

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,

At 5:30 p.m. today, one of the members of our James Alberione community, Albano, Italy, who was over a hundred years old, unexpectedly took her last breath:

**DELL'AQUILA SANTA—SR. BERENICE**  
**born in Volturino (Foggia), Italy, on 18 July 1920.**

“Santina,” as she was usually called, was a very sunny-natured person, with a rich and sound faith. She lived her many years as a Daughter of St. Paul with joy and enthusiasm, sowing benevolence, love for her vocation and a positive outlook on life wherever she went. She entered the Congregation in Rome on 18 February 1935, at the age of 15. After a time of formation, she was sent to Florence to take the Word of God to families. In 1939 she returned to Rome to make her novitiate, concluding it with her first profession on 3 March 1940. According to the custom of the time, she left almost immediately afterward to carry out itinerant mission work in the diocese of Foggia and then in that of San Benedetto del Tronto.

In the community of Aquila, where she lived for 10 years (1944-1954), she began to carry out with great zeal the book center apostolate. Many people were drawn to her simplicity and consistency of life, as well as her smile, her kindness and gentleness.

In 1954, she was transferred to Taranto and later to the communities of Ascoli Piceno, Siena, Campobasso and Arezzo: forty years of intense book center activity in contact with young and old, priests, religious, seminarians and countless people of various cultures. Her continual self-surrender to the Lord obtained for her the evangelical wisdom that is able to grasp every need and find words that heal, enlighten and console. She never pursued higher studies, and would cheerfully say that she knew only two languages: Italian and the Volturino dialect of her hometown.

It was after her transfer to Taranto that Sr. Santina had the chance to experience the great heart of Maestra Thecla. With pleasure and a wealth of detail, she would recount how sad she had been to leave the mountains of the Abruzzo region for a maritime city. She felt that she would die without her beloved mountains.... In the light of this, Maestra Thecla, who intuitively grasped Sr. Santina's sorrow, transferred her to Ascoli Piceno. Our sister was profoundly touched by that maternal act and never forgot Prima Maestra's thoughtfulness.

In Lecce, where she lived for ten consecutive years, she helped the sisters with great generosity, spreading peace and serenity in the house. In 1994 she was sent to Naples Capodimonte to carry out small apostolic activities and refectory duties. A very sociable person, she always had many stories to tell about the time she lived in contact with M. Thecla and the Founder. She has left us the following memory of her novitiate group's participation in the canonization of Gemma Galgani and Euphrasia Pelletier: “I remember that as we were climbing the steps of St. Peter's Basilica,” she recounted, “Prima Maestra asked us to stop for a moment. ‘Do you see those banners of the new saints?’ she asked us, pointing upward. ‘Remember that we are all called to be like them. We too must become saints!’”

Sr. Santina had been a member of Albano's James Alberione community since 2018. She had no particular illnesses but she nevertheless felt that her end was approaching. She prepared herself to welcome the coming of her Bridegroom and thanked him every day for the great gift of life. Her very existence was a hymn of praise to him and also the most beautiful witness to her vocation. Her passage to the other shore took place very peacefully: at the end of supper today, she unexpectedly closed her eyes, stopped breathing and re-opened them to light, joy and full communion with her God. We want to say a heartfelt *thank you* to this dear sister for her beautiful presence among us and entrust to her in a particular way the intention that was closest to her heart: the gift of vocations for the Congregation, so that the Word might race ahead and be proclaimed in every part of the world.

Affectionately,

  
sr Anna Maria Parenzan

Roma, 8 novembre 2022