



IN MEMORY
OF MAESTRA
THECLA

Rome, 5 February 2022

Dearest Sisters and young women in formation,

Like all those who did not have the privilege of knowing Maestra Thecla personally, I enjoy listening to sisters who shared a part of their Pauline journey with her. I was particularly struck by their reference to her *faith*, manifested in all the nuances of love, because faith—genuine faith—“is born of love and reflects God’s own love” (*Lumen fidei*, 50).

Prima Maestra’s simple and strong faith was founded on the *reliability* of the Lord, who never fails to keep his promise: “Do not fear; I am with you,” and who “does not give you what you ask for, but what you believe he will do.” And this faith, nourished daily by the Word and the Eucharist, illuminated her loving service of the Congregation, which she guided with wisdom and maternal solicitude as a faithful disciple of the Founder, interpreting for us his prophetic charism, translated into touches of homespun wisdom that gave depth to our roots and impetus to our missionary development.

Maestra Thecla loved and accompanied us with a mother’s heart; she inspired us on our journey and encouraged us to stick to it, despite the hardships and trials. She healed our wounds, comforted the sick, and gave us the witness of love for the poor and a commitment to hospitality. She constantly invited us to pray for the spiritual and material needs of humanity; she urged us to avoid focusing on trivialities, but instead to come out of ourselves and broaden our minds and hearts:

At times we pay a lot of attention to small things and forget the big ones. We get lost in trifles. We close ourselves in our own little world, forgetting that the earth is a big place and that there are many souls who are stretching out their hands to us, waiting to receive light, life and salvation precisely from us. Let us remember that as Christians we have to give in proportion to what we receive (VPC 124).


“Having received, we must give”: this is a recurring theme in Prima Maestra’s conversations and writings. “How often she spoke of doing a little good to souls, of bringing a little light to the world,” Fr. Alberione said in his testimony of her.

What would our dear mother want and ask of us today? I posed this question to some of our older sisters and found their answers enlightening.

First of all, Maestra Thecla would want us to be free of heart, content, generous and unselfish. She would urge us to participate intensely in the sufferings of the world and to listen attentively to the promptings of the Spirit in order to find new ways to proclaim the Gospel. She would tell us to never forget that the roots of a tree are always alive, and that to guarantee a fruitful journey we must remain attached to our roots with firm faith and a heart open to the needs of the world. She would remind us that, in order to do good to others, we must fully live *the call to holiness*, which is a call to a love that is put into practice, that leads us out of “individualism, pessimism, and closure in our own small worlds” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 134), and thus prevents us from sinking into “dull and dreary mediocrity” (GE 138). She would recommend that we strengthen our unity and sense of Family as a sign of the times and a witness for today.

Sisters, let us ask Prima Maestra Thecla’s motherly intercession on our behalf and on all the members of the “admirable Pauline Family,” which she loved so much.

With deep affection.


Sr. Anna Caiazza
Superior General