

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

At 11:00 p.m. last night, one of the members of our community of Alba, Italy, was called to contemplate the face of God forever at the end of a long agony:

**SANSON ASTERINA – SR. MARIA GIOVANNA  
born in Basiliano (Udine), Italy, on 2 February 1935.**

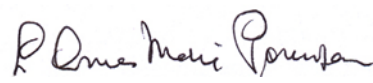
From her beautiful family in Friuli in northeastern Italy, on the border of Austria, our sister inherited both a deep spirit of faith and a strong work ethic. As a child, she had learned to raise silkworms, a complex and tiring job that enabled her to contemplate the beauty and secrets of nature. She entered our Congregation in Alba on 8 Sept. 1958. After two years of formation, she was sent on apostolic experience to Vercelli and then made her novitiate in Rome. She concluded that period of her life with her first profession on 30 June 1962, Feast of the Apostle Paul. In her application requesting permission to make her vows, she wrote to the superior general: "I am willing to do anything, to go to any house and to carry out any service. I place myself in your hands...."

She received the name Sr. Maria Giovanna at her profession and spent her Juniorate in Vercelli, working in the itinerant apostolate. In presenting her for admission to the renewal of her vows, the superior of her community wrote: "Sr. Giovanna is a very good and generous Pauline. She is a zealous propagandist, animated by a truly apostolic spirit." In her letter requesting permission to make her perpetual profession, Sr. Giovanna herself wrote: "I am aware of the step I am about to take. In these years I have had the opportunity to profoundly live the commitments I am taking on. It is true that they involve sacrifices, difficulties and renunciations of all kinds, but I am not afraid. I have great confidence in God and I know that with his grace all things are possible. If a person truly loves the Lord, then nothing is a burden and everything in life is beautiful."

With this outlook of faith, Sr. Giovanna continued her ministry of disseminating the Word of God in the diocese of Lecce. This was followed by a rich and prolonged community and apostolic experience in Reggio Emilia together with other FSPs who were also filled with enthusiasm and open to every form of evangelization. Afterward, Sr. Giovanna was transferred to the St. Paul Film Agency, dedicating herself joyfully to this new Pauline adventure. She learned about films, evaluated them, and suggested them to teachers and pastors so that they could be used for catechesis. She extended her radius of doing good through her visits to parishes, institutes, prisons and schools.

After a brief parenthesis in Bologna, Sr. Giovanna began a new stage of her apostolic life in 1982, in contact with the customers who frequented our Pauline book centers. First she was sent to Genoa-Sampierdarena, and subsequently to Benevento, Potenza, Ravenna, and Alessandria. In Potenza, she also carried out the service of superior with dynamism and great attentiveness to the members of her community. Stationed in Trieste from 2005 to 2016, she put her communicative abilities to good use in that centrally-located book center, which was also frequented by priests and lay people from nearby Croatia and Slovenia.

But Sr. Giovanna's health was declining, and it was in this community in 2016 that she suffered a stroke of the esophagus that robbed her of speech and the ability to feed herself. Transferred to Alba, she spent her last years peacefully, radiating benevolence and willingly embracing her difficult physical situation, which forced her to be nourished by means of a tube that went directly to her stomach. In the past few weeks, this method of artificial feeding also became blocked, leading to her death. We are sure that Sr. Giovanna, after all her sufferings, went to meet the Lord with her lamp lit and that she now contemplates the full splendor of the Face she loved and sought throughout her life. Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 15 December 2023