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FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO  
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Dearest Sisters,

We received the news that at 11:55 a.m. today (local time), one of our sisters in the “Hiratsuka Fujishiro-en” senior citizens’ facility in Kanagawa, Japan, passed to eternal life:

**KAMIMURA TOKIKO – SR. MONICA  
born in Kagoshima, Japan on 4 September 1933.**

Baptized as an adult on Christmas Day 1951, she met the Daughters of St. Paul in the small store of the parish where she had received baptism. She related that through meeting Sr. M. Luisa Chizuko Yamada, who visited the parish once a month for vocational purposes, several young women had entered our Congregation.

As a girl, Sr. Monica had been struck by an article published in the diocesan magazine, which presented the Pauline mission of evangelization through the press. It was an apostolate that fascinated her because it was similar to the apostolic activity that she herself was carrying out in the J.O.C. (Young Christian Workers’ Association), with which she was proud to be associated. She wrote with pleasure: “I grew up [in the Faith] through evangelization.”

She entered our Congregation in the house of Osaka on 8 March 1956, despite the fact that her parents were against her choice. But the priest who had helped her overcome the obstacles she faced succeeded in reconciling her with her family. Sr. Monica confided how deeply moved she was to see that the Lord’s methods surpassed anything she could possibly imagine. She commented: “It is said that families who have offered their children to God are certainly blessed. I truly believe that. When I returned home from the convent to visit my family, my mother said she could see I was the happiest of all her daughters. My memory of this experience has always helped me overcome difficulties.”

At the end of her year of novitiate, Sr. Monica made her first profession in our Tokyo community on 30 June 1960. Recalling her years as a young professed sister in Tokyo, Fukuoka, Sendai and Nagoya, she commented: “I worked in the bindery, the kitchen and the small bookshops we had set up in the shopping centers of Nagoya and Sendai. But our main apostolate was ‘propaganda’ to the families. Our visits took us to distant cities, and we remained away from home for long periods of time. It was a style of apostolic outreach that reminded me of my experience as a girl in the J.O.C.”

For about twelve years (1994-2006), her apostolic responsibilities included serving as the sacristan of a parish in Nagasaki, a city that is home to the largest number of Catholics in Japan. She carried out this mission with great fidelity and love, happy when she had the chance to accompany some members of the faithful home to heaven because she sensed how beautiful it was to be welcomed into the loving arms of God the Father.

In 2008, Sr. Monica was transferred to our Hiratsuka community, first to assist its sick members, and later to be cared for herself as one of the sick. About four years ago, she was moved to the Hiratsuka Fujishiro-en Nursing Home. Because of the ups and downs of the ongoing covid pandemic, the members of her community were not allowed to see Sr. Monica in person, but her caregivers told them that she was having a hard time eating. This morning, too, she refused the meal that was offered to her, prompting her caregiver to go in search of something else that might tempt her appetite. But just as the woman was leaving her bedside, Sr. Monica breathed her last.

In silence, she flew to the arms of God the Father, where she is now able to see him face-to-face, “taste” his sweetness and goodness, and allow him to fill her to overflowing with the Bread of heaven. Sr. Monica has left us for the other shore—the shore of peace and joy from which she continues to evangelize, “racing ahead” to bring the Word of salvation to all. Affectionately,



*sr Anna Maria Parenzan*

Rome, 28 August 2022