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We received the news that at 6:09 a.m. today (local time), one of our sisters in the Shirokane no Mori Senior Citizens' Home in Tokyo, Japan, was called to praise and bless the Lord alongside all the angels in heaven:

**SHIMAZU HIROKO – SR. BIANCA ROSA**  
**born in Ehime (Takamatsu), Japan on 21 April 1937**

Sr. Bianca Rosa was a good, humble, kind, very caring and discreet sister. Her lips were always curved in a gentle smile that expressed the sense of gratitude that filled her heart. Even at the last moment of her life, she beautifully expressed her thanks to the people who had cared for her—a thanks that revealed the deep meaning of her whole existence.

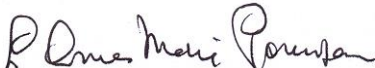
She entered the Congregation in the community of Tokyo on 25 March 1956 after receiving her high school diploma while still at home. Her vocation made a great impact on the life of her younger sister Etsuko (the future Sr. M. Johanna), who had many long talks with Sr. Bianca Rosa while she was at home on vacation with her family. Through their conversations, Etsuko came to understand that the Lord was calling her too to live a fuller and more complete existence by following in the footsteps of her older sister and dedicating herself to the proclamation of the Gospel among the Daughters of St. Paul.

Sr. Bianca Rosa made her novitiate in Tokyo, concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1960. She spent her Juniorate working in the Fukuoka book center, and after her perpetual vows, which she made in Tokyo on 29 June 1965, she continued her Pauline apostolic service in our Tokyo and Nagasaki communities.

In 1982 she was transferred to Osaka, where she devoted herself to diocesan services, to work in the bindery, and to editing texts in Braille for the blind. In Tokyo and Nagasaki, she had the opportunity to welcome every category of people to our book centers, which she did with great kindness, and to manifest her love for the Gospel to everyone she met. Later, she served as cook in the communities of Tokyo and Osaka for eleven consecutive years—a service she carried out with simplicity and a spirit of sacrifice, yearning to imitate the total self-offering of Jesus. In fact, she herself once said that the commandment of love he had given the world (cf. Jn. 13:34) had become the light and powerful thrust that had shaped her entire life.

In 2010 Sr. Bianca Rosa was obliged to undergo stomach surgery to remove a tumor, but after that radical intervention her health declined rapidly. It exhausted her to carry out even routine daily activities, but despite her frailty and weakness, she poured all her energy into her service as sacristan, as well as into various household responsibilities. In 2014, she wrote: “I offer my daily duties for the glory of God and the salvation of humanity, in union with the sisters working in the direct apostolate. I long to live in the presence of God and do what is pleasing to him. I want to become more aware of Jesus living and working in me and in every sister. I yearn to receive him with faith, learn from him and be transformed by him.”

As her strength declined, due in part to a fall in 2021, Sr. Bianca Rosa was admitted to a care home for senior citizens in Kanagawa Prefecture. In 2022, she was moved to a similar care-giving facility in Tokyo Prefecture. Last August, she suffered a broken femur and her condition was further weakened when she came down with covid. By now our sister was ready to welcome the visit of her Lord, so as to receive the prize destined for his ardent apostles. And today, the Feast of Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, she was called to heaven to contemplate, together with the whole heavenly choir, the Face she had sought and loved all her life. Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 29 September 2023