

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

We received the news that at 11:37 a.m. today (local time), God the merciful Father visited our community of Mumbai, India, to call to unending life our sister:

D'SOUZA PHILOMENA – SR. MARY SCHOLASTICA
born in Vile Parle (Bombay), India, on 28 August 1933.

Sr. Scholastica entered the Congregation in the house of Bombay (present-day Mumbai) on the Liturgical Memorial of St. Thecla, 23 September 1951, only a month after the arrival of the first Daughters of St. Paul to establish our presence in that country. She liked to reminisce that her family home was located right across the street from the hospital where the FSPs were temporarily living. She herself had just completed her studies and celebrated her birthday and she wanted to share the sweets she had received with these new missionaries to India. She brought them the treats and M. Paola Cordero, with keen intuition, gave her a novena to St. Paul and invited her to visit them again. Within a few days, Philomena entered the Congregation, wanting to share with the sisters that time of grace as fully as possible. Her unexpected entrance was a blessing for her and also for the little group of FSPs who, with the arrival of their first aspirant, were able to begin spreading the Word of God to the families of that immense metropolis and its surrounding villages.

The entrance of this first vocation, a true gift of God, was recorded as follows: “We welcomed the new candidate joyfully. Maestra Paola gave a brief talk to her and the thirty or so relatives who accompanied her. The young woman handed over her jewels to her father, left the group to put on the dress of an aspirant, and then returned to present herself to her deeply-moved and happy relatives.”

In 1954, Philomena was sent to Rome to make her novitiate, which concluded on 19 March 1956 with her first profession. Those two years in Italy were a very special time for her and she always carried them in her heart, along with the memory of her many co-novices, to whom she remained very attached. As a child, Philomena had lost her mother, but she found in her novice mistress Maestra Nazarena, another mother who understood, loved and supported her.

When she returned to her homeland, Philomena, now Sr. Scholastica, devoted herself to the diffusion apostolate in Mumbai, Calcutta and Bangalore. For many years, she worked in the circumscription's bindery, including in the role of manager. Her sole objective was to do good through the “good press,” to reach everyone, to not waste even a moment of time because, as she often said with deep conviction, “everything is apostolate.” The technical apostolate characterized almost all of Sr. Scholastica's Pauline life. Even later, when she was confined to her room because of poor health, her stiff fingers continued to put covers on prayer books, fold signatures from the typography, and make rosaries.

Day after day she offered her life to God in serenity, simplicity and goodness. Her sweetness and gentle smile, through which her spirit of littleness shone, touched the hearts of her sisters and all the people she encountered. She had a special affection for the Congregation's superiors at all levels of authority and she jealously preserved small souvenirs of them, especially their photographs, because they too represented for her the maternal love she had lacked while young.

This “first flower of the Indian province,” as she was affectionately called, has now been transplanted to heaven. We entrust to her care the young women entering the Pauline life, asking the Divine Master to form them into courageous and fervent apostles.

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 18 November 2021