
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,

At 3:30 a.m. today, the Memorial of Blessed Timothy Giaccardo, the *Master of Beauty* visited our community of Albano, Italy, to call to his radiant dwelling place our sister:

**GALLIANO – Sr. ANNA MARIA
born in Niella Belbo (Cuneo), Italy, on 31 March 1935.**

In the last months of her life, Sr. Anna Maria repeatedly said: “My life is moving toward its fulfillment.” She saw the moment of death as the attainment of fullness, as a transforming encounter with the *Master of Beauty*—an encounter which she, as an artist, described in this way: “a clear horizon alight with infinity, revealing the meaning of existence and a love stronger than death.” With great simplicity, Sr. Anna Maria confided that she closed each day with the words of this particular song of hers—including the days that in recent years had become very difficult for her due to the fact that she was bedridden and immobilized because of several severe illnesses.

A testimony dating back to her younger years offers a glimpse of her very rich personality and ability to translate her life experiences into poetry. She wrote: “Perhaps the origins of my sensitivity to poetry as vision and music can be traced back to the time when I was very small. On summer evenings, one of my brothers and I would lie down on the lawn near our house and gaze spellbound at the splendor of the starry sky above us. One evening, breaking the silence, I exclaimed: ‘I can hear the music of the worlds!’ That moment of astonishing discovery has always remained with me....”

Sr. Anna Maria’s life was marked by her countless poems which, when set to music, became liturgical songs—catechetical opportunities to revive in the faithful a yearning to meet the Master who *captivates thoughts and makes hearts dream*.

She entered the Congregation in Alba on 15 September 1947, at the age of 12. In her first years of formation she learned the art of bookbinding, and after a brief apostolic experience in Brescia, she made her novitiate in Rome, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1954. In 1957, she wrote to the Superior General: “Our Pauline religious vocation is so beautiful! I say this with all my soul. It is beautiful in spite of the self-denial it continually requires, indeed, precisely because of this and because of the constant striving forward it compels us to undertake. I personally see the vocation to the religious life as a very great predilection on the Lord’s part, an act that he continually renews as a result of his infinite personal love for us... It seems to me that everything is a matter of God’s love, and in the depths of my heart I have just one great desire: to love him more and more and to make him loved by all souls. He alone can fully satisfy a person’s heart, because he alone is infinitely worthy of love.”

After a period of apostolic experience in Reggio Emilia as a young professed, Sr. Anna Maria had the opportunity to attend courses in philosophy and theology in Rome. In 1961, at the end of another brief apostolic interlude in the houses of Cagliari and Udine, she was assigned to the Via Antonino Pio community of Rome, which would remain “her” community until nearly the end of her life.

Beginning in 1962, she collaborated with Sr. M. Agnes Quaglini in the apostolate of catechetical editing, particularly through the preparation of several monographic issues of *Way, Truth and Life* magazine, which she was in charge of for several years. She made a notable contribution to spreading in Italy the wealth of catechetical renewal inaugurated by Vatican Council II in that extraordinary time.

She considered it a great gift of God to be able to perfect her academic studies by attending courses in sacramental theology at the Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anselm and catechetical pedagogy in the Institute of Catechetics at the Salesian Pontifical University (both in Rome), as well as courses in the Theology and Sociology of Communication at the Catholic University of Lyons (France).

In 1979 she was asked to collaborate with Sr. Filippina Busso in the record production apostolate. Starting then, and for the next 30 years, she offered her contribution to the FSP Audiovisual Publishing sector, in which she held the role of publishing director for over fifteen years. Above all, however, she

herself was the author of the texts of many songs, writing more than 300 of them for catechesis and the Liturgy to foster communal singing in ecclesial settings. One of her works is the text of *Noble Icona*, the official hymn for the Exposition of the Holy Shroud (2010), and also the text of *Christ, Master of Humanity*, the official hymn of the 5th National Ecclesial Convention (Florence, 2015). Over the years, she produced a remarkable collection of poems that were set to music and sung by renowned performing artists. Sr. Anna Maria liked to recall her cordial collaboration with musicians such as Msgr. Antonio Parisi, Msgr. Giovanni Maria Rossi, Msgr. Felice Rainoldi, Msgr. Marco Frisina and, in recent times, Fr. Fabio Massimillo [all high-profile figures in the world of Italian religious music]. She always remembered with gratitude the constant encouragement of Fr. David Maria Turoldo and the attention that musician Fr. Eugenio Costa, sj, always gave to her texts. Sr. Anna Maria once confided that her special concern was to preserve in her hymns “the simplicity that allows the whole Church to sing.” She went on to say: “May the Lord be blessed if something of our heart enters into communion with the souls of others [through music]. I believe the truest channel of communication is the Holy Spirit. And he speaks when and in the way he chooses....”

Among her musical texts, we cannot fail to mention the hymn she wrote that was chosen to celebrate the Centennial of the Daughters of St. Paul and set to music by Maestro Massimillo. Sr. Anna Maria called it “a missionary love song.” FSPs had been singing *In the Footsteps of St. Paul* for decades and Sr. Anna Maria rewrote the song for today’s generation.

And we certainly cannot overlook her last passionate effort to laboriously draft, while completely bedridden, the hymn *Thecla, Our Mother*, set to music by Maestro Frisina. It was a task that the Superior General, Sr. Anna Caiazza, had requested of her and which she fulfilled with great love.

For the last three years of her life, Sr. Anna Maria lived in the St. Raffaele wing [the intensive care sector] of our Albano community because a number of serious illnesses and also a fractured femur made it impossible for her to move around autonomously, but this did not affect her desire for knowledge, information and participation in the life of the Church, Congregation and her community. She often said that she was very grateful for “the gift of being ‘a little Daughter of St. Paul’ in the great and admirable Pauline Family.”

In many of her poems, she gives us a glimpse of her inner dialogue with Jesus Master—an intimate experience of love that today, in the light of her death, holds echoes of resurrection:

*What else can I do, my Beloved,
if not remain with you
on the eve of this last day,
which faith has already tinged with gold?
You are the grace that calls forth song;
a beloved divine Presence;
the radiant glory
of my existence.*

Affectionately,

Rome, 19 October 2023


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan