



*Dear Sisters,*

On September 15, 2023, Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows, at the retirement home Sansui-En di Hachioji-Tokyo, at 9:47 PM, our sister was called to receive the gift of eternal Life,

**SR. M. JOSEPHINA – YUKIKO M. MADDALENA TOKIWA**  
**born on February 13, 1926, in Yokohama-Shi, Kanagawa-Ken (Japan).**

The fourth of five children, she was raised in a Buddhist family. On May 5, 1948, at the age of twenty-two, conscious of the gift of the Christian life, she received baptism and a new name: Maria Maddalena. Thus she received the protection of Mary of Magdala, the disciple of Jesus and apostle to the apostles. At that time, she lived in Yotsuya of Tokyo and, with her older sister, she occasionally visited our community in Yotsuya, attracted especially to the Eucharistic adoration. A religious sister, who accompanied her in the vocational discernment, advised her: «Since you are drawn to prayer, do not enter my Congregation, but enter with the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master». Thus, on June 24, 1952, she left her family and was welcomed as an aspirant in the community of Tokyo, which was characterized by the generous zeal of the beginnings of the foundation and the daily poverty faced with a spirit of faith and trust.

On March 25, 1955, having completed the regular novitiate, she made her religious profession in the DM community in Tokyo, and on March 25, 1960 she made her perpetual profession, always in Tokyo.

After spending her years of temporary vows in the priestly service and in the ceramics workshop, in 1961 she was appointed coordinator of the community as superior in Fukuoka, first at the Society of Saint Paul and then in the Divine Master Community. She then held various pastoral positions in the dioceses of Osaka and Tokyo in the Catholic Committee.

An intelligent and precise sister, she was appreciated especially in the areas of administration and accounting. Her service at the Japanese Episcopal Conference (1970-1971) was of great value, providing a competent contribution in preparing the economic report for the diocese, a report that she herself presented during the gathering of the Bishops. She then fulfilled many years of service in the area of accounting in various communities of the Province. Her style of competent service, which was also humble and joyful, raised

questions among the lay collaborators and became a witness of life for those who do not know Jesus and his Gospel. A young woman who worked with her in the office testified: when she received baptism, she asked to receive the name Josephine.

It was to her intuition that we owe the practice of using the name “Pietà” for the Liturgical Apostolate Centers in Japan. Sr. M. Tecla Nishida clearly recalled that Sr. M. Josephina suggested the name “Pieta” since she maintained that the statue of the Pietà by Michelangelo Buonarroti conserved at Saint Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican, was well known among the Japanese of all religious traditions. Sr. M. Josephina had the intuition that this name would transmit a sense of the care, of the maternal and Marian devotion, concerned as she was that the Liturgical Apostolate Center would be primarily a place of mission for the disciples of Jesus Master, with the inspiring beauty of good.

She was a person who valued prayer, who lived “the art of prayer and prayer as art” in her daily life. Taciturn and recollected, she did not indulge in negative comments but observed silence. She conserved, even during the exacerbation of senile dementia, a great sense of humor, making others laugh wherever she was, and at times making observations so pertinent that those present were amazed. From the first steps of her religious life she took care to place obedience ahead of personal interests or talents, grateful for the vocation she received, as testified in the letters written to Mother Lucia Ricci, the Superior General at that time.

Affected by Alzheimer’s disease, in 2014 she was admitted to the Casa di Cura San-sui-En di Hachioji-Tokyo where she concluded her earthly pilgrimage accompanied by the prayer of the sisters who were present: Sr M. Giuditta Tokuno, Provincial Superior, Sr. M. Flora Kida, Vice Provincial and Sr M. Loretta Omizu, Local Superior.

We give thanks to the Lord for the vocation of Sr. M. Josephina Tokiwa because she left us a testimony of creative fidelity to the charism as enculturation of the mission which is born of the Eucharist and is placed at the service of the priestly people of God.

Sr. M. Josephina, we entrust to you the sisters of the Province of Japan as they begin the second session of the Provincial Chapter, and the new General Government as it undertakes its service for the entire Congregation. May your generous life be a seed for new vocations!

*Sr. M. Michaela Haneth'*