



Dear Sisters,

Wednesday, September 25, 2024, in the SP Community Casa Madre in Alba (Italy), at 3:30 PM, Jesus Master definitively called to himself our sister

SR. M. GIANNINA – MARIA BALDISSERA
born on October 14, 1937, in Istrana (Treviso - Italy).

The youngest of six children, she was brought to the baptismal font the week after her birth: on October 21 and, receiving the name of Maria, she was entrusted to the special protection of the Virgin Mother of Jesus.

In an interview given to a Portuguese Pauline Cooperator on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of her religious profession, she recounted: «My entrance into the Congregation – at Alba, Casa Madre – coincided with the closure of the Marian Year, December 8, 1954, and the consecration of the Sanctuary of the Queen of Apostles in Rome. Thus, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, has always been the source of inspiration in my specific vocation. I was not yet eighteen years of age when, having met a Sister Disciple of the Divine Master, I confided to her the desire to consecrate myself to the Lord. She advised me to write to Primo Maestro. And I received a response from him, from which I remember these particular words: “There is great beauty in being a bride of Christ. Go ahead, joyful and serene for your whole life”. These words were, for me, a firm assurance that were repeated to me by the Founder on the occasion of my perpetual profession and departure for Brazil. It was then that he asked me: “Where are you going?”. “The Divine Master is pleased to go with you: continue, content and joyful”».

These characteristics distinguished Sr. M. Giannina throughout the journey of consecrated life. From the beginning, she demonstrated the awareness of her vocation and a sincere love for the Congregation. Bishop Carlo Stoppa, the Bishop of Alba, following the canonical examination required for admission to religious profession, noted: “good, joyful and open”.

Having completed the normal course of initial formation, on March 25, 1957, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, she made her religious profession in the General House in Rome and, on March 25, 1962, she made her perpetual profession, also in Rome.

A few weeks later, on April 28, 1962, she departed for the new mission entrusted to her in Brazil, where she arrived on May 11.



Day after day she was formed in missionary zeal, placing at the service of the Pauline community her physical and spiritual energies, as coordinator of the communities at Caxias do Sul, at São Paulo, with the Society of St. Paul among the young aspirants to the consecrated life, clerics, priests and brother disciples. On June 7, 1970, she returned to Italy and was assigned at the SSP General House in Rome, then in Vicenza, Alba, Albano Laziale. After a brief stop in Nice, France in 1978, on March 12, 1979 she departed for Lisbon. On September 13, 1982, she was appointed the Regional Delegate of Portugal.

Over time, she would maintain the nostalgia of her missionary experience beyond the borders and encourage the sisters, the clerics, the young in formation, to face the challenges and inevitable difficulties that accompany the cultural and environmental insertion in multicultural religious communities in a positive manner.

In 1989 she returned to Italy and spent the rest of her life primarily with the communities of the Society of St. Paul, animating the communities of the sisters and brothers to live the Pauline religious life intensely: in Vicenza, Cinisello Balsamo, Catania, Rome, Alba SPCM, etc...

Motivated by the Pauline vocation, she lived as a woman associated with priestly zeal, in the spirit transmitted by Fr. Alberione, inspired by Mary of Nazareth, Mother, teacher of life and faith for Jesus and for his disciples and apostles, in the complementarity of daily ecclesial service. She was firmly convinced of this and transmitted it to those who lived and collaborated with her: to the generations of every age and culture. She spent the majority of her life in the communities of the Society of St. Paul, in Italy and in Brazil, and thus refined the authentic maternal spirit of those who take care of life and of the consecrated life. She did not spare herself nor did she seek her own interest, but despite her strong and decisive character, she offered her service in charity, recalling the words of Jesus: «*Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine you did for me*» (cfr Mt 25:40).

She was aware that living her vocation as a Sister Disciple in generous simplicity could contribute to the edification of the entire Church by helping and fostering the formation of holy religious and zealous priests: thus she opened her heart and her horizons to the universality of the Church and of the Pauline Family, especially of the Society of St. Paul.

Zealous in the works and persevering in the prayer of praise and thanksgiving, she lived in the apostolic spirit the privileged time of the daily Eucharistic Adoration. Also in Portugal she encouraged the young women to live and transmit the ecclesial and not only the devotional sense of the Eucharistic Adoration, which sensitizes the people of God to faith and filial trust. She helped them to understand that the craftsmanship, the production and diffusion of liturgical items, are oriented toward rebuilding the spirit of faith and helping the People of God to pray: with a positive spirit she encouraged the development of the forms of mission that are open to the inculturation of the faith.

The experience within her family taught her about the communion of the religious charisms in the Church: she as a Sister Disciple, a sister who is a Dorothean, and a brother who is a Salesian. Thus it was natural for her to esteem the versatility of the Pauline Family and place herself at the service of the initiatives that express this reality of “being Family”.

Sr. M. Giannina was a sunny person: she loved the Congregation and the priestly apostolate which she fulfilled with love and passion for a great part of her life.

On April 24, 2021, she was appointed coordinator of the small community of Sister Disciples in the Casa Madre [Mother House] of the Society of St. Paul.

The sisters of the community of Alba bore witness to her: «Sr. M. Giannina was a straightforward sister, with a ready wit, who always sought to give encouragement. She loved the young people and followed with interest and prayer the activities of the diocesan youth ministry that took place in Alba. She rejoiced when we told her about the experiences with the youth. She was also greatly loved by the Pauline brothers, by the people outside and by the employees».

During this final period, tired and more frail, she began therapy to help restore her energy. As usual, yesterday afternoon she went for physical therapy in the infirmary for the prescribed treatments. The physiotherapist realized that she was not well and began cardiac massage, that proved fruitless. The Emergency Medical Team attempted to revive her, but, unfortunately, there was nothing to be done.

Thus she concluded her earthly pilgrimage as she had always desired: in the house she loved the most and in which she had spent her energies for good as a consecrated woman, until the end.

The Lord of life, who found her ready for the final encounter, with the oil of charity in her burning lamp, welcomed her to the Eternal Wedding Feast.

And we who, amazed, contemplate his mysterious call to eternal life, trust in her fraternal intercession in heaven, with all the Brothers and Sisters of the Pauline Family who already belong to the community of Paradise.

Rome, September 26, 2024

Sr. M. Micaela Monetti
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