



Dear Sisters,

Today, April 24, 2018, toward 6:00 AM, in the House of Sanfrè DM (CN), our dear sister returned to the Father's House:

**SR. M. LUCIANA, GIOVANNA LAZZARINI**  
**BORN IN PRAZZO (CUNEO) ON JULY 6, 1928.**

Giovanna entered the Congregation at the age of fifteen on October 19, 1943, in Alba (Cuneo). Following the novitiate, she made her first religious profession in Alba on May 24, 1947, and her perpetual profession on May 24, 1952, in Tokyo (Japan). As a newly professed, she spent three years at the Society of St. Paul in Pescara. In 1950, she returned to Alba for studies. After some time in Sanfrè, she returned to Alba, and in 1951 she was assisting in the Liturgical Apostolate Center in Catania. She returned to Alba where she was offered the possibility of going to Japan as a missionary. Sr. Maria Pia Chiavassa and Sr. Maria Luciana Lazzarini left for Tokyo on April 3, 1952. After various stops, they reached Tokyo in the night of April 5 at 2:30 AM, welcomed by the sisters who had arrived earlier (cf *Divin Maestro*, May 1952).

The season of Easter in which we are living proposes for our consideration the disciples who, outside of Jerusalem, proclaim that Jesus is Lord and a great number come to believe and convert to him. In this time of Easter proclamation we can reflect upon the mystery of the life of Sr. M. Luciana Lazzarini. As a young professed, she was chosen to go to a mission that was just beginning, in a nation that was by no means easy, in which those who believed in Christ were, and continue to be, in the minority. Chosen and sent for the proclamation of Jesus Master in this Nation, to form disciples who would, in turn, proclaim and bear witness to Jesus, she was surprised by a serious illness: tuberculosis, which at that time had its conclusion only in eternal life. The great missionary zeal dwelling in the heart of the pioneers gave rise to a prayer and a command to the Lord and to the patient: you must be cured and the miracle would come about through the intercession of Father Timothy Giaccardo, as well as the faith and obedience of the young sister, Sr. M. Luciana. The doctor treating her became a believer, and he would testify to the inexplicable healing that would lead to the beatification of Father Timothy.

These are some excerpts from the testimony of Sr. M. Luciana. *«I am the one healed from pulmonary TB. My attested cure took place on July 8, 1954, when I felt that I was healed (...). Having expressed the desire during my novitiate to go to Japan as a missionary, in April of 1952, I was sent to Tokyo. I arrived in Tokyo shortly after the war, on April 5, 1952. Japan, at that time, did not have the current modern resources and they lived in poverty. As sisters, even though we were not accustomed, we slept on mats. Food was scarce and hardly nourishing. The work was great: they were at the beginning and the enthusiasm made us forget the necessary prudence in our work. By the middle of July of 1952, overcome by study, work and the shortage of food, I became ill with a slight fever».* After some rest and care I made a good recovery. After the winter, she transferred to Kawaguchi with the novices to begin the first Japanese novitiate. On February 13, 1954, they did the first pneumothorax, which was then done every week. After X-rays taken on May 22, she was advised to undergo a risky lung surgery. Mother General sent a check from Rome for her return to Italy. On July 2 she was supposed to go to the health department for an injection in preparation for her departure from the country, but she did not go... On July 7 the contract was signed for the purchase of the new house. *«In the afternoon of the same day, at about 3:00 PM, Sr. M. Pia went to the room where I was resting and told me in a strong and resolute tone, a tone that to me was unusual and strong: "Sr. M. Luciana, you are not going to Italy, you no longer need an operation, you must be cured. Tomorrow morning we will have a Mass said to Signor Maestro, then you will go to the hospital for the x-rays that, according to the doctors, you must present upon your arrival*

in Italy, but these will show that you are well and that you are cured!" It seemed like I was dreaming, but I exclaimed: "How happy I would be if this were true!" Mother then became more serious and, raising her voice, added: "You must not doubt, ask Signor Maestro for the miracle with faith!" I did not open my mouth again; I got up and went immediately to the chapel nearby. The Eucharistic Master was alone, with faith I knelt on the tatami, before the tabernacle, and prayed: "Jesus, I never asked you to be cured, I was happy to suffer for you, for the priests, for the growth of the Sister Disciples in Japan. Now I am under obedience. If I must obey, you must obey as well. Through the intercession of Signor Maestro you must cure me". That same evening, with great faith, I began a triduum to Signor Maestro. I did not doubt for an instant; I was certain that I would be healed (...). At the command of Sr. M. Pia, I felt within me new strength and I was immediately certain that I could and must be healed (...). On July 8, 1954, I heard Mass with the community. I united myself with the prayer of the sisters through the intercession of Father Timothy Giaccardo. I promised then that, if I was granted the grace of healing, I would spend the rest of my life for the vocational apostolate. After breakfast, accompanied by Sr. M. Stella Doi, I prepared myself to go for the x-rays. Before leaving, Sr. M. Pia told me again, in a stern voice, in more or less the following words: "Go with faith, you must return cured!" On July 10, in the early afternoon, as I was resting in bed, M. M. Pia, together with Sr. M. Stella Doi and the novices went to work in the fields. Suddenly I heard Sr. M. Pia and Sr. M. Stella calling in a loud voice as they hurried toward my window (...). Between joyful amazement and tears I managed to understand that the surgery was no longer necessary, that I was well, and that I no longer needed to return to Italy. In an impetus of joy, I took the small image and relic of Signor Maestro that I always had with me from under my pillow and exclaimed: "He is a saint!" I then allowed the tears to flow freely, and added: "Japan, that I love so much, is still mine, it is mine twice, now I will work with greater zeal for the good of my beloved Congregation!" Later I learned from Mother what happened. "We were in the fields – she told me – when we were called to the telephone at the Radio Office located not far from us. By telephone we learned from the sanatorium that you were well and that the pagan doctors could not explain how the x-rays could be so different in such a short time, even though there not been anything new". As soon as possible, we went to the hospital and the news was confirmed. Professor Kizawa, the primary doctor of the sanatorium and the one who was to perform the surgery, released the document and the x-rays that attest to my healing. I was well! I was cured! (...) No one doubted the diagnosis, the precision of the prognosis, the unexplainable cure". I am convinced that God healed me through the intercession of Timothy Giaccardo, toward whom I feel a great sense of gratitude and thanksgiving".

Since the health of Sr. M. Luciana remained stable over time, it was recognized as a miracle by the Church, who decreed the beatification of Fr. Timothy Giaccardo, which took place on October 22, 1989, by John Paul II. Throughout her life, Sr. M. Luciana, narrated and proclaimed the wonders of the grace she had received from the Lord. She spent her life in Japan, except for a year spent in Italy, at the Center in Florence, in 1974. In Japan she served in the formation of the novices (1957), those in temporary vows (1969), as regional councilor (1971, 1975), local superior, regional secretary or secretarial assistant. She came to Italy in 2005 where she joined the community of Sanfrè. She made herself useful assisting the sisters in greater need, in many small services of charity. She was known for her insistent prayer for religious and priestly vocations, and never missed an occasion to bear witness to her joy of being a Sister Disciple!

In 2003 she prepared a spiritual testament, which read in part: «I thank all of the sisters of the Congregation, especially those of Japan, for all the good you desired for me, for the help and patience you used toward me, and things you sometimes also put up with. Lord, forgive my limitations, the slowness, the difficulty in making my own the culture of the Land of the Rising Sun, the good I failed to do. I ask everyone for forgiveness and that the Lord may bless each one. Congregavit nos in unum Christi Amor! In this spirit, I repeat my love for all the sisters scattered throughout the world, for the noble Japanese nation, and I offer to God my life for new vocations to the Congregation and to the Church! (...) Eternity will not suffice to thank the Lord for having made me a pious disciple of Jesus Master, and having always watched over me! ».

In a note to Sr. Micaela Monetti, dated May 22, 2017, she praised Jesus Master for having prepared her as Superior General, affirmed that she rejoiced at her election, and invoked for her the intercession of her mother and aunt, Sr. M. Vitalina, already in paradise. Sr. M. Luciana passed away today in great peace, due to cardio-respiratory insufficiency.

While you enjoy the company of the elect in Heaven, intercede for the upcoming gathering of the Major Superiors of our Institute (April 26-20) at Casa Betania in Rome!

*S. H. Paolo Mancini*