

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,

Half an hour after midnight, while silence enveloped everything, one of the members of our community of Alba, Italy, fell sweetly asleep in the Lord as the result of a cardiopulmonary arrest:

GIPPONI GIUSEPPA – SR. MARIA PIERA
born in Gombito (Cremona), Italy, on 4 June 1931.

A hard-working, strong-willed and discreet person, Sr. Piera was an FSP missionary whose goal in life was to make the Word of God race ahead. She dedicated her entire being to the Lord in simplicity and love, intent on fostering the growth and development of the Pauline mission on French soil and on rendering community life serene and welcoming for the sisters.

On 15 October 1948, at the age of 17, she entered the Congregation in the Motherhouse of Alba, paving the way for her cousin Agnes, who would soon follow her into the religious life. After a year of initial formation, she was sent to Turin to spread the Gospel through itinerant “propaganda” and book displays in parishes and schools. Considering her maturity, she was soon admitted to the novitiate in Rome, concluding this stage of her formation with her first profession on 19 March 1952, in the festive atmosphere of the inauguration of the crypt of the Queen of Apostles Temple.

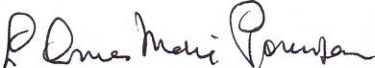
She spent the time of her temporary vows, and the period immediately following it, in Genoa, engaged primarily in spreading the Word of God through the diffusion apostolate. From 1965-2014, she devoted herself without pause to the Pauline mission in France, but in 2014 deteriorating health made it advisable for her to return to Italy. In her early years as a missionary, she focused on learning French so as to carry out the diffusion apostolate and also organized Gospel Days and Weeks in Lyon, Arras, Paris, and Marseilles.

In 1976, Sr. M. Piera began a long curriculum of governing responsibilities in the French Delegation, first as superior of the communities of Paris and Marseilles, and then as a Delegation councilor. From 1984-1990, she served as Delegation Superior, after which she was appointed superior of Marseilles, then bursar of the Lyon community. Over the years, she also served as vice-delegate and, for several terms, as superior of the house of Lyon and as Delegation councilor again.

Sr. M. Piera loved France very much. She devoted all her energy to spreading the Gospel far and wide and to proposing the Pauline vocation to young women. In fact, one of her greatest sufferings was precisely the circumscription’s lack of the vocations it needed to continue the Congregation’s mission in a land very rich in culture but also in great need of the light of the Gospel. She felt unprepared for such a challenging mission, but her wisdom, faith and apostolic passion helped her find new ways to respond to the ever-changing needs of evangelization. She offered encouragement to the sisters serving on the front lines of the FSP mission and often substituted for them in routine household duties in order to free them to undertake new paths of apostolate more in keeping with the times.

Sr. Piera loved our Pauline spirituality very deeply and rejoiced when she was given the chance to participate in the month-long course of spiritual exercises based on the spiritual-apostolic proposal of Blessed James Alberione. After undergoing knee surgery, her health sharply declined but she did not consider “retiring.” Instead, she continued her activities, especially in the kitchen, so as to lighten the load of the sisters who worked full-time in the book center. But her health continued to worsen and 2014 she was asked if she would be willing to be transferred to Alba so as to receive the medical care she needed. The docility and faith she manifested in accepting this difficult proposal was truly admirable. At the Motherhouse, Sr. Piera continued to generously donate her time and talents in the bindery and in the daily routine of preparing baked apples for the community.

She spent the last few years of her life in the infirmary wing of the community, where she concentrated on preparing herself for transition to the next life, eager to taste forever the sweetness of God’s mysteries. Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 28 December 2022