



Dear Sisters,

Today, June 19, 2018, at 8:45 AM in the community of Sanfrè, the Lord called our sister to the eternal Passover,

SR. M. DAMIANA - MARIA BERNOCCO
born on April 18, 1924, in Cherasco (CN).

After barely a week, the community of the Sister Disciples in Heaven rejoices once again for a new sister who has joined them to give glory to God forever.

Maria came from Cherasco (CN), the town to which the family of James Alberione transferred and from which James entered the Seminary of Alba. Maria was born only a few months after the foundation of the Sister Disciples and entered the Congregation in Alba on September 8, 1948, the year in which the Sister Disciples received juridical recognition in the Church through the Pontifical approval. This journey with the life of the Institute seems to have planted in her a *love for the Congregation that was clearly marked and excellent*. As a candidate, she was deemed: *simple, generous, very conscious of her religious vocation*.

Her parish priest introduced her as belonging to a profoundly Christian family, a young woman of optimal conduct under every aspect.

In her request for admission to the first stages of formation, she clearly expressed: *«I heard the invitation of Jesus: come and follow me, and I came!»*. It was an awareness that grew over the years so that she was able to say: *«Aware of the meaning of religious life, I humbly and consciously ask to be admitted to the perpetual religious profession»* (January 16, 1957). She made her first profession in Alba on March 25, 1952, and her perpetual profession in Rome on March 25, 1957.

Following her profession in Alba, she was assigned to the workroom and as assistant to the aspirants; in 1959 she was in the workroom at the Society of St. Paul in Rome. From 1960 to 1964, with natural ease, she moved to another European country, she was in Spain, first in Bilbao DM house, and then at the Pauline Seminary in Madrid, as local superior. In 1964 she returned to Italy where she fulfilled the same ministry at the SSP at Villa S. Giuseppe in Rome and then in Turin. She then went to Alba and, after a period in the workroom, she was appointed local superior at our community in Altavilla. She then went to the St. Paul house in Alba and, in 1981 to Turin as local superior; in 1985 she returned to St. Paul in Alba. In 1990 she was local superior in Cinisello Balsamo SP, and in 1992 she was transferred to the RA community in Rome where she continued to give completely of herself in the workroom. In 1997 she was at the community of Turin and then in Sanfrè (CN) in 2001. The apostolic life of Sr. M. Damiana is characterized by mobility and flexibility, facilitated by that evangelical spirit of poverty and agility of the disciples sent by Jesus, who urged them to bring nothing with them for the journey (cf Lk 9:1-6). The attitude of making the maximum use of time, a spirit of industriousness, was second nature to her. This is the typical expression of the formation in her family and of Pauline poverty.

Today's Gospel: *«Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect»* (Mt 5:48) invites us to mirror ourselves in the heart of the heavenly Father, who always loves everyone. This word of God clearly nurtured the interior life of Sr. M. Damiana, who translated this love of neighbor into an exquisite attitude of service. Her quick, active hands were precise in the work of sewing and expressed a profound inner zeal. The Eucharistic-liturgical life nourished and formed in her a maternal heart and that spirit of continual offering in every moment and action of her days that we find in her correspondence and that is like the profound fabric of her serene life that communicated peace in every reality, even in advanced age. A living liturgy. Already in precarious health, about 15 days ago she had a stroke. which led to coma and eventually to her death.

Sr. M. Damiana, while you are in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity, ask God to make the pastoral work for vocations fruitful for the entire Pauline Family!

S. H. Paolo Mancini