



Dear Sisters,

Today, January 23, 2017, at 5:30 PM in the community of Sanfrè (CN), the Bridegroom found prepared for the eternal wedding feast our sister

SR. M. MODESTA – SANTINA GROTTTO
born in Piovene Rocchette (VI) on June 28, 1924.

On June 15, 1946, the Congregation received this young woman, already mature and with experience of life, into the community of Sacile (PN) as a gift. Her Pastor, Father Domenico Pegoraro, said that he was proud to entrust his parishioner to the Institute, into which she wanted to be received, assuring that she always maintained optimal moral and religious conduct.

Santina, given the complex history of the Institute, began her novitiate on March 24, 1948, made religious profession on March 25, 1949, in Alba (CN), and her perpetual profession on March 25, 1954, also in Alba. She felt privileged by God in the gift of this vocation, always aware of her littleness. From the beginning she fulfilled her ministry of apostolic charity in the community at the Society of Saint Paul in Albano Laziale, and then in Rome. From 1954, she spent two years in Portugal where she began to familiarize herself with the Portuguese language, which would prove to be useful for a new and prolonged mission. In fact, immediately after her return to Italy, she received the gift of being part of that first group of pioneers who gave rise to our presence as Sister Disciples in the vast country of Brazil.

The Founder, Father James Alberione, imparted a special blessing upon them. After a long voyage by ship, they arrived in Sao Paulo on July 26, 1956, to establish our presence in Brazil. This group consisted of: Sr. M. Salvatoris Rosa, **Sr. M. Modesta Grotto**, Sr. M. Venerina Vaccarisi, Sr. M. Giancarla Barale, Sr. M. Pasquina Romano, Sr. M. Fabiana Lucido. Here they met Sr. M. Paolina de Luca, one of the first eight Sister Disciples, who had preceded them to visit her family residing there. The first dwelling of the young sisters was a rented house in the Villa Mariana zone, where some young Brazilian women soon entered, making it necessary to find a larger place for residence and for the apostolate. In 1961, they transferred to Raposo Tavaresuna, an area in which the entire Pauline Family was located.

In the beginning, the strong awareness of being disciples of Jesus Master was expressed in fidelity to the Eucharistic adoration, in the daily service in the Pauline seminaries, in the sewing of vestments at the service of the liturgy, and especially in the witness of faith and trust in Divine Providence, and joyful dedication to apostolic work in fraternal charity. Sr. M. Modesta was particularly dedicated to the search for donations. In her responsibility, she created around the community a network of favor and friendship, and her regular visit to the benefactors was awaited as a blessing. She was able to give a brief catechesis of faith and trust in God, in his providence, and this was received with gratitude.

With regard to Sr. M. Modesta, there emerged a great sense of generosity and dedication, also expressed by the sisters of Brazil who, participating in this passage to eternal life, recall, *«We are celebrating the Passover of Sr. M. Modesta Grotto: “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and*

dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (Jn 12:24). It is with sorrow that we received the communication of the eternal Passover of our dear and beloved Sister M. Modesta, faithful witness of the first hour, of the sowing and growth of the seed of the charism in Brazilian soil, by her generous dedication to the mission. Sr. M. Modesta was, and continues to be a luminous witness of Jesus Master, keeping alive the flame of the charism by her discipleship, lived in simplicity, generous joy and love for vocations. With the entire Congregation we are united in prayer for the eternal repose of our dear sister, Sr. M. Modesta. Let us ask that, near God, she will continue to be a great intercessor for the entire Congregation and that from this offering may arise many vocations for the continuity of the growth of our mission for the Church today» (Ir. M. Veronice Fernandes e Irmãs e jovens – PDDM Province – Brazil).

Sr. M. Modesta returned to Italy in 1979, and, after a brief period at the House of Prayer in Centrale di Zugliano (VI), she was offered the ministry to serve as an aide in the department for priests of the hospital “Regina Apostolorum”. Together with the scrupulous care for cleanliness, her work was “seasoned” by continual prayer, which enabled her to bear a witness of contagious joy even for the priests. In 1988 she returned to Centrale di Zugliano where she offered her collaboration in various services, always creative and industrious. In 2006, various health problems required her to move to a community for elderly sisters: she was transferred first to Cinisello Balsamo (MI), and then to Sanfrè (CN). Afflicted for many years by multiple pathologies, which gradually worsened, the illness confined her ever more leading to her death, surrounded by the loving care of the sisters.

Sr. M. Modesta, you edified us by your missionary spirit, obtain for our Congregation, as it approaches the 9th General Chapter, to live the zeal of the Apostle Paul in today’s world, to give Jesus to the men and women of our time!

S. H. Paolo Haurum.