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FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO  
CASA GENERALIZIA  
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Dearest Sisters,

Our merciful Father has once again visited us. At 8:49 a.m. today (local time), he dropped by our Thecla Merlo community in Pasay City, Philippines, to call to new life in the kingdom of heaven our sister:

**CABALUNA TEODULA – SR. MARIA CHIARA**  
**born in El Pardo (Cebu), Philippines, on 12 September 1936.**

Sr. M. Chiara was the oldest of four sisters and from an early age she felt very protective toward her siblings, whom she always took care of with great affection. She entered the Congregation in Pasay City on 28 July 1955, at the age of nineteen. After her initial formation, she was sent to Lipa for her novitiate, which concluded with her first profession on 30 June 1960.

As a young professed, she spread the Gospel to families, schools and businesses in Manila and Davao. After her perpetual profession, made on the Feast of St. Paul in 1965, she was sent to Selangor, Malaysia, as a missionary. Those were very intense years for her, during which she studied the Bahasa language and disseminated the Word of God in that very rich culture, interwoven with Malay, Chinese and Indian traditions. When her visa expired eight years later and she was obliged her to return to the Philippines, she wrote to the superior general: “I am so sorry that I cannot return to Malaysia because of government rules. I am still willing and able to go to a mission land—Africa, Macau or anywhere else. I would be very happy to volunteer for Africa. I have dreamed of being a missionary ever since I joined the Congregation. I pray and hope for the best, asking that God’s will be done.”

In 1974 she continued her itinerant apostolate in the Philippines, in the houses of Cagayan de Oro and Cebu. In Pasay, she worked in the typography for a few years, after which she was transferred to Olongapo to manage the book center, spreading great gentleness and serenity around her. Sr. M. Chiara was a very likable person. Quiet, patient and open-hearted, with a positive outlook on life, she poured these blessings of nature and grace into the mission that the Lord entrusted to her day after day.

In 1986, she was appointed superior of the Zamboanga community and then resumed the book apostolate in Pasay City, Baguio, Zamboanga, Cebu and Marikina (Manila). In some communities she also generously served as vice superior and bursar. When the Congregation launched its Missionary Project in 1993, she asked the superior general to send her as a missionary to Singapore. In fact, her apostolic experience in that great metropolis while she was in Malaysia had remained in her heart. She wrote: “I am really praying and hoping for the grace to be a missionary, but at the same time I am ready to do God’s will, whatever it may be.”

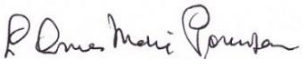
In 2016, Sr. M. Chiara was assigned to Pasay City, where she welcomed customers to the book center and carried out various community services. She loved music very much and played the organ for liturgical celebrations, despite problems with her eyesight. She also directed the community choir.

For the past several years, Sr. M. Chiara had been experiencing a number of health issues resulting from hypertension and diabetes. Last October, after undergoing some medical tests, it was discovered that she also had liver cancer, already in its final stage. She lived the last weeks of her life serenely, placing herself in the hands of God the Father and entrusting herself to the care of her sisters. This morning, she was called to heaven by a heart attack—a consequence of the coronary problems that afflicted her.

Throughout her life, Sr. M. Chiara waited every day for the coming of the Lord. She longed not only to say *yes* to him but for her very life to be a *yes* to him. The readings of today’s Liturgy are a response to her yearnings, giving us the consoling certainty that her beloved Master is no longer hidden from her: her eyes now see him and her ears hear his voice, speaking words of salvation, hope and peace.

Affectionately,

Rome, 3 December 2022

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan