

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

Today, the Memorial of the Guardian Angels, the Lord visited our community of Albano, Italy, to call to himself for all eternity, our sister:

RANIERI ANGELA – Sr. MARIA VENANZIA
born in Bari, Italy, on 27 August 1928.


When she entered the Congregation in the Divine Providence community, Rome, on 5 Oct. 1947, she was already an accomplished printer at a famous print shop in Bari, so she quickly found herself setting type for St. Augustine's book, *The City of God*, at the FSP printing house in Rome. At the conclusion of her year of novitiate, she made her first profession on 19 March 1950. In the mysterious logic of God, it was Sr. Venanzia's work in the typography that gave her life its definitive orientation. It turned out that the inks used for printing gave her a skin disease for which, in 1952, she had to be treated in our Albano clinic. And so the FSP Albano community became her home for the rest of her life. She spent more than seventy uninterrupted years there, obtaining at the suggestion of our Founder, Blessed James Alberione, the diplomas of general nurse, professional nurse, and head nurse. Sr. M. Venanzia recounted the sacrifices she had made to obtain professional training and at the same time not deprive the sisters of care: every morning she went to the training school for nurses at St. John's Hospital and in the afternoons she worked in the clinic that later became Regina Apostolorum Hospital. Over the years, she made an important contribution to the growth of the Hospital in her roles as ward head, head of the admissions department, and person in charge of the pharmacy.

Sr. Venanzia confided with passion how she had learned a novel way to live the Pauline vocation within the care-giving context by discovering how to synthesize her life through love. She continued to repeat with deep conviction, until her last days, the certainty that had always accompanied her: "To suffer for the sake of mission... To pray and offer myself so that the house of Albano might be a house of sanctification and for sanctification; that it might be a house of prayer and self-offering." In her heart, she treasured beautiful memories of M. Thecla's life, especially of her last years. She recalled being present in the operating room in 1957 when M. Thecla underwent surgery and helping to dress her body after her death.

With joy and satisfaction, Sr. M. Venanzia recounted the experience of being accompanied by holy Pauline priests, first and foremost, Fr. Dragone. She shared with simplicity her commitment to "pure obedience to the will of God," and said that she wanted to do his will with enthusiasm and joy. She wrote, "I trust God profoundly. I am in his beloved hands. It is he who has always guided my life. I yearn to integrate contemplation and action and to enter into a deeper relationship with him. I love my Congregation and my community and I surrender myself to the immense sea of God's mercy."

On the occasion of her 60th anniversary of profession, she gave this testimony: "The gift of a vocation to the religious life is important, but perseverance is even more important. Almost my entire life has been spent in the community of Albano. But I have not lacked opportunities for missionary openness and apostolic progress. I have traveled to all the continents by means of prayer and self-offering. I have not done great things, but everything the Lord has asked of me I have carried out in union with the apostolate of the whole Pauline Family. I loved the Congregation; my community is my family. I thank the Lord for all that he has given me. For me, being a Daughter of St. Paul has always been a reason for joy and pride." She confided that the FSP centennial year had been an opportunity to reinvigorate her life and come to better understand the mystical dimension of the Pauline spirituality to which we have been called.

She recalled with emotion the Founder's words about the house of Albano: "From this hill on which Albano is perched," he told the sisters, "look up at the sky, which can be clearly seen. Fix your gaze on heaven." From this hill of Albano, which she loved so much, the Lord called her to eternal life, to the intimacy and *union* with him for which she had yearned her whole life. Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 2 October 2023