



Dearest Sisters,

As we move ahead on our Lenten journey, we received the news that today the Divine Master visited the infirmary of our Thecla Merlo community in Pasay City, Philippines, to associate to his Paschal mystery our sister:

**MARIANO NARCISA – SR. FRANCESCA**  
**born in Asingan Pangasinan (Ilocos), Philippines, on 29 October 1937.**

Sr. Francesca entered the Congregation in the Queen of Apostles community in Pasay City, Philippines, on 13 April 1960. She made her novitiate in Lipa, concluding that stage of her formation with her first profession on 8 December 1963. As a young professed, she carried out itinerant diffusion of the Word of God in the dioceses of Vigan and Naga, and after her perpetual profession, made in Pasay City on 8 December 1968, she returned to this apostolate, along with supplementary services as a driver in the community of Lipa.

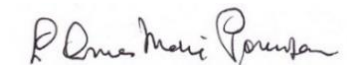
Following this, Sr. Francesca devoted herself with great commitment to technical responsibilities in the Pasay City Book Center and the outreach apostolate in Cagayan de Oro. In 1976, deeply touched by a report on Africa by the sisters of the general government, she expressed to the superior general her desire to be a missionary, writing: “I know I am not worthy and I realize my limitations, but I trust in the mercy and guidance of God, who sustains me at all times. So despite my unworthiness, I am ready to say ‘Here I am. Send me to do God’s will!’” Sr. Francesca’s offer was accepted, but her “Africa” turned out to be our Albano community and service in Regina Apostolorum Hospital. In 1982, she was sent to Italy to assist our sick and elderly sisters, especially those in greatest need of care. For a time, she worked in the Hospital’s pediatric and general medical wards, but above all she specialized in providing physical therapy for the sisters who needed it. In 1990 she obtained her diploma as a professional nurse.

Sr. Francesca was a serene, sociable and very hard-working person, determined, competent and confident in assisting those in need. The sisters with whom she lived in Italy remember the exotic charm of the orchids she cultivated and arranged on the windowsills of the physical therapy sector, as well as her skill as a cook, especially in preparing Filipino delicacies for special occasions. They readily recall the helpfulness and generosity with which she carried out her various duties, including that of driver.

In 2009, Sr. Francesca returned to the Philippines for vacation, but while she was there, she suffered a stroke and also developed cardiovascular problems that increasingly undermined her health. Because of this, she never returned to Italy. Instead, she was transferred to the Thecla Merlo community in Pasay City, where the infirmary of our Filipino province is located. At this point, she could no longer walk and had to move from place to place with the help of a wheelchair. Throughout her many years of suffering, she manifested great resilience and acceptance of her situation: she never complained, was always kind and thoughtful toward her caregivers, and grew steadily in docility and a spirit of prayer.

For the past several months, Sr. Francesca’s progressively worsening health made it necessary for her to be hospitalized repeatedly. Today her Lord and Master paid her one last visit, calling her to himself by means of a heart attack. We entrust our dear sister to the merciful arms of God the Father, asking him to accompany her on her journey to his abode of light and peace.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 15 February 2024