

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 4:00 p.m. today (local time) the Divine Master visited Kitazato University Hospital in Tokyo, Japan, to lead to new life in the kingdom of heaven our sister:

IMAMICHI YOKO – Sr. MARIA GIOVANNA
born in Takamatsu (Shikoku), Japan, on 19 July 1929.

This dear sister contributed from the outset to the growth of the Pauline presence in Japan. In fact, she lived in the Akasaka zone of Tokyo where our first Pauline missionaries had found lodgings and she took every opportunity to visit small FSP community to teach the sisters the Japanese language. Through their witness she discovered the riches of the Christian life and was baptized in July 1950. Her brother, a philosophy professor, played an important role in her conversion by offering her valuable advice.

On 5 July 1951, she entered the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Paul, running away from home to prevent her parents from stopping her. She was ready to overcome any obstacle: her character had been forged in the dark times of World War II and, in contact with nature, her innate qualities had blossomed. After a time of initial formation, she was sent to Rome in 1953 to study Italian and make her novitiate. She made her first profession on 19 March 1955 in Queen of Apostles Sanctuary, and then began intensive studies in theology within the Congregation in an intercultural climate rich in charismatic experiences.

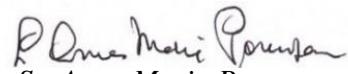
In 1958, Sr. Giovanna returned to Japan enriched by the vast amount of knowledge she had acquired, which she was immediately able to pass on to the Institute's Japanese formandees as their teacher, formation assistant and then as novice mistress for more than ten years. In 1973, she was appointed provincial superior—the first Japanese FSP to hold this position. Afterward, she was given the opportunity to perfect her biblical formation by earning a license and then a doctorate in Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome. The wisdom and preparation she had assimilated made her a true reference point for the sisters and for the Church in Japan. She encouraged the members of her circumscription to study more profoundly the Pauline charism and also the writings of the Founder by translating many of his texts into Japanese, including *Abundantes divitiae gratiae sue*. She did the same with M. Thecla's talks.

In addition, Sr. Giovanna taught Sacred Scripture in high schools and universities and gave countless conferences to priests, religious and lay people. She wrote many books for our FSP publishing house, one of which was a commentary on St. John's Book of Revelation. Her last and most demanding apostolic activity was the translation of the Bible in collaboration with the Franciscan Biblical Institute. Her love for the Word also enabled her to become familiar with digital technologies through her contributions to the "Laudate" website.

Sr. Giovanna was often called upon to offer her academic and spiritual input on the congregational level. In the early 1980s, she was a member of the Central Commission for the revision of the Constitutions and she also contributed, as an expert translator, to numerous congregational meetings and fraternal visits. We still remember the booklet she wrote entitled "Heading Toward Our Great Goal as Disciples of Paul," as part of the series *Living Well Each Stage of Life*.

In 2012, Sr. Giovanna experienced a bad fall, which marked the beginning of her slow decline—a time she lived in peace and steady spiritual growth. She spent her last years in the Shirogane no Mori nursing home in Tokyo, where she was lovingly cared for by the staff and our sisters. Severe anemia hastened her meeting with Jesus Master, her Spouse. In recent times, a non-Christian nurse would read her excerpts from the commentary she had written on Revelation, which the woman had found by chance.

We can only imagine how happy it must have made Sr. Giovanna to see in the woman one of *the immense multitude that cannot even be counted....* And today, almost the vigil of All Saints Day, we think of our sister as having already washed her garments in the blood of the Lamb and we thank him for the many graces he poured out on her throughout her long Pauline life. Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan