



Dear Sisters,

Today, November 11, 2016, in the Divine Master Community of Palermo, at 10:00 AM, the Lord called to eternal life our sister,

SR. M. LETIZIA – IRENE GAIO
born in Centrale di Zugliano (VI) – (Italy) on June 14, 1946.

At the beautiful age of twenty, Irene entered the Congregation in Rome on October 6, 1966, bringing with her the experience gained in a simple and Christian family. Her parents did not object to her choice of life and the pastor presented her confidently, testifying to her willingness to undertake the formative journey of religious life. At the conclusion of the year of novitiate, she made her religious profession on August 6, 1969, in Rome, receiving the name of Sr. M. Letizia, with a specific finality: *“Remember in your life the ‘Novitiate of Joy [Letizia]’ that you and all your companions, following a life of joyful fidelity, may attain to the eternal joy in the Pasch of Heaven”*. On October 19, 1975, she made her perpetual profession at Centrale di Zugliano, in the parish church where she was baptized.

Immediately she presented herself as a sister who was jovial, sociable, sensitive and generous who, despite her personal limitations, enthusiastically fulfilled the tasks entrusted to her. She left a good impression wherever she went, as a sister animated and dedicated to the mission: sharing with all the great treasure of Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life, especially through beauty. She carried out her ministry in various houses and activities: at the Society of Saint Paul in Vicenza (1973-1974) she came to appreciate the priestly apostolate, but for the majority of her years she was at the various Liturgical Apostolate Centers: in Florence, Turin, Genoa, Saint Mary Major (Rome), Bordighera, Bologna, Cagliari, Milan, Bari, and finally in Palermo. She had an artistic sensitivity that was completed at the Institute of Art in Urbino, preparing her for a qualified graphic service: this proved useful in the exercise of the liturgical mission, assisting the people of God to pray in beauty.

In 2014 she underwent surgery for cancer of the stomach that had already metastasized. The surgery and following chemotherapy led to the arrest of the cancer, which reappeared aggressively during these past weeks, causing her death.

Sr. M. Letizia faced the illness and its complications with clear consciousness, accepting with serenity and courage each phase of its progression. The desire to win the battle made her indomitable and confident in the trials which gradually became heavier to sustain. A profound spiritual life, purified in the crucible of suffering and sustained by trust in God, the merciful and good Father, rendered her serene, and at times realistically ironic in describing her health. During this final period, with a smile upon her lips, she presented herself as “tumored of God”, bearing witness that her struggle, before being a battle against the sickness, was especially the result of the total offering of herself in the fear of the Lord who cares for all his creatures.

The sisters who accompanied her in this final period attest to her love for the apostolate, especially in the service at the Liturgical Apostolate Center in Palermo, where she offered her qualified and precious contribution for as long as her physical energy permitted. Even during her convalescence, between rounds chemotherapy, she continued her apostolic activity especially regarding the relationships with the vendors, and the specific requests of priests or seminarians who went to the Center: for her these were signs of life in the mission, for us it is a testimony of love for the vocation of the Sister Disciple. With the comfort of prayer and the charity of the community, Sr. M. Letizia prepared herself to enter into the perennial joy of the eternal Pasch, offering her life for the sanctification of priests.

Sr. M. Michela Monetti