

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,

The Lord has called to himself the oldest member of our Congregation and of the entire Pauline Family. At 6:50 p.m. today, he visited the Thecla Merlo community of Albano, Italy, to lead to the Father our 105-year-old sister:

SALVÀ RINA Sr. VINCENZA
born in Sant'Apollinare (Rovigo), Italy, on 11 July 1917.

Born during World War I, in the year of the Fatima apparitions, she entered the Congregation in Alba on 4 September 1931, at the age of fourteen. She had no time to make a prolonged discernment regarding her choice of life: Maestra Brigida Perron, who was visiting the Rovigo community, recognized the younger sister of Sr. Luigina and invited the girl to return to Alba with her. The prospective candidate promptly accepted the invitation and within a few hours was packed and ready to go. It was a truly unforgettable moment that she always spoke of with great gratitude, saying simply: "All praise and glory to God alone."

In Alba, she lived in the FSP community located in St. Paul's Square until, in 1933, the whole community relocated to the new "Divine Providence" house in Borgo Piave. The new house still lacked electric lights and running water, so our first sisters lived in genuine poverty, sustained by faith and their great apostolic ideals. In the apostolate, young Rina learned the technical work of producing Bibles. "What a joy it was!" she exclaimed. "I worked with great enthusiasm. It was so beautiful! Our assistants told us that, through this work, we could convert the world because we were multiplying the Word of God. We thought that was amazing!"

Maestra Thecla was very present in her life and it was she who suggested that Rina take her mother's name for profession. Recounting this story, Sr. Vincenza said with emotion: "Prima Maestra was a true mother to me. She provided my trousseau and I turned to her in every need." She made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 10 February 1939. Afterward, she remained in the Antonino Pio community for a few years, working in the bookbinding sector. In 1943 she was transferred to Ascoli Piceno and made her perpetual vows there in 1945.

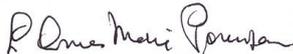
From the very start, Sr. Vincenza learned to love the book center apostolate. She truly made it her "church," her pulpit, her place of evangelization and catechesis through her direct contact with people who even many years later continued to confide their problems to her and ask for her advice and suggestions.

In 1951, while she was in Terni, the sisters opened a book center in nearby Spoleto. Sr. Vincenza would commute between the two towns. The following year she was transferred to Agrigento and from there to Matera, Naples and Aquila. In 1970, she served as local superior of the Mantua community and then resumed the book center apostolate in Pavia, Bari and Biella. She would say frankly: "I didn't have much formal education. In the book center and on propaganda, I would just 'make do,' and the Holy Spirit always came to my aid. Sometimes someone would ask me: 'What did you study in school?' I would reply that my studies consisted of the Gospel and personal reading. The Word of God and prayer filled me with strength, courage and serenity." She would add with great conviction, "God did everything. All I said was: 'Here I am!'"

From 1999-2010, Sr. Vincenza was stationed in Arezzo, where she lovingly carried out community services ranging from the laundry room to wardrobe maintenance to various errands. When she was in her nineties, she was transferred to the Thecla Merlo community of Albano, where she was pleased to have more time for prayer and reading, and where she also lent a hand in the sacristy. She confided, "This is my life and I am happy with it because I can pray for the sisters and for everyone. I get up early in the morning and my time of prayer gives me strength for the day."

During our last General Chapter, Sr. Vincenza, already a centenarian, wanted to visit the Chapter assembly to offer her best wishes to the newly-elected Superior General and to speak with the Chapter delegates, with simplicity and humility, about some aspects of the Pauline life that she felt most deeply. Above all, she felt the responsibility to transmit to them the missionary passion that burned in her heart.

We praise the Father for granting this dear sister such a long and fruitful life, overflowing with good. We also want to thank Sr. Vincenza for being a true teacher of life, and for filling our communities with her warmth, sweetness and tenderness. Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 16 November 2022