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FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO  
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Dearest Sisters,

We received the news that yesterday, the Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time, our good Father visited the Nakai Fujishiro-En Home for the Elderly in Nakai-machi (Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan) to call to himself our sister:

**ISHII ASAKO – SR. MARIA GIUSTINA**  
**born in Fukushima (Sendai), Japan, on 29 September 1929.**

Sr. Giustina met the FSPs when they visited the families of her area with their publications not long after they opened a house in Japan. From these sisters, she bought a Bible and a pamphlet entitled “Have Hope,” the content of which she found so meaningful that she shared it with her friends. Impressed by the “propaganda” apostolate of the sisters, she decided that this was what she too wanted to do with her life. She entered the Congregation in the house of Tokyo on 14 August 1952, the very day of her baptism.

On Prima Maestra Thecla’s second visit to Japan in 1953, she wrote: “There is a marvelous group of young women here. Between the Italians and Japanese, the community has more than 60 members.... Here the hand of God can be seen in everything, at every moment. These vocations, who grew up as non-believers, are now thirsting for the good. Our beautiful chapel is ideal for prayer, and our Japanese sisters sing so well it moves my heart.”

In this climate of fervor, Sr. Giustina underwent her initial formation and novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 8 December 1956, Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Immediately afterward, she was sent to Osaka to take the magazine *Akebono* to the families and to search for subscribers to this publication, which was the object of the thoughts, conversations and prayers of all the members of this young community. Sr. Giustina loved visiting the families, but she willingly took to heart the Founder’s advice to organize the diffusion apostolate better and to focus on institutes and businesses.

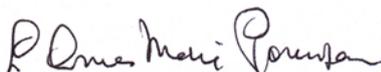
In 1961, after a period of preparation, she made her perpetual profession in Tokyo and then resumed the outreach apostolate in the communities of Nagoya and Tokyo, where with great creativity and zeal she organized “Good Press Days” in public schools with the collaboration of the teachers and principals. Following this, she spent several years managing a small book shop known as the “St. Paul Corner,” located in a famous Tokyo department store. Then, after a parenthesis as a cook, she resumed the propaganda apostolate in the cities of Hiroshima, Osaka, Nagasaki, dedicating herself with enthusiasm and love to visiting parishes, where she had the chance to meet the faithful and guide those who were searching for God to baptism. Her fervor and sociability opened the doors of many hearts.

Sr. Giustina had been deeply struck by the words of the Founder, who invited his sons and daughters to nourish themselves on the Word and the Eucharist, and even before her entrance into the Congregation she had been passionate about reading and assimilating the letters of St. Paul. Two of the Apostle’s statements in particular made a profound impact on her: “Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 1:17), and: “we proclaim Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23). She applied her meditations on these words very concretely to her daily life, saying that they helped her overcome any problems she encountered. “I preach Christ crucified,” she said, “which means that even if I have to suffer, I cannot come down from the cross....” She had learned from the first FSP missionaries to Japan that the Word of God was a sacred text, which inspired her with such reverence for the Bible that she tried very hard to never put her bags containing that Word on the ground. She was always very grateful to our sisters of the first hour for teaching her not only the practical aspects of the Pauline mission, but also its spirit.

From 2013-2019, Sr. Giustina carried out various community services in Fukuoka, even though she was already beginning to manifest signs of Alzheimer’s disease. Her condition worsened to the point that in 2019 it was necessary for her to return to Tokyo to receive suitable care in a facility providing round-the-clock assistance to the elderly. We want to entrust to this dear sister our mission of spreading the Word, asking that it may speed forward, bringing peace, consolation and hope to our suffering world.

Affectionately,

Rome, 28 February 2022

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan