



Dearest Sisters,

With deep emotion we inform you that at 5:40 p.m. today, the risen Christ—the immolated Passover Lamb—visited the University Clinic in Erlangen, a few kilometers from Nuremberg, Germany, to invite to his eternal wedding feast, our sister:

**RANDRIAMIHAJAMANANA SR. VIRGINIE ZAFIARISOA**  
**born in Anatihazo, Isotry (Antananarivo), Madagascar, on 24 December 1978.**

Love was the mainspring that had always oriented our sister's life. It was what motivated her to say *yes* to her Lord and Master, as she herself commented, in preparing for the decisive step of perpetual profession. The invitation of Jesus to *remain in his love* accompanied her throughout her life. And this very Johannine word, read and reread to her by those who visited her bedside, sustained her until her last day.

Sr. Virginie entered our Congregation in the community of Antananarivo, Madagascar, on 3 September 2003. After her initial formation, she was part of the group of young women who participated in the International Novitiate held in Nairobi, Kenya. She found it a wonderful experience to be in close contact with Paulines from various nations, and she concluded that stage of her formation journey with her first profession in Antananarivo on 29 June 2008. As a young professed, Sr. Virginie carried out apostolic activities ranging from book center work in the Malagasy capital, to the itinerant apostolate to families, and also editorial work, which she particularly loved. In addition, she deepened her cultural formation through the study of philosophy and catechesis.

In 2014, Sr. Virginie came to Italy to learn the language and prepare for her perpetual profession. The group consisted of FSPs from different continents. She made her perpetual profession in Alba on 13 June 2015, during the solemn celebration of the Congregation's centenary of foundation.

She was deeply touched by the invitation of the Superior General to strengthen our delegation of Central Europe with her enthusiasm, and so, in October 2016, with love and great hope, she became a member of the circumscription's Düsseldorf community. In that city, she perfected her knowledge of the German language and literature, which she had already initiated during her university studies before entering the Congregation. So as to carry out her mission more competently, also attended a course for booksellers.

In 2019, Sr. Virginie was transferred to Nuremberg. In this community, too, the sisters were prompt to appreciate her simple and hospitable personality, which enabled her to establish positive relationships with every category of people. She especially loved the vocation apostolate and immersed herself in this sector with great hope. In August 2023, she joyfully participated in World Youth Day in Lisbon, writing on that occasion: "I am very grateful to God and the Congregation for the beautiful opportunity to be a member of a team composed of representatives of the Pauline Family and to communicate our vocation and mission to young people."

Toward the end of last February, after numerous medical tests, she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer already in an advanced stage, with severe metastasis to the liver. In ever-growing surrender to the divine will, Sr. Virginie serenely embraced this passage of God in her life.

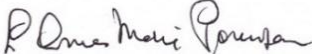
Before being admitted to the hospital for a liver biopsy, the results of which prevented her from ever returning to her community, she had entrusted a sister with a list of the hymns she wanted to be sung at her funeral. One was a hymn to Mary in German, which included the words: "*Bless me, Mother, for I am your daughter.*" The sentiments expressed in this hymn gave rhythm to the last days

of Sr. Virginie's life and reinforced her yearning to go home to heaven. On her lips flourished words of thanksgiving for everything. When the Superior General paid a visit to her, she repeated over and over again in perfect Italian: "Thank you, dearest..."

The hospital staff was edified by Sr. Virginie's serenity and by the loving support and accompaniment with which her sisters surrounded her. The nurses, intrigued by the length and musicality of her surname, did some research and discovered that it means *the wedding of the king*—a splendid term that sums up the beauty of what our sister experienced today. Like a bride, she was invited to the King's wedding—the wedding feast of the Lamb—where she now lives in love and intimacy with him *forever*.

We are especially close in prayer to the sisters of our Central European Delegation and also to those in Madagascar, who are saying goodbye to the third Malagasy sister to be called home to heaven at a young age. We believe these seeds that have fallen into the rich soil of our Congregation contain a boundless and exuberant paschal dynamism of rebirth that will obtain life for many people.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, 10 April 2024