

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

At 7:46 a.m. today (local time), God our merciful Father visited the Camellia Sakuragaoka Care-Giving Facility for the Elderly in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, to call to himself our sister:

**ABE MASAE – SR. MARIA PIERINA**  
**born in Nagano, Japan, on 1 February 1931**

We remember her as a simple, lively, hardworking person and a lover of the beauties of nature, which were for her an occasion for praise, prayer and deep joy. She passionately cultivated garden vegetables and fruit trees to enrich the meal table and make her sisters happy. Very practical by nature, she was a resourceful person who willingly placed her abilities at the service of our communities.

She entered the Congregation in the Osaka community on 9 June 1952, six months after she was baptized. As a postulant, she dedicated her manual skills to the apostolate under the guidance of Sr. Giustina Rossi, and quickly learned to expertly use the cutter, folding machine and stapler, which had just been added to the FSP bindery in Tokyo.

She made her initial formation and novitiate in the circumscription's central house in Tokyo, concluding this stage of her Pauline journey with her first profession on 8 December 1956. As a young professed, Sr. M. Pierina took the Word of God to the families, institutes and businesses of Nagoya and Osaka. After her perpetual profession on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1961, she continued this itinerant apostolate, helping everyone get to know the book center's publications and presenting with conviction the circumscription's new magazine for families, *Akebono*, which was taking its first steps. Nagoya, Sendai, Niigata, Osaka, and Sapporo were the communities that benefitted from her apostolic fervor and desire to live the Pauline vocation with fidelity and impetus.

She worked for a short time in the Sendai and Tokyo book centers, but mostly made herself useful in various communities through her culinary, sewing and gardening skills. The sisters in Tokyo, Nagoya, Sendai, Sapporo, Nagasaki and Hiroshima all had the chance to experience her generosity, good sense, and commitment in a direct way, even as she made the effort to soften her strong character. Sr. M. Pierina often recalled the teachings she had received from her novice mistress, Sr. Irene Conti, who had urged her to move ahead by cultivating the virtues of faith and humility, reminding her: "That is where God is waiting for you...."

When Sr. M. Pierina celebrated her 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of religious profession in 2016, she said, "I was taught to do even the smallest things wholeheartedly and this is enough for me." Listening to the invitation of Pope Francis to Christians to *go out*, she was convinced that she could do this in spite of her poor health, by presenting to God the needs and intentions of the people who had confided in her during her long life as a Pauline.

Sr. M. Pierina's health began to decline around the year 2017 when she was obliged to return to Tokyo after developing lumbar spinal stenosis (a narrowing of the lower segment of her spinal canal) which made it hard for her to walk. In 2020, she was transferred to our Hiratsuka community to receive the care she required, and last September, when covid worsened her situation, she was moved to a home for senior citizens. Today, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, *a living image of the poor and humble Christ*, the Lord called our sister to himself to gift her with Life in all its fullness.

In union with Jesus, let us praise the Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for manifesting his great goodness in the life and death of this dear sister, revealing to her many things that remain hidden from the wise but are revealed to the little ones, the meek and the humble of heart, as he says in today's Gospel reading (cf. Mt. 11:25-30). Affectionately,

*Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan*

Rome, 4 October 2023