



Dear Sisters,

As the Regina Apostolorum community concluded the celebration of Vespers in the Church of Jesus Master, yesterday, January 13, 2017, at 8:00 PM; in the Blessed Timothy Community (Rome), our sister consigned her spirit to God

SR. M. PAOLA – MARIA CASADEI
born in Sant’Arcangelo di Romagna (FO) on August 19, 1931.

At the young age of 19 she felt the attraction of the call of the Divine Master and left everything, family bonds and activities, to follow Him and enter the Congregation in Alba (Cuneo) on August 27, 1950. The Pastor introduced her by affirming that *“one of the young women [of my parish] desires to enter the Sister Disciples. She is a member of Catholic Action since her infancy. She is from a religious family, all of whom are members of Catholic Action... from childhood she has had the desire to enter the convent...”*.

Following the novitiate, she made her religious profession in Alba on March 25, 1954, and her perpetual profession in Rome on March 25, 1959. The reports underscore her spirit of sacrifice and an evaluation that was always positive and favorable. In her requests, joy is a recurrent theme: *“I am very happy to have embraced this life”* (1952); *“with all sincerity I must say that I am very happy for these two years of religious profession”* (1956); *“Five years have passed since my first profession, and I can say with sincerity that I am truly happy to be living this life”* (1959). In the following years, she manifested to Mother M. Lucia Ricci: *“I want to become a saint, not from the altar but from Paradise”* (Easter 1981).

In 1954 she was in Alba and in 1958 in Rome, where she worked in the embroidery workroom. She soon revealed an extraordinary talent in this art at the service of the liturgy: with her hands, how many threads of silk, gold, wool, and other precious materials were used to produce marvels of beauty on chasubles, miters, stoles, with the most exquisite liturgical sensitivity. From 1969, she fulfilled the ministry as local superior in various communities: Rimini (1969), Saint Mary Major in Rome (1973), Florence (1977), Cinisello Balsamo DM (1982). In 1986 she returned to the embroidery workroom in Rome, where she joyfully began teaching many young sisters the art of embroidery. In 2006 she was transferred to the Blessed Timothy community, and there continued her ministry as her health permitted.

The Gospel speaks to us of the precious pearl that is to be sought, thus in the writings of this sister, we find a truly precious pearl. In her letter of February 12, 1964, addressed to Mother M. Lucia Ricci: *“For some time I wanted to write this note, but I was always somewhat hesitant since I recognize my weakness, but despite everything, **I now feel more than ever and have decided: Mother Maestra, I feel the deep desire to do more for the Church of Jesus Master and I ask you to be able to offer my life for this and for the sisters who are studying.** It is true that I am poor and my life is of little importance, but I believe that it will be pleasing to Jesus and that he will*

make it better. I am disposed and content to do as you tell me. I am very close to you in prayer. In Jesus Master, Sr. M. Paola C.”

We do not know the response of Mother M. Lucia, but the fact remains that she testifies that this offering was dictated by the Holy Spirit and that she experienced the desire to offer herself completely for a cause that was perceived as truly great: the Church of Jesus Master in Rome and the good that would come of this. It is a witness that seems to echo the words of Blessed James Alberione: *“Let us remember that, by working for the Church of Jesus Master you honor the Son, the Son of Mary. This is most pleasing to Mary. And, on the other hand, **that church will serve to draw many souls to God, to Jesus Master, and it is Mary who communicates the graces to prepare these souls to approach Jesus and then to live of Jesus, and with Jesus, for eternity**”* (APD 133, 1963).

Those who lived with Sr. M. Paola can testify that she frequented the Church of Jesus Master, participating in the community liturgy, for as long as she was able, even when this required the use of a wheelchair.

The offering of her life came with a painful affliction. Her long calvary began in 1976, when she was diagnosed with *schleroderma*. Sr. M. Paola went through all the stages of the illness, and faced each of its manifestations with extraordinary courage and tenacity, undergoing various treatments that were offered and collaborating with intelligence and responsibility. Besides the specific treatments on the part of medical specialists, she also experienced the particular attention of the sisters who are nurses.

She prepared consciously for her final encounter with the Divine Master; willingly accepting the suggested intentions, especially for the gift of new vocations, for whom she will continue to intercede from Paradise. She joyfully welcomed the visits of the young in formation.

Sr. M. Paola, as we invoke for you the infinite peace of God, we count on your intercession before the Divine Master for the 9th General Chapter, which is now at the door!

Sr. M. Paola Hanauer