



Dearest Sisters,

At 11:00 a.m. today, the anniversary of Maestra Thecla's birth, the Divine Master visited our Thecla Merlo community of Albano, Italy, to call to live in eternal intimacy with him our sister:

**BALDINI LUIGINA – SR. M. AUGUSTA**  
**born in Montesicuro (Ancona), Italy, on 23 January 1926.**

Sr. M. Augusta was a smiling, simple, affectionate sister, who loved the Congregation with a truly maternal spirit, striving to do all she could to brighten the life of the communities in which she lived by radiating peace and great goodwill.

She entered the Congregation in the house in Ancona on 1 April 1948. After a short time in Treviso, she was sent to Rome to undergo her initial formation and a year of novitiate, which concluded with her first profession, on 19 March 1951. She spent her Juniorate in Agrigento, carrying out the diffusion apostolate to families, parishes and institutes. She returned to Rome for her perpetual profession, which she made in the Queen of Apostles Shrine on 19 March 1956.

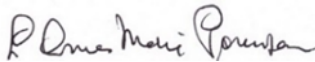
Sr. Augusta lived another eight years in Agrigento, after which she began, in 1964, an almost lifelong apostolate as a cook, first in Messina and then in Palermo. It was a curriculum of service to the sisters of the Italian Province that concluded only a decade ago, when she was nearly 90 years old. She remembered with particular fondness the 20 years she spent in Palermo, characterized by the unexpected visits of Cardinal Pappalardo, pastor of the Sicilian diocese, who felt at home with our sisters and often invited himself to dinner with them. He knew that Sr. M. Augusta greatly enjoyed his impromptu visits and was never disturbed by them.

In 1969, while still stationed in Palermo, she wrote to her provincial: "I am serene and content. My sole desire is to do God's will in everything. I carry out my cooking services very willingly, for the sake of the Lord, and I try to improve my skills as much as I can. Although the job of cooking requires a spirit of sacrifice and renunciation, everything becomes easier when it is 'flavored' with prayer and union with Jesus. With the grace of God, I hope to become always more docile and obedient. I want to love my superiors and Congregation and to spend my whole life doing that."

Ten years later, still in Palermo, she wrote to her superior at the end of her spiritual exercises:

"I am happy that I was able to spend long periods of time in prayer. At the feet of Jesus, in silence and recollection, one comes to understand so many things. I meditated on our Constitutions and I have to say I discovered treasures in them I had never noticed before... I want to make progress, to treat everyone with goodness, and to try to avoid even unintentional failures... My daily work in the kitchen requires a lot of patience. I have to know how to be silent, to make hidden sacrifices and to renounce many things... I think of how many mothers of families make countless sacrifices for their loved ones without complaint. I too must be ready to make sacrifices for my community."

In 1984, Sr. M. Augusta was one of the sisters asked to help open our Thecla Merlo community at Albano, a community at the service of our sick and elderly sisters. Here she spent and overspent herself with great generosity, a spirit of sacrifice, and deep love. The sisters among whom she lived will always carry in their hearts the memories of her warm welcome and acceptance of them, her loving hugs, and her wholehearted participation in the life of the community. In recent times, Sr. M. Augusta focused her entire being on her intimate union with Jesus in the Eucharist each morning, ardently awaiting the coming of her Master and Lord, the Bridegroom of her life. By now she was ready for his call to live with him forever. We entrust our dear sister to the merciful arms of God the Father, asking him to hold her close to himself and envelop her with his overwhelming love. Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 20 February 2024