



Dear Sisters,

Today, April 29, 2018, at 4:30 PM, in the DM House of Albano our sister went to her final Passover

SR. M. JOANNA MARIA ASSENNATO

BORN ON MAY 18, 1923 IN PACHINO (SR).

Maria entered the Congregation in Catania on June 25, 1945. The entrance of this young woman, just over twenty years of age, took place in the most delicate historical moment of our reality as an Institute. The dimension of strong faith, inherited from her family and her parish, did not prevent her from moving forward, supported by the love for Jesus Master and for the Congregation that filled her heart from the beginning. Following the novitiate, she made her religious profession on April 4, 1948, in Alba. As a young professed, it was proposed that she go as a missionary to Argentina, to which she did not hesitate to give her generous assent. There she found Mother M. Scholastica Rivata, already working in the mission and dedicated to the formation of the young candidates. In the internal bulletin, *Divin Maestro*, it is written: *“The ship «Conte Grande» was boarded in Genoa on March 30 by the Sisters: Sr. Maria Bibiana Ravina and Sr. Maria Joanna Assennato, directed toward Argentina»*. They arrived in Buenos Aires on April 20, 1950, after a long voyage.

Here she dedicated herself to various services, and made her perpetual profession in Florida, at the Society of Saint Paul, on April 4, 1953. Her service would alternate between the communities of Florida and Cordoba, where she was also local superior. In 1956 she was asked to assume the role of local superior in the newly established community of Santiago, Chile. She returned to Argentina in 1959, as local superior in the community of Florida. With the same agility with which she left Italy, she returned at the end of 1962 to the community of Via Portuense, Rome, where she was assigned as a seamstress, sewing especially for the sisters. Most of us remember having a religious habit sewn, with maximum precision, by Sr. M. Joanna! She was known for her patience in meeting the needs of all! In the greetings for her 25th anniversary of profession, it was recalled that she spent *“various years in the houses of Argentina and Chile, and now spends her energies dressing the sisters. She is truly noted for her mercy. Her characteristic from the time of novitiate was order. She demanded it of herself and in her surroundings! A beautiful sign of interior sensitivity”*. In the greetings for her 50th, motivations were listed that can be confirmed: *“With you today, I bless and thank the Divine Master: for your life as a Sister Disciple; for the love that has made every small action of every day precious; for your dedication in the mission wherever the will of God called you to service; for the joyful witness of belonging to Christ the Master Way, Truth and Life; for your fidelity in these 50 years of consecrated life to God in the Congregation, in the Pauline Family and in the Church”*. And then she was entrusted with a special intention for her advancing age: *May your life be a living prayer for the vocations in the Czech Republic! (May 8, 1998)*.

Those who lived with Sr. M. Joanna can testify to the lively and intense Eucharistic spirit of her life: first and most faithful to the turns of adoration; even when her physical conditions were not favorable, she did her best to kneel before the Blessed Sacrament! This love for Jesus rendered her more solicitous and attentive in apostolic service. She was both attentive to poverty and generous. With simplicity, she lived and communicated the gospel and Pauline values that became noted characteristics of her personality.

For health reasons, in 2006 she transferred to the Blessed Timothy Community in Rome and then to Albano. Even with the declining health, she never lost her smile, which surely originated in a peaceful and harmonious interior life, despite the limitations on verbal communication. Her health gradually declined, leading to her death.

The gathering of the Major Superiors, which concludes tomorrow, April 30, can still count on the intercession of a sister who bore in her life the experience of a mission that was joyfully loved and shared! In Heaven, Sr. M. Joanna, through Christ Jesus, present our apostolic dreams to the Father!

S. H. Paolo Mancini