



Dear Sisters,

Today, February 14, 2016, First Sunday of Lent, in the community of Albano Laziale (Rome), at 5:30 PM, while the community was gathered for the celebration of Vespers, the Divine Spouse arrived unexpectedly to call to himself our sister

SR. M. EGIDIA CELINA MACCIONI
born on July 25, 1934, in Mogoro (Oristano).

In some notes about her vocational story, she recounted that she was raised in a family known for living the faith and for its love of the Church, offering concrete assistance in the parish. As a member of Catholic Action, she had assimilated the values of this ecclesial movement. She was also a person who held a position of responsibility in an organization which promoted families: *Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia (National Association for the protection of Maternity and Childhood)*. One of the parish priests in contact with Mother M. Gesualda Serra accompanied her for a period of vocational discernment, directing her toward the Institute of the Sister Disciples. Celina entered the Congregation in Rome on June 21, 1957. She was then sent to Alba and returned to Rome for the novitiate, where she made her first religious profession on March 25, 1960. During the period of temporary vows, Sr. M. Egidia had various apostolic experiences: at first she went to the Liturgical Apostolate Center in Milan, a year later she went to Alba, where she worked in the embroidery in gold, then to Bordighera for various tasks, and in 1964 to the Society of St. Paul in Rome. In her request for admission to the perpetual profession, she expressed her experience of the religious life and especially the apostolates of the Congregation: *“finding myself to be ever more content, I humbly ask with greater awareness and desire to be admitted to the perpetual profession”*. She made her perpetual profession in Rome on March 25, 1965.

From 1965 most of her ministry was in the Liturgical Apostolate Centers: Milan (1965), Naples (1966), Milan (1968), Florence (1970); in Bologna she was in the embroidery (1974), then to Trento (1985), Turin (1988), then back to the embroidery in Rome (1989). In the spirit of accepting the will of God, her availability was evident in the frequent transfers in response to various apostolic needs. For short periods, she was in: Rimini, Bologna, Florence, Bari, Saint Mary Major in Rome, Genoa, Sanfrè; and from 2006 until 2011 she was responsible for the refectory in the Regina Apostolorum House in Rome. In 2011 she went to Albano, first to assist in various duties, and then as an infirm sister.

Sr. M. Egidia distinguished herself for her precision, an exquisite taste for beauty, and the love of order. She had a very strong sense for the apostolate as expressed in prayer and in the offering of her life. She also appreciated the apostolate of suffering by offering many intentions: *“For the Church, for the Holy Father, for our beloved Congregation, especially for vocations and for priests”*. Spiritual work was central to her, and after each annual retreat she sent to her superior, no matter who it was, some conclusions drawn from her spiritual journey. In 1981 she wrote to Mother M. Lucia Ricci: *“I am in Thiene for the annual retreat and my thoughts went to you during these days. I wish to express my gratitude for this “house of prayer” which you have lovingly fostered and worked to*

make a reality. It is a wonderful place which, with prayer, nurtures the meeting with God, recollection, silence... These were beautiful days that enhanced my union with God and, with greater reflection on the Word of God, I sought to discover my position, the state of my soul with respect to God and to the sisters. I must express my gratitude for the good that he works in my soul, and to ask pardon for my ingratitude, lack of correspondence, and human limitations”.

To Sr. M. Regina Cesarato, Superior General, she wrote: *“I am in Bethany House, approaching the end of my annual retreat, and while I am still in silence (externally) and filled interiorly with the Word of God, I joyfully write to you. Every day I am more serene and content to be a Sister Disciple of the Divine Master. I strive to offer everything lovingly each day, but I can never finish thanking the Divine Master for his call and for the gifts he gives me every day, through his grace, his love, and his forgiveness. I always need them...These days of retreat are a great gift. **The Word of God descends into the soul like a spring of pure water that purifies and strengthens us...** The spiritual itinerary of the Pauline Family. “You are the body of Christ” enabled us to experience the joy of belonging to the Pauline Family, spiritually united in everything” (Rome, Bethany House, September 12, 2007). And again: “The Word of God, received and lived, also gives perfume to daily life” (October 7, 2008). In this first Sunday of Lent, Sr. M. Egidia invites us to make the Word of God the light guiding our Lenten journey, with the goal of radically changing the depths of our being! Thank you, Sr. M. Egidia, for the gift you are for us! Remember us from heaven and obtain for us true conversion of heart, conversion to mercy!*

S. H. Paolo Mancini