

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
CASA GENERALIZIA
Via S. Giovanni Eudes, 25
00163 Roma
Tel. 06.661 3039 - Fax 06.661 57 208



Dear Sisters,

Yesterday at 10 p.m.(local time), at the Policlinico Umberto I in Rome, one of our sisters suffering the effects of *Covid-19*, was brought into the arms of the good and merciful Father:

ALEANDRI Sr MARIA PIA
born in L'Aquila on 25 December 1933

She was called to contemplate that luminous Face which, as a skilled artisan, she printed on the icons that she sent all over the world: icons depicting the Pauline devotions but also classical images of the Christian tradition. For her, they were windows to the transcendent and expressed her simple soul, open to beauty. And it was precisely in the joy with which she carried out this service that the true face of Maria Pia was discovered, as if by magic: a concrete sister, an expert in the most varied trades (from carpentry to gardening to cooking...), capable of gestures of true tenderness. Faithful to the Master who had called her at an early age, she received from him the strength to leave a large family, one that she always loved and one which deeply loved her. She was proud of her homeland, Abruzzo, and as long as her strength allowed it, she did not fail to participate in the solemn rite of the *Perdonanza*, the most important city festival in L'Aquila. In recent years she had shared with her loved ones the suffering of the arduous post-earthquake reconstruction that had led to the destruction of places very dear to her.

She entered the Congregation in Rome on 15 December 1957, at the age of 24. During the time of her formation, she had the possibility of an apostolic experience in the community of Aosta before going to Rome for her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 30 June 1961. As a young professed, she was assigned to the community of Salerno and later to Massa Carrara and Bergamo where she spread the Gospel to families, schools and offices. In 1970, she was called to the mission "ad gentes" in the new foundation of Lagos (Nigeria). Africa remained in her heart and she was happy when she could reconnect with some Nigerian sisters who had joined the local congregations. On her return to Italy in 1972, she was assigned to the generalate which became her community for most of her life, and from where she travelled with her heart to every part of the world. She had a special affection for Pakistan, where she had stayed for some time to help the sisters. Generosity was one of her most beautiful characteristics: with kindness and competence, she welcomed guests, especially family members, making sure they had everything they needed and graciously serving them at mealtimes.

Maria Pia was always on the move: with worn-out shoes, she never tired of walking the crowded streets of the traditional Roman market of Porta Portese. She was happy when she could accompany her sisters to admire the artistic beauties of Rome and the precious mosaics of Byzantine art in the Hagia Sophia. For many of us, she was 'Piuccia', an affectionate nickname given to her by Sr Maria Cevolani when they were together in Via Laurentina (Rome). We cannot forget her concern for the sisters of the general governments that succeeded one another during the long years of her assignment to the generalate community: an attention that went from preparing coffee to cleaning the rooms, to welcoming them joyfully after long journeys. Nor can we forget her countless Nativity scenes at Christmas, indeed... true works of art.

We recall Maria Pia's profound suffering when, in the spring of 2019, she had to join the community in Albano for health reasons. It was a suffering that she was able to integrate over time, reaching the point of accepting her new situation in peace. She had recently celebrated sixty years of religious profession: on that feast she received the embrace of Don Valdir de Castro, Superior General of the Society of St Paul. Her gratitude was great and repeatedly she said: "How can I ever thank you?"

In recent weeks a bad pneumonia was the warning sign of the presence of *Covid-19*. She was admitted to the "Umberto I" General Hospital in Rome on 29 July, and after long days in a medically-induced coma, she was called home to the Father, who enfolded her in his loving embrace.

Affectionately,

Rome, 13 August 2021


sr Anna Maria Parenzan