



Dear Sisters,

On August 12, 2024, in the Sinnei-En Retirement Home, in Hachioji - Tokyo (Japan), at 4:12 PM, the Divine Master called to eternity his Disciple and our sister

SR. M. CANDIDA – MICHIKO CATERINA HARADA
born November 25, 1927, in Kagoshima (Kyūshū – Japan).

Michiko was born and raised in the Prefecture of Kagoshima, a region in southern Japan in which Saint Francis Xavier planted the first seeds of evangelization. The fifth of eight children, she was educated by her parents who were practicing and devout Buddhist and Shinto believers. She knew the horrors of war, hunger, evacuation, devastation, and she also experienced the rebirth of the reconstruction in peace, even in the midst of poverty and misery.

Little by little, as she sought a deeper meaning for that which she was dramatically living, she approached the Christian community and discovered the beauty of the proposal of new life brought by Jesus. Thus, introduced by an catechist friend, after a period of initiation, she received the grace of baptism on December 24, 1948, at the Christmas vigil, together with about twenty catechumens: children, youths, mothers with babies and adults. From this font also sprang the grace of a religious vocation, which matured in prayer and in the discovery of God's personal love.

On May 2, 1952, the day in which the Congregation celebrated its second anniversary in Japan, overcoming the resistance of her parents and her family, she left her paternal home and joined the community of the Sister Disciples in Tokyo. Reflecting upon her vocation, she wrote: «I, who as a student having somehow seen the students and the sisters of the missionary school as strange and avoided them, I who knew nothing about Christ, today, I am praying before the Eucharist! Reflect on the incommensurable works of God» (1999).

She was sent to Rome for initial formation. At the conclusion of the novitiate she made her religious profession in Rome on March 25, 1956, and her perpetual profession on March 25, 1961, also in Rome.

She was sent for artistic studies in painting (especially serigraphy, parchments and design) and attended the Course of Musical Culture promoted by the Italian Association of St. Cecilia for Sacred Music, with optimum results. She obtained the certification as a Teacher in the Schools of Sacred Music and as Assistant in the Gregorian Courses.

Upon her return to Japan, in 1964, she gave a great contribution to the development of the painting department in the Liturgical Apostolate. Besides painting, she also composed charismatic songs, which would reinforce the liturgical sense of the Japanese sisters. Sensitive to



the new steps being taken in the Church after Vatican II in the areas of liturgical reform and enculturation, as Novice Mistress she guided many novices and formed in them the Japanese spirit of the charism specific to the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master. In addition to this service, she was also local superior in various communities, regional councilor and secretary. She was also the first member of the Secretariat for the Spirituality of the Pauline Family in Japan, contributing to the deepening of the spirituality of the Founder and translating his writings.

Her presence in the life of the Province of Japan was especially precious for the contribution given to the translation of the charismatic texts, the Rule of Life, and communications from the General Government: a presence of communion that was nourished by the original sources of the charism of Fr. James Alberione, Mother Scholastica Rivata and the Mother Generals who succeeded her.

Her novices recall that she never spoke badly about others, that she was truly a person who lived in God's presence, looking upon the glorious transfiguration of Christ even in the midst of any difficulties. Those who remember her are grateful for having received the witness of how to live the ordinary events of daily life in faith.

In November of 1999, she wrote: «Recently I have become convinced that each day we live a “call”, a “call to life”. I cannot do other than to concentrate my ears, my eyes, and my heart upon the voice of God who “calls me to life”, who does not see me as an ornamental doll, but as a daughter and renews the invitation to prepare myself to respond immediately to the needs of the Church and of the society “of today”, an invitation of the Lord who desires my life “today” and my existence “today”. I believe that the last invitation we will receive upon earth will be when the Lord, who continues to “call me to life”, calls me to himself for eternity. “Come to me” (cf Mt 11). My desire is to prepare myself every day for the last and best invitation that I can ever receive on earth».

Toward 2010, her physical strength began to decline, accompanied by frequent falls and numerous fractures. In 2022, it became necessary for her to go to a nursing home due to advanced dementia. Also there, she was loved by the people, and she did not go unnoticed since she prayed and sang at the top of her voice.

On August 12, the spiritual exercises were being held in the DM Community of Hachioji: many of the sisters who had been her novices affectionately went to the clinic to visit her. Two hours after having received them, she joyfully responded to the invitation of her beloved Master Jesus and departed for heaven.

In this month of August, with its numerous liturgical feasts – Transfiguration of the Lord, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – we are reminded that Paradise is the final destiny of humanity. The definitive call of Sr. M. Candida is also a significant sign reminding us that we do not have a stable dwelling here below, but are pilgrims travelling toward the tender and merciful embrace of the Father.

Rome, August 13, 2024

Sr. M. Micaela Monetti
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