



Dear Sisters,

Today, March 29, 2017, at 7:15 AM (local time) in the community of Fresno (USA), our sister was called to eternal life

SR. M. VERITAS MARIA RINA MONTECCHIO
Born on June 19, 1927, in Ca'Oddo Monselice – Padua (Italy).

Maria Rina entered the Congregation in Sacile (Udine) on September 7, 1941. Italy was at war and the young woman, overcoming many challenges, began in faith the formative journey for the consecrated life together with other young women from the same place. Two years later Elena, her older sister, followed her into the Congregation, taking the name Sr. M. Flaminia. She was also a missionary in the United States, and died there on October 16, 2008.

Maria Rina made her novitiate from 1944-1945, during a critical period in the history of the Institute. On March 25, 1945, she made her first religious profession in Alba (CN). She would make her perpetual profession in Canfield (USA) on March 25, 1950.

As a young professed, at twenty years of age, Sr. M. Veritas began her life as a missionary in the United States. The story reported in the information bulletin *«Il Divin Maestro»*, March 1948, with all the freshness of the beginnings recounts: *«On February 10, in Genoa, on the ship «Saturnia» headed for New York, the four sisters embarked: Sr. M. Fulgenzia Bellagamba, Sr. Maria Beniamina Muzzi, Sr. Maria Trinita Taricco, Sr. Maria Veritas Montecchio»*. It was a community voyage in which they assumed responsibility as animators and sacristans, under the watchful eye of the chaplain who exhorted them to give an example of strength to the others. Sr. M. Veritas could later affirm: *«The detachment from the Mother House, from the Mothers and Sisters, from my country, cost me a great deal, but I willingly accepted this sacrifice. Nothing is ever too much for the Divine Master!»*.

She loved her new country from the beginning. Soon she became a citizen. She inserted herself there, with appreciation for its culture; she learned the language, culinary arts, the simple and distinct lifestyle of the Americans. Her life in the USA was spent primarily in the Houses of the Society of Saint Paul: in Canfield (1948-1952), Derby (1952-1956), Canfield (1956-1960 and 1983), at the diocesan seminary in Fresno and then in the Liturgical Apostolate Center (1960-1966), then in Los Angeles and Staten Island at the Society of Saint Paul (1991-2003 and in 2006). In a letter to Mother M. Lucia Ricci, she was able to affirm: *«I can understand better and love this apostolate in the sense of offering and vitality for the priests and brothers»* (Staten Island, May, 10, 1992). *«I think you will be pleased to know that here at Saint Paul it has become like a center for prayer. Besides the perpetual Eucharistic adoration that is well sustained, there are many different groups who come to pray after work»* (Staten Island, July 19, 1994). She spent a few periods in Italy, in 1971 and in 1987, also to be near her elderly mother. On the occasion of her 50th anniversary of profession she wrote proudly: *«I consider our small group as being special with respect to the war and then to peace, and that by the grace of God we are all alive and working»* and she affirmed that the *Magnificat* interpreted her thanksgiving very well.

Sr. M. Veritas bore her name with dignity in honor of the Divine Master, by her special love for the Word of God, bearing witness to the truth of the verse of today's Gospel reading for Wednesday of the fourth week of Lent: *«Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed*

from death to life» (Jn 5:24). She always demonstrated great apostolic zeal in presenting the Institute to the local Church; interest and dedication in every initiative. The Sisters in the United States bear witness to the fact that she was always intrepid for vocations... She always supported the spiritual retreats. Nor did she hesitate to directly propose to the young women: «Have you ever thought about becoming a sister? Think about it: I will pray for you».

Some of her writings, addressed to the Mother General, Sr. M. Regina Cesarato, give evidence of her rich interior journey: *«Yes, I want the bread broken in the Eucharist to be lived in my life in imitation of the Divine Master» (August 28, 2005). «Cordial greetings from my new dwelling in Fresno. I cannot find the words to thank the Divine Master for his great love. This change has brought me greater spiritual and physical progress, and I feel well. I enjoy the beauty of nature and the joy in everything, living in this community of mutual love in the simplicity of the Sister Disciples» (December 3, 2010). «I find myself well with the older and the younger sisters. ... Regularly at three in the afternoon, the seven of us in the infirmary, recite the Rosary together for the sick, for priests, and for vocations especially for the Pauline Family. ... In the Holy Mass, to the large Host, I as a small host, offer myself with Jesus to the Father as an offering and as bread broken for the glory of the Father and the salvation of priests and of the entire world. I appreciate the thought of making suffering fruitful» (September 29, 2011).*

Her youthful spirit and wit brought joy to the community. She was gracious with all. Her final illness reduced her memory and, due to other medical complications, her care required a great deal of commitment.

For some years, in fact, there had been the manifestation of a form of Alzheimers' that diminished her capabilities. An aggressive form of pneumonia and generalized infection led to the fulfillment of her earthly journey, surrounded by the care and the prayer of the sisters.

Dear sister, with lively interest you kept yourself informed of the needs of the Church and the world, invoke the Spirit of God upon all of us as we approach the vigil of the 9th General Chapter, that the missionary spirit that animated you from the first years of your consecrated life may be renewed in all of us.

S. H. Paolo Mancini