



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



Dearest Sisters,

We received the news that at 10:10 p.m. last night (local time), one of our sisters hospitalized at St. John of God Hospital in Pasay City (Philippines) concluded her long and intense life:

LABAY ANACLETA – SR. MARIA ASSUNTA
born in Boak Marinduque, Philippines, on 13 July 1923.

Our sisters remember Sr. Assunta as an energetic person who was convinced of her vocation and of the beauty of the Pauline mission, especially the “propaganda” apostolate that she carried out with passion for many years in several Asian countries and also in Australia. She gladly recounted, especially to young women, her various experiences “in the field” since they were her pride and glory.

Sr. Assunta entered the Congregation in Lipa, Philippines, on 8 Sept. 1947. After a time spent diffusing the Word of God in the Diocese of Manila, she made her novitiate in Lipa, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1951. Given her maturity, she was soon chosen to contribute to the launch or consolidation of several new FSP foundations. In 1955, even before her perpetual profession (made in March 1956), she was sent to the small community of Sydney, Australia, which had opened just a few months earlier, to help the Pauline mission develop on that vast continent. During those difficult years, filled with innumerable sacrifices, Sr. Assunta was sustained by the firm conviction that she belonged to the Lord forever. When she made her perpetual profession, she wrote: “I feel very unworthy of this great gift, but I am sure that the Divine Master will give me the grace to fully understand the meaning of the word *perpetual* in order to live it....”

In 1958 she returned to the Philippines and was assigned to the kitchen, first in Cebu and then in Pasay. In 1961, she was again called to help start a new FSP foundation, this time in Malaysia. The chronicles of the time relate that on 21 January 1961, she and three other sisters (Sr. Elisabetta Capello, Sr. Eulalia Bravo and Sr M. Virginia Guevarra) sailed from the Philippines to Kota Kinabalu in Northern Borneo (present-day Sabah). The sisters, who had brought with them many books in English from the Philippines, immediately began the diffusion apostolate, courageously overcoming the many problems they encountered, especially in the villages, due to the variety of local languages and the scarcity of means of communication. The sisters visited Christians and non-Christians alike in the remote jungle villages of Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei, and their tenacity and zeal bore good fruit.

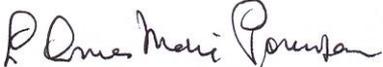
In 1970, Sr. M. Assunta returned to her homeland but her stay there was brief. Two years later she was sent to Taipei, Taiwan, where she carried out the diffusion apostolate in a culture very different from her own, using a language that was not easy to learn.... But Sr. Assunta sought only the will of God as manifested through her superiors, sure that obedience would work miracles. Although her time in Taiwan was brief, it was an experience that carved itself deeply into her heart.

After five years spent evangelizing the immense Chinese population, she returned to the Philippines to dedicate herself with generosity and enthusiasm to the Pauline mission in Cebu, Tacloban, Olongapo, Legaspi, Tuguegarao and Baguio. In 2008, she was transferred to Pasay City to work in the bookbinding department. Sr. M. Assunta was truly a tireless apostle: blessed with good health for so many years, her sole concern was to make her whole life a gift to God.

But at this point her strong heart was beginning to fail. She was moved to the infirmary wing of the community about 4 years ago so as to be able to follow a pace of life compatible with her declining physical condition. Two years ago she was diagnosed as suffering from heart blockage, but was able to overcome that crisis. However, last night she suffered a serious heart attack, which led to her encounter with the Lord. May this fervent Pauline apostle, whose name is certainly written in heaven, rekindle in our Pauline missionaries of today the joy of evangelization that enables them to overcome all boundaries in order to bring the peace and light of the Gospel to all.

Affectionately,

Rome, 3 July 2022


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan