



Dear Sisters,

Today, the first day of the year 2013, the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God, at 11:15 AM, from the community of Sanfrè, the Lord called to himself our sister

**Sr. M. Gualberta Maria Gazzera
born in Sant'Albano Stura (CN) on December 19, 1935.**

Maria entered the Congregation in Alba on January 17, 1959. She was recommended by her pastor in the following manner: *“I am certain that you will be most satisfied with our aspirant and that she will correspond with special generosity to the grace of God”* (Fr. Ravina, 10/12/1958). She completed her initial formation in Alba (CN) and then went to Rome for her novitiate, at the end of which she made her religious profession on May 7, 1961. After a year of study in the Religious Sciences, she was sent as assistant to the aspirants, first in Cinisello Balsamo (1962) and then in Alba (1964). During her period of preparation for the Perpetual Profession, which she made on May 7, 1966, she offered her collaboration at the Center for Souvenirs at St. Peter's (Rome). Immediately thereafter she began her missionary life in Argentina (1966), where she spent time in various communities. Upon being asked to accompany the novices in their formation, she replied: *“I gave a great yes to the new mission the Lord has entrusted to me at this moment. Sincerely, I feel incapable, but I have confidence in the help of divine grace. I am convinced of that which you told me many times: the certainty of being in the will of God brings great peace”* (to M. M. Lucia Ricci, 11/5/1968). From 1972 to 1974, she was in Chile as the formator for the Postulants. In 1974 she returned to Italy for some years to assist her mother, who was suffering and alone, following the death of her father. She was entrusted with the ministry of local Superior in various communities: first in Altavilla-Alba, then in the General House of the Society of St. Paul in 1976, and in 1978 she became a member of the Regional Council. In 1980 she returned to the missions, always in Latin America, but this time in Colombia. She spent most of her time there at the Apostolic Nunziature in Bogota (from 1982 – 1989). *“I will continue my service here at the Nunziature for as long as the Lord wishes. I am very happy to offer this service, as well as all the services or apostolates fulfilled by the Sister Disciples, which fill us with joy because it is a service of love. Every day I feel, in a new way, the sublimity of our vocation and mission, not so much for the activity or for the place, but for that which the Lord gives continually. He offers the hundred-fold continually. We must only be aware of this, accept it, and correspond”* (to M. M. Lucia Ricci, 11/23/1986).

She had the gift of discovering the positive aspects and appreciated the value of faith and prayer, witnessed by our first sisters, values which rekindle the flame of the vocation and of the mission. She recognized the Congregation in the world as a gift of light and communication of the evangelical values, witnessed by the sisters in the various nations. Upon her return to Italy in 1989, she was appointed local superior for two terms in Albano, in 1993 in the Regional House, in 1997 in Milan (Queen of Apostles House), from 2000 – 2006 in Sanfrè, where she continued to offer her generous service following the completion of her terms as local superior. Sr. M. Gualberta can be considered a true Sister Disciple; austere with herself, always joyful, exhibiting an exquisite charity so that she never criticized others.

Her recent letters addressed to Sr. M. Regina Cesarato manifest her awareness that the hour of the Lord was approaching. On the occasion of her 50th anniversary of profession, she wrote: *“50 years are many, but they passed like smoke. And now? Nothing remains but to tighten, intensify my life with the Master that I may be ready to welcome him when he comes to call me to himself. In the meantime, I must leave room so that he can take possession of me”* (Rome, 6/25/2011). She

manifested a particular sensitivity for prayer and offering for priests. In the Year of the Priesthood she said: *“The year of the priesthood for the entire Church, and especially for us as Sister Disciples, is an urgent reminder that we must pray and offer that there may be priests and that they may be holy in order to guide humanity in accordance with the will of God”* (Sanfrè, August 19, 2009).

Her health gradually declined. In a letter to the Superior General, she manifested her clear awareness: *“I would like to inform you that my health has decreased lately. I received the diagnosis: chronic leukemia... For my part, I ask the Lord to do his will, as he desires. I always say: “Take me, but leave the priests, especially the Pauline priests, that they may fulfill their ministry and their apostolate for the good of humanity. May the Lord’s will be done. I am lacking in nothing, rather I have too much in grace and goods. May the Lord and Mary help me to correspond”* (5/26/2012).

In a recent discussion with Sr. M. Giovanna Colombo, Provincial Superior, she expressed this attitude of serene offering.

While the communities in Rome, Via Portuense, welcomed a group of about ninety young people from the Taizè movement, coming from various parts of Europe, especially Eastern Europe, Sr. M. Gualberta peacefully concluded her earthly pilgrimage, comforted by the Anointing of the Sick and accompanied by the prayerful presence of the sisters. We perceive in these events a reminder from the Divine Master to renew in us the missionary zeal which characterized the life of this Disciple.

Inspired by the words of today’s liturgy, let us ask for her: *“May the Lord shed his light upon you and grant you peace”*.

Sr. M. Paola Mancini
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