolate, a point of union between the various local media. This was the beginning of that ecclesial service oriented toward the pastoral care of communications, which characterized almost her entire Pauline life. In order to be better qualified, she obtained a degree in communication in Belo Horizonte, specializing in journalism. She soon had the opportunity for an experience of intense collaboration in the Church, first in the Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte as editor of the weekly *Jornal de Opinião* and then, at a national level, in Brasilia, at the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Communication of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB) and as coordinator of the Press Office. In this capacity, she rendered great service to the Regions and Dioceses for about thirteen years, organizing meetings, but above all developing and disseminating thought on the role of communication in evangelization.

In 1999, there was another parenthesis in her life with her involvement in the editorial team of the Brazilian magazine *Família Cristã*. She made herself available with enthusiasm and humility, with her usual delicacy, kindness and ability to create communion. In 2005, she was called to serve as provincial vicar and councilor for the apostolate. She was elected to represent the province in the 8th and 9th General Chapters: her presence everywhere radiated the ecclesial breath that constituted her very life. In 2011, after another interlude dedicated to the magazine *Família Cristã*, she was stationed again in Belo Horizonte where she was engaged primarily with the task of developing the Pastoral Care Plan for Communication in the diocese.

In the last few years, the onset of cancer sapped her strength but not her desire to be useful, especially by initiating young Paulines into the difficult task of editing and directing the magazine. As usual, her commitment was total and, even though the disease was consuming her, she continued to work, with an incredible inner strength that certainly came from her intimacy with the Lord, from the prayer she never neglected, from her tender devotion to the Virgin Mary whom she invoked daily with the rosary. Last December, as she was drawing to the end of her course, she brought to completion the final issue of the printed magazine, which then switched to its current digital format.

In her life, the invitation of Blessed Garrido, which Pope Francis addressed to all journalists, was fulfilled: "Open your eyes with wonder to what you will see, and let your hands be filled with the freshness of the sap, so that others, when they read you, will touch with their own hands the palpating miracle of life."

Affectionately,


Sr Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 12 May 2021