

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
CASA GENERALIZIA
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Dearest Sisters,

We received the news that on this first Saturday of the month, at about 6:00 a.m. local time, one of our sisters of the Boston community, U.S.A., was called to eternal life:

WICKENHISER MARGARET – SR. MARY MARK
born in Lackawanna, New York, United States, on 14 September 1941.

She would have celebrated her 80th birthday in just a few days and, like every year, she was preparing for a joyful commemoration of this gift of life. We are sure she never imagined that the Lord, in his loving providence, was preparing on his part a festive banquet for her in the kingdom of heaven.

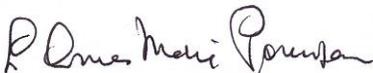
Sr. M. Mark entered the Congregation in the community of Boston on 30 August 1958, following the example of her older sister, Sr. M. David, who had preceded her by several years. After a time of study and apostolic experience, she made her novitiate in Boston, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1961. During her Juniorate, she carried out the technical apostolate and also itinerant evangelization in New York. After her perpetual profession in 1966, she was called to dedicate the wealth of her mind and heart to the circumscription's young candidates through the teaching apostolate. Very soon, in 1970, she was entrusted with the service of superior of the house of New Orleans, and later that of St. Louis. She was then reassigned to Boston to manage the shipping department. Considering Sr. M. Mark's apostolic enthusiasm and her gift for writing, she was soon oriented toward specialized studies in the theological, spiritual and pastoral fields in view of editing and drawing up catechetical texts. Her commitment in this area was truly praiseworthy. Her dedication to writing/editorial work, particularly in catechetics, and her search for new paths to enable the Word to race ahead, distinguished her entire Pauline life. It was a commitment she carried out with passion and competence, suspended only during the years in which she was called to serve as provincial superior (1989-1993) and then local superior (2001-2007) in the community of New Orleans.

For over 10 years, Sr. M. Mark served as director of the province's Publishing House. She spent and overspent herself to keep the flame of the catechetical vocation burning brightly because the Founder considered it to be "our first and fundamental apostolic activity." She spearheaded the catechetical series, *Alive in Jesus*, authored and edited many prayer books (she had just completed a collection of prayers to St. Joseph) and had just started working on a new series of Spiritual Classics. A woman of profound faith, with a reserved and shy nature, she never put herself forward but neither did she ever shirk a responsibility. She was rich in common sense and wisdom and was a person one could trust. On her 60th anniversary of profession, she confided: "The intensity, exuberance and effervescence of the early years of profession have long passed, but they have been replaced by a deep-seated joy and certainty that I am where God wants me to be.... My vocation to follow Jesus Christ more closely as a woman religious has involved me in a way of life that transcends my natural abilities and personality. More and more, I have learned to recognize my dependence on God, who has used whatever skills and knowledge I have acquired.... I continue to trust that God will be with me and bring me safely home to himself."

Sr. M. Mark's sudden death took everyone by surprise. Just a few weeks ago, she informed the sisters of the province that the results of a CT scan revealed a benign mass located in her pelvic area. An operation on 2 September to drain the cyst was successful. Yesterday, Sr. M. Mark returned to her community to continue her convalescence. She was in pain but things seemed to be going smoothly. At 4:00 o'clock this morning, the on-duty nurse came by to give her another dose of pain medication. When she returned two hours later, our sister was already in the arms of her heavenly Father, who had carried her safely home to heaven, just as she wished.

May Sr. M. Mark intercede for all of us, asking that we might grasp in an ever-fresh way the call to be "the voices and pens of God" (cf. FSP54, p. 255) so as to irradiate the light of faith and hope to humanity today.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 4 September 2021