



Dear Sisters,

Today, October 16, 2008, from the community of Staten Island, NY (USA)

Sr. M. Flaminia – Elena Montecchio
Born in Ca'Oddo Monselice (Padua) on November 9, 1925

was called to join the large community in heaven of the Sister Disciples who were missionaries in the USA. She was the sister of Sr. M. Veritas, also in the USA, who entered the congregation before her. Sr. M. Flaminia entered in Alba (Cuneo) on November 9, 1943. She came from a large family of 5 brothers and 3 sisters. During the war, their father was beaten to death in a shelter. Her notes trace the history and the profound motivations of her vocation and the environment, filled with many sacrifices, poverty and faith in which it matured: *“I have always loved the Madonna and prayed the entire Rosary every day. Every morning I attended Mass. Then I went to work in the fields of a man who had many workers. I was enlisted in Catholic Action and on Sundays helped the pastor teach catechism to the young people. I observed a life of prayer and love for Jesus in the Eucharist. At the age of 18 I entered among the Pious Disciples”*. She began her novitiate on March 24, 1946 in Alba and was a member of the group which, during the difficult period of our history, was transferred from Alba to Rome. *“The two groups of novices – Daughters of St. Paul and Pious Disciples, under the direction of Maestra Nazarena Morando FSP and of Sr. M. Lucia Ricci PD as assistant, - we unable to merge into one group. On both sides this unification was lived as violence which, especially in some of the novices of the Pious Disciples, had repercussions even for their physical health (Albero visto dalle Radici, 2- p. 160)* Shortly after the diocesan approval of the Congregation, she made her religious profession in Sanfre' (TO), on May 26, 1947, where she was recuperating.

After spending two years at the Society of St. Paul in Turin and Modena, she was asked to become a missionary in the USA. The bulletin, “Divin Maestro”, of December 1949, states: *“Aboard the ship “Sobieski” the following sisters departed on November 17: Sr. M. Cordis Drudi, Sr. M. Ancilla Bellesso, Sr. M. Gioviana Fratelli, Sr. M. Flaminia Montecchio. They are arriving in New York, but destined for lands further away (two of them went on to the Orient)”*. She made her final profession in Staten Island (USA) on May 26, 1952. As attested by the documents, Primo Maestro (Fr. James Alberione) was delegated by the Vicar for Religious in New York to conduct the canonical examination and ascertain the complete liberty, desire and preparation of the sister. Sr. Flaminia was in the communities of Canfield, Derby, Staten Island at the Society of St. Paul and spent some periods of time in our communities in Fresno and Boston. She continued her service at the Society of St. Paul for as long as her health permitted, especially in her ministry as a cook. In various letters she states: *I have been assigned to the SSP... I pray the Lord to give me the grace to serve them in the spirit of the Madonna (1985). “I continue my service at the Society of St. Paul, with dedication and love, in serenity and confidence” (1997), I am content, happy to offer this service” (1999)*. Lately she was at the community in Staten Island, gravely ill with leukemia. The sisters testify: Sr. Flaminia was that Sister Disciple of whom Blessed Alberione spoke; she spent all of her energies of prayer and work for the Pauline Priesthood, “like the Madonna beside Jesus and the Apostles”. She was “mother and sister” to our Pauline brothers. She joyfully consumed herself for their good health, for their perseverance in faith in the Pauline mission. I would like to compare Sr. M. Flaminia to a Eucharistic bee. She went from the chapel to the kitchen and from the kitchen to the chapel with the spontaneity and fruitfulness of the industrious bee. She not only provided the “nectar of good food” but stirred up the desire for holiness, for peace and offering in all those she met. She nourished the Pauline brothers and her sisters with many more hours of Adoration than those prescribed by the norms. She participated in all the community events until the penultimate day of her life among us in the Staten Island community and breathed her last as the community sang *Scio cui credidi et certus sum (Sr. M. Tiziana Dal Masetto)*.

She encountered her death as the completion of her earthly pilgrimage. She recently spoke very peacefully in a telephone conversation with Sr. M. Regina Cesarato, superior general. Let us assume with Sr. M. Flaminia a special prayer intention regarding Mother M. Scholastica: *“I am reading with pleasure the story of her simple life, rich with offering and graces. Let us pray to the Divine Master than her heroic virtues may one day be recognized” (1990)*. In our preparations for the World Mission Day, the Divine Master presents the images of these missionary sisters, filled with youthful energy, vocational joy and dedication to faith. May their life witness help us to be *“handmaids and apostles of Jesus Christ”!* Let us pray for Sr. M. Flaminia and count upon her intercession for us!

Sr. M. Paola Mancini