

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ  
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO  
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Dearest Sisters,

At 5:00 a.m. today, one of the sisters of our James Alberione community, Albano, Italy, gently fell asleep in the Lord:

**CIRILLO MARIA – SR. MARIA GRAZIA**  
**born in Naples, Italy, on 15 August 1927.**

In harmony with her name, this sister was truly a *grace*—a great gift to the Congregation, to the Church and to the sisters who lived with her over the years and were able to experience the gentleness, goodness and benevolence that radiated from her entire being. Tiny in stature, she was truly one of the “little ones” of the kingdom of heaven—a person who gave herself totally to her Lord and made herself “all to all” through the various expressions of the Pauline mission to which she was called.

She entered the Congregation in the community of Rome on 5 September 1952, after having obtained, while still at home, a diploma in bookkeeping. From the very beginning, her superiors recognized in her the characteristics that would leave a special imprint on her entire life: promptness and quickness in everything she did; a good, loyal, docile, and friendly character; a profound spirit of prayer and a deep yearning to become holy. After a brief time of apostolic experience in Belluno and Naples, she made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1956. The course of spiritual exercises in preparation for that fundamental step was preached by the Founder himself, who strongly urged the young sisters to strive to reach full union with Jesus, to “lose” themselves in him so as to become *new persons—communicators of God*... (cf. FSP56, p. 453).

During her Juniorate, Sr. M. Grazia worked in the St. Paul Film Agency in Via Castro Pretorio, Rome, and in the *Ut Unum Sint* apostolic sector in the same city. After her perpetual profession on the Feast of St. Joseph, 1961, she was assigned to the Naples/Capodimonte and Ferrara book centers. In 1969, she returned to the St. Paul Film Agency in Rome. When asked by her provincial superior if she had any particular desires, she requested permission to obtain a driver’s license in order to be more useful to the community, and also to receive some training as a window dresser. Otherwise, she wrote, “my only desire is to do God’s will, as expressed through my superiors.”

Over the years, she worked with great enthusiasm and commitment in our Aquila, Naples, Perugia, Messina, Massa, and Treviso book centers. She was renowned for her industriousness and creativity, as well as for her continual efforts to make our book centers beautiful, welcoming places of education and culture. Those who entered these centers were drawn by her warm smile and hospitality.

In Perugia and Catanzaro, Sr. M. Grazia served as local superior, and in the period that followed this, her training in bookkeeping was put to good use when she was assigned the role of bursar and administrator of the St. Paul Film Agency’s offices in Rome.

Later, she willingly carried out community services in the Treviso, Novara and Livorno communities, as long as her health permitted her to do this. In 2014, she was transferred to the James Alberione community, Albano, due to the advance of Alzheimer’s disease, which was causing her to gradually lose her memory.

In the last period of her life, Sr. M. Grazia was no longer able to speak but the smile that perpetually lit her face spoke more eloquently than a thousand words. By now bound to a wheelchair, she never complained about anything and found many ways to keep her hands busy so as to avoid wasting any of the graces of her vocation. Although she could no longer “race ahead” to bring the Gospel to others, her interior yearning to do so was evident in the way her petite form huddled over and caressed the pages of the Word and other well-loved texts that she had read, studied and interiorized throughout her long life.

For the past week, Sr. M. Grazia was unable to swallow but at this point she was ready to be clothed in her bridal finery so as to be led rejoicing into the mystery of eternal communion with the Trinity. Affectionately,

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan