



Dearest Sisters,

It has been written that “August carries the fragrance of Paradise.” We sense this fragrance among us as well, because on August 31, at 11:40 a.m., the Lord visited us once again at the infirmary of Alba, calling to himself our sister

SAURO MARIA BRUNA Sr. MARIA BERNARDA
born in Povegliano, Verona, on January 19, 1934

The older sister of Sr. M. Emanuela, who died in 1998, Sr. M. Bernarda was born into a large, deeply religious family in the Veneto region of Italy, in a parish environment rich in faith and vocations.

She entered the congregation in Alba on March 15, 1952. Two years later, Sr. M. Bernarda went to Rome for her novitiate, followed by her first profession on March 19, 1955. During the period of temporary vows, she was assigned to the Venice community and dedicated herself to the itinerant mission among families, schools, and institutions. After making her perpetual profession in Rome on March 19, 1961, she began a long period of service in the book centers of Novara, Sondrio, Turin, Rimini, Arezzo, Cremona, Treviso, Ferrara, Pavia, and Alessandria. For more than thirty-five consecutive years, she served in these various apostolic centers, bringing her energy and enthusiasm, her love for people, and her desire to communicate the Gospel to as many people as possible. Her smiling face, simplicity, and creativity fostered fraternal communion and an openness toward people and mission.

Sr. M. Bernarda also sought to live in faith the difficult experience of having a seriously ill brother who often needed her care and attention. Thus, at various times, in 1979, 1995, 2012, and 2016, she had to leave the community and request extended periods of absence for family reasons. These requests were always for her an occasion of suffering and of offering herself to the Lord; they were, in a sense, her martyrdom of charity.

Then for more than thirty years, Sr. M. Bernarda lived in the large Motherhouse community in Alba, where she provided precise, punctual, and serene service at the switchboard. This office became the place of her daily offering, of service to the community and the congregation, and of openness to all who visited the house for a variety of reasons. Sr. M. Bernarda welcomed everyone with simplicity and generosity of heart. She loved to recall the years she had spent in direct contact with the people of God, remembering the many graces she had received. With wonder and gratitude, she recalled the silent presence with which the Lord had guided her life. In particular, she would recount vividly the various occasions when the *gray man* had come to her aid, that very tangible presence of closeness and support experienced by so many of the sisters of the early years.

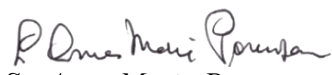
About ten years ago, Sr. M. Bernard had to leave her beloved reception desk and move to the infirmary. She had no particular illnesses, but as she advanced in age, senile dementia progressed and walking became increasingly difficult, eventually requiring her to use a wheelchair.

The Lord’s visit came peacefully, almost unexpectedly, even though Sr. M. Bernarda was no longer speaking and for about two weeks had been unable to swallow. For her, the time had come for the most rewarding encounter, for the fulfillment of the offering of her life that she had renewed time and again. In 2015 she wrote to the superior general: “With greater awareness of the gift I have received, I want to sing my Magnificat to the Lord, renewing the offering of my life because I know in whom I have believed... Here I am, O God, I come once again to do your will.”

With Sr. M. Bernarda, we offer praise and thanksgiving because the Lord has done great things through her humble life, and holy is his name.

Affectionately,

Rome, August 31, 2026


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan