

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

At 9:20 a.m. today, one of the members of our community of Alba, Italy, was called to receive the reward promised to good apostles:

LO CURCIO GIUSEPPA – SR. MARIA EDOARDA
born in Palermo, Italy, on 29 August 1936.

“Our life is short. The only thing we possess that will remain forever is love.” These words, spoken by Sr. M. Edoarda just a few days ago, are a good summary of the life of this dear sister who truly made love the sole reason for her existence. We remember her smiling face, her enthusiasm for the Pauline vocation, her ability to communicate with people from every walk of life, her ardent heart and her feet always on the go across the immense continent of Australia, where she lived for almost fifty years.

She entered the Congregation in the house in Rome on 15 June 1956, and from the time she was a postulant she devoted herself to pastoral work for vocations and spreading the Word of God in various parts of the capital. She made her novitiate in the Divine Providence community of Via Antonino Pio (Rome), concluding it with her first profession on 30 June 1959. She spent her Juniorate in Terni, sharing with the sisters the joy of belonging to the Lord and communicating him with her whole life. She returned to Rome to prepare for her perpetual profession, which she made on 30 June 1964. Afterward, she was assigned to the very busy book center in Lodi, where she did her best to concretize her deep yearning to make herself all to all like the apostle Paul.

Sr. M. Edoarda had a powerful desire to be a missionary *ad gentes* and this yearning was satisfied in 1966 when she was asked to leave for a truly distant country, Australia, where our FSP missionaries had opened a community in Sydney in 1955, followed by two more in Adelaide and Melbourne. Upon her arrival, Sr. M. Edoarda was stationed in Adelaide. Those early years were difficult since the multicultural and multi-religious context of the continent required a very open heart and a more-than-average capacity to welcome others. With her characteristic simplicity, Sr. M. Edoarda immediately made herself useful through her work in the circumscription’s small typography and in the sisters’ widespread outreach to families, schools, parishes, and institutes scattered across the immense Australian territory.

In 1972 she was assigned to the circumscription’s beautiful and centrally located book center in Sydney, where she worked especially in the religious articles sector. As the years went by, that department became a meeting place for the many benefactors whom Sr. M. Edoarda involved in intense charitable activities on behalf of the most fragile and weakest people. She received and gave without keeping anything for herself, always striving to arouse enthusiasm in these lay collaborators and organize them well so as to expand the good they did. The spiritual hunger of the world touched her intimately and she did everything she could to bring it help, even though she realized she was just a small drop in the ocean.

Sr. M. Edoarda’s sociable character enabled her to establish a wide network of relationships. By the time she was transferred from Adelaide, she was perhaps one of the best known and loved people in the city. Love was truly the key to her life, leading her to give preference to the poor and those with special needs. Her love also fostered the beauty and growth of community life because Sr. M. Edoarda was close to all the sisters, supporting them and encouraging them to witness to the joy of being together.

In 2015, her advancing age and the demanding journey of redesigning the Delegation’s communities made it a timely moment for her to return to Italy. She serenely accepted a transfer to our Alba community, where she willingly lent a hand with many small services, while continuing to offer her life and the difficulties she encountered for her beloved delegation. A few months ago she was diagnosed with colon cancer, already at an advanced stage. With great trust, she placed herself in the hands of her doctors, serenely accepting this new challenge. Yesterday her physical situation suddenly worsened: the Lord was waiting to fill her with his love and clothe her with his robe of grace. Let us now entrust to Sr. M. Edoarda the work of evangelization in vast Australia: may the Word of God continue to race ahead so that peace may spread and the good continue to multiply in the world.

Affectionately,

Rome, 27 October 2023


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan