

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

At 2:28 p.m. today (local time), the Risen Lord visited the “Camelia Sakuragaoka” Senior Citizens’ Facility in Kanagawa, Japan, to call to new life in the kingdom of heaven our sister:

YAMADA AYAKO – SR. M. AMALIA
born in Dairen (Manchuria), China, on 21 July 1929

An ardent Pauline missionary, Sr. Amalia was always “straining ahead” to make herself useful to the community and to initiate the Pauline mission in places in greatest need of the proclamation of the Gospel, especially China. She said she had entered the Congregation by the pure grace of God, overcoming her parents’ opposition and prayerfully facing every problem she encountered. In fact, her steadfast prayers obtained the conversion of her parents who, in order to better understand their daughter’s choice, studied the catechism and were baptized.

Sr. Amalia entered the Congregation on 10 February 1952, in the community of Fukuoka, Japan. The following year, taking advantage of the visit of Blessed James Alberione and M. Thecla to the circumscription, the superiors moved up the vestition date for Amalia and her 16 companions. The story is told that, given the urgency of the situation, M. Thecla herself helped to sew the religious habits of the young women. In those years, the rite of religious vestition was celebrated with great solemnity, even though officially it simply marked the entrance into the postulancy. On 19 March 1956, Sr. Amalia concluded her novitiate, lived in Rome, with her first profession and was sent to the Osaka community to work in the book center. By the following year, she was already a formation assistant in Tokyo, where she was also assigned to the apostolate of writing books. After her perpetual profession, made in 1961, she served as formator in Osaka before being sent to Boston, USA, to learn English and consolidate her missionary vocation.

In 1974 she left for Taipei, Taiwan, where she was immediately appointed delegation counselor. Four years later she was sent to Hong Kong to carry out itinerant outreach in parishes, schools and communities. In 1981, Sr. Amalia returned to Taiwan to serve as local superior in the Kaohsiung community. She yearned to follow in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul so she devoted great attention to her own spiritual life and also to fostering a deep prayer life in her community, avoiding all forms of activism. In 1985, she returned to Tokyo, Japan, where she dedicated herself with great zeal to book center work. But she still longed to carry out the mission *ad gentes*, so when the Congregation launched its Missionary Project she let it be known that she was available. As a result, she was sent to Macau. Except for brief interludes, she remained there until 2009, pouring all her energy into the activities of the book center, which was located in the heart of the city and served as the focal point for the Pauline mission. It was also a place of encounter for different cultures and languages, especially English, Portuguese, and Chinese. Sr. Amalia’s kindness and innate wisdom fostered a harmonious atmosphere in the little community, which was made up of FSPs from all corners of the globe, united by the same missionary ideal. Sr. Amalia was much loved in both her community and in the diocese, and when she returned to Japan in 2009 because of deteriorating health, everyone sincerely thanked her for her sojourn among them.

Sr. Amalia spent the last stage of her life in the Tecla Merlo community, Tokyo, where she continued to radiate goodness and love for the Pauline mission. Although it was a struggle for her to walk, she nevertheless willingly lent a hand with housekeeping services, facilitated the purchase of mini-media and religious items, and carried out translation work. In 2020 she was transferred to our Hiratsuka community and two years later to a home for senior citizens in need of more intensive ongoing care, where she gave fulfillment and fullness to her self-offering to God. We are certain that in her new life in heaven, Sr. Amalia will continue her unceasing prayer for immense China, asking God that there be no shortage of evangelizers who will feel compelled to speak to the people about “what they have seen and heard” (cf. Acts 4:20), and boldly proclaim the Word of God through the witness of their lives.

Affectionately,

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 18 April 2023