

Dear Sisters,

Today, September 12, 2008, at 7:30 AM, from the Fresno (USA) community, our sister,

Sr. M. Lauretana – Lidia Carnevale
Born in Fondi (Latina) on July 7, 1921

was called to participate in the joy of eternal life.

Lidia entered the Congregation on November 26, 1939 in Alba, in that house permeated with the grace of the origins. She was not yet twenty years of age when, in the midst of the war and certainly not without discomfort, she arrived in this city in the region of Piedmont. Here she made her initial formation. She began her novitiate on March 25, 1942 and made her first religious profession on March 25, 1943. During the first years her apostolate was that of the diffusion of the Gospel. She was in the Pauline communities of Florence, Fossano, Vercelli, Sacile. She made her perpetual profession on March 25, 1948, shortly after the pontifical approval of the Congregation. It was Holy Thursday. After a short period spent in the priestly apostolate in Turin, at thirty years of age she began her life as a missionary.

Departing from Genoa on October 6, 1951, aboard the transatlantic ocean liner, “Constitution”, Sr. M. Lauretana traveled with Sr. M. Leonia Torresan, Sr. M. Paolina Pisano and Sr. M. Paolina Bellia. The sisters arrived in New York on October 20. She then continued by train to Sherbrooke (Canada) and arrived at Mont Sainte-Anne on November 5.

In the internal bulletin, “*Divin Maestro*”, dated December, 1953, we read: “*La vita in Cristo e nella Chiesa*” was begun less than two years ago and already in the distant land of Canada the first French edition of this magazine has seen the light. It bears the same title: <<La vie dans le Crist et dans l’eglise>>. It has the same appearance and arouses the same attraction. When the Founder suggested this, it seemed impossible: it was only by repeating and living the words of the gospel <<in verbo tuo laxabo rete>> (at your word I will lower the nets) that the attempt was made and it was successful.” For a few years the magazine was also published in English. Sr. M. Lauretana was responsible for the diffusion of the magazine; a mission she carried out with unwavering zeal together with the young Canadian sisters. She continued in this mission until 1972 when she was transferred to Staten Island, New York and then to Fresno.

Her primary occupation in Fresno was the service to the Eucharist. Always faithful to the adoration, she cared for the community chapel with incomparable diligence and attention to the smallest detail. She jealously guarded the items for worship, almost as one would watch over a beloved person.

She was methodic, organized and orderly. Her hands were golden. She learned the art of weaving stoles and miters in Canada and continued to use her loom until only a few months ago...an unfinished green stole remains there. She also loved to embroider in gigliuccio: she alternated her work between albs, stoles and the sacristy for as long as her health allowed.

She was also a sensitive person. She was communicative and committed herself to speaking well both English and French. She often had a dictionary in her hands.

The physical limitations, the widespread rheumatism, were certainly a journey of purification and apostolic offering for her, and she accepted them with serenity and optimism. She was not easily defeated. A few days ago she suffered a cardio-circulatory collapse from which she was unable to recover.

Her missionary life clearly bore witness to her generosity and unlimited spirit of sacrifice. We might say that our history in these nations bears the seal of the unshakeable faith of sisters who advanced in the certainty that they were spending their lives for the Lord. It is an echo of the words of St. Paul in today's first reading: "*I do it all for the sake of the gospel. ...I run, but I do not run aimlessly*" (1Cor 9:23.26).

Let us pray for Sr. M. Lauretana and our sisters in the USA, who are being tried in their faith!

Sr. M. Paola Mancini