

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ  
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO  
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Dearest Sisters,

We received the news that while our sisters were at lunch today in the community of Curitiba, Brazil, a severe heart attack opened the doors of eternal life to one of their members:

**ALEXANDRE DE OLIVEIRA – SR. MARIA**  
**born in Lins (SP), Brazil, on 1 March 1944.**

Sr. Maria was a dynamic, enthusiastic, passionate and restless sister, an expert teacher, who used great creativity to reach the hearts of children, adolescents and teens in order to help them fall in love with reading, and who also promoted their human and Christian growth.

She entered the Congregation in the house of São Paulo DM, Brazil, on 31 August 1964. She underwent her initial formation and novitiate there, concluding that stage of her Pauline journey with her first vows on 30 June 1969. She was then sent to Niteroi to work in the book center and also carry out diffusion of our publications to the families of the area. In 1972, while still a temporary professed, she was assigned to the editorial room of our magazine department in São Paulo DM. After her perpetual profession in 1975, she devoted herself to apostolic outreach and also to administration work in Recife. Transferred to Salvador, Sr. Maria had the chance to experience a particular closeness to the people through various animation encounters she guided after which, in São Paulo DM, she returned to her commitment to proclaiming the Word. Grasping the beauty and urgency of our Pauline mission, she asked for more in-depth academic preparation so as to carry out the Institute's apostolate with greater effectiveness. In 1983, she obtained a licentiate in philosophy and then pursued further studies in the fields of pedagogy and children's literature, often combining them with missionary activities. Over the years, she earned various academic degrees, all the way up to a doctorate.

Sr. Maria was deeply convinced that the education of children must begin early, through suitable reading supported by the witness of life. She constantly sought new ways to cultivate a love of reading in young people. It can truly be said that she opened up wonderful new paths for juvenile education, traveling all over Brazil to promote this apostolate through her intense animation activities in schools and institutes, where she also involved teachers and pastors through the courses and conferences she prepared and guided for them with care and expertise.

Feeling the need to attain her goals, she worked hard to ensure that every initiative she undertook would bear fruit in people's hearts. She wrote several books on the subject of children's literature and its dynamics, and for several years she was in charge of her circumscription's publications in the educational field.

In 2013 Sr. Maria went to Santiago, Chile, to learn the language and promote literature for children, adolescents, and teens in that nation too. After a time dedicated to restabilizing her health in São Paulo, Brazil, she had the joy of being assigned to Maputo, Mozambique in 2016. She remained there for a few years, pursuing her dream to initiate our young African FSPs into the mission of educating children by means of visits to the schools and the promotion of suitable books. The great passion for formation that throbbed in Sr. Maria's heart gave her no rest. She talked about it constantly and shared with her sisters, with teachers and with pastors the apostolic dreams that inspired her.

In 2019, Sr. Maria returned to Brazil, where she continued her apostolic commitment to educational promotion and communication first in Recife and then in Curitiba. She had enriched the lives of numerous children with many beautiful surprises... But the Lord, in his infinite providence, also had a big surprise in store for her by calling her to himself in a totally unforeseen way. May the beauty of Christ's face, which she now contemplates fully, illuminate her entire being and fill her with endless joy. Affectionately,

*Sr Anna Maria Parenzan*

Rome, 5 September 2022