



Dear Sisters,

On the Solemnity of the Most Holy Mother of God, January 1, 2024, at 6:10 AM, as the new year was beginning, Jesus Master, the Life of the world, called to himself our sister

SR. M. ANTONINA – MARIA PATTI
born on February 9, 1936 in Santa Maria di Licodia (Catania - Italy).

Almost ten days following her birth, on February 18, 1936, the little girl was brought to the baptismal font in the SS. Crocifisso (Holy Cross) Parish and received the name Maria. She was raised in a simple and devout family, cultivating true human and spiritual values. Having met the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master, she was guided by the pastor, Fr. Luigi Borzi, in responding to the call of Jesus Master and to follow him in this Congregation.

On November 14, 1961, at the age of 25, she left her family and entered the Divine Master community in Catania, where there was already another young woman coming from the same parish, Maria Musumeci, Sr. M. Olimpia. The pastor was proud that he had accompanied these young parishioners in responding to a vocation to the religious life and overcoming the natural resistances of their respective families, who saw their daughters leave for cities far from the area in which they were raised.

Following the usual time of the initial formation to the consecrated life, on March 25, 1964, on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord, she made her religious profession in Rome and, at the conclusion of the period of temporary vows, on September 8, 1969, together with Sr. M. Olimpia, she made the perpetual profession in Catania. This was an occasion to give witness to the beauty of the total and definitive offering to God to the people of God who participated in the rite, with special attention to the family and parishioners who watched her grow in faith and in the religious vocation.

Speaking of herself, Sr. M. Antonina presents herself as a young adult, ready to serve the Divine Master by doing *“everything that is most humble in our houses”*. She understood well the vocation of the Sister Disciples which finds in Mary, the girl of Nazareth and the Mother of God, the model for daily service, in simplicity and faith. Like Mary, she knew that the Lord looks upon the humility of his servant, that *spirit of humility that enables us to recognize the truth in all things*, as Mother Scholastica Rivata taught.

Her life was spent primarily in the workrooms of the Pauline communities, caring for the wardrobe of the brothers and sisters; those men and women consecrated to the service of the

Gospel. She interwove with prayer the hours spent ironing or tailoring because she understood that this was the best way to support them in the apostolate. Thus they perceived her silent testimony in the communities of the Society of Saint Paul in Rome – General House, Seminary, Provincial House – Modena, Ostia Antica, Florence, Catania, Albano Laziale and other places.

The adoration, both diurnal and nocturnal, was for her the daily School of the Divine Master in which she learned to understand the value of silence and the things that are essential in daily life. In this school of life she was formed to face the inevitable difficulties of living together and serving the Lord and his Kingdom unconditionally. In fact, in 1995, following a medical examination for vision problems, she was diagnosed with a benign cerebral meningioma that was quite large. She underwent emergency surgery and serenely faced the post-operative period, well aware that this pathology would change the remainder of her life.

With the passage of time, she left the ministry in the wardrobe and, being transferred to our communities – first Catania and then Palermo – she made herself available for the needs of the community. In 2021 she was transferred to Sanfré (CN). Here the community was able to offer her the care that was suitable for her general health condition, which was increasingly more fragile. In this final period of her life, she was able to find the interior conditions that fostered a more authentic transformation of herself. In her pathology, although she was deprived of speech, she transmitted sweetness, serenity: she enjoyed the nearness of the sisters, showing herself to be a pleasant sister with a sociable and peaceful smile.

At the beginning of 2024, Sr. M. Antonina, with her departure for Paradise, becomes an important sign for all of us. She reminds us to keep our interior gaze fixed on the few things that matter in our earthly pilgrimage, and especially to keep our gaze fixed on the final goal, which is in the heart of God the Father. As you are being introduced into the Pauline community of Heaven, Sr. M. Antonina, pray for us as we journey toward the completion of the first centennial of Foundation.

Sr. M. Michaela Ronetti