

ISTITUTO PIA SOCIETÀ
FIGLIE DI S. PAOLO
CASA GENERALIZIA
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Dearest Sisters,

In today's baptismal atmosphere, one of the sisters of our James Alberione community, Albano, Italy, was called at 11:10 a.m. (local time) to be reborn from above and clothed in a magnificent robe so as to participate in the wedding feast of the Lamb:

MASELLA SR. TOMMASA
born in Brindisi, Italy on 22 October 1941.

Sr. Tommasa belonged to a "totally Pauline family," given the fact that two of her younger sisters were also members of Alberionian foundations: Sr. Joan, she too a Daughter of St. Paul, and Valeria, who belonged to the Institute of Mary Most Holy of the Annunciation.

Sr. Tommasa entered the Congregation in the house of Rome on 16 February 1965. After a time of formation, study and apostolic experience in Bologna, she made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession in the Queen of Apostles Sanctuary on 30 June 1969. As a Junior, she lived in Novara and Turin; in the latter community she studied theology in an intercongregational school for temporary professed sister.

During her preparation for perpetual vows, which she lived in the FSP Motherhouse in Alba, Sr. Tommasa was pervaded by a strong desire to devote herself to evangelization among the poorest people of Africa or Latin America. And her dream was soon fulfilled. After her perpetual profession, made in Alba on 29 June 1975, she was sent as a missionary to Chile. In the new nation that she quickly came to consider her own, she spent 25 very intense years dedicating all her energy to the Congregation's mission in Santiago, Antofagasta and Valparaiso. Over the years, in these Chilean communities, she served several terms as local superior and enthusiastically carried out the work of itinerant diffusion, that of book center coordinator and also that of coordinator of vocation work. She loved the outreach that brought her into direct contact with Chile's poorest populations and expressed her satisfaction at being able to reach people directly so as to understand their needs. She wrote, "Getting to know the problems of so many people helps me to be more generous and makes me think more about others than about myself."

In 2000, she returned to Italy to help diffuse the Bible and other catechetical texts from Pauline book stands set up at the various Roman basilicas in celebration of the great Jubilee of the new millennium. At the conclusion of that special year, she was assigned to the Via del Mascherino community in Rome, where she placed herself at the service of the many Spanish and Portuguese-speaking people who visited our International Pauline Multimedia Center. A generous, helpful and hard-working person, she sought to cultivate her interior life so as to hone her gaze and interpret, in the light of God, the various situations unfolding around her. For about 10 years, she worked primarily with audiovisuals and multimedia in the Multimedia Center, pouring all her talent and creativity into improving that department and making it more attractive. She interacted with the Center's clients simply and cordially, her faith-filled attitude allowing her to console, comfort and communicate hope to everyone who approached her.

At the end of last August, the sisters of the Mascherino community noticed that when Sr. Tommasa returned home after a trip to Alba, she was behaving in an unusual way. She was hospitalized to discover what the problem was, and was soon diagnosed with a severe, inoperable brain tumor that was already at a very advanced stage. She spent the last 3 months of her life in the James Alberione community, Albano, where she faced her malady with great courage, radiating goodness, patience and a deep sense of gratitude for all the care and attention she received. Until the end, with full awareness, she united her life to that of the crucified Christ, to whom she often turned with a simple, loving gaze.

As we celebrate today's feast, let us join Sr. Tommasa in praying an invocation from the Byzantine liturgy, asking the Lord that this petition might be fully realized in her: "Christ our God, you who are rich in mercy and clad in a mantle of light, give me the gift of a garment as resplendent as your own."

Affectionately,

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 8 January 2023
Feast of the Baptism of the Lord