



Dear Sisters,

Today, August 3, 2013, on the first Saturday of August - the month directing our gaze toward Paradise - at 3:30 PM in the community of Sanfrè, our sister returned to the Father's House:

**Sr. M. Timotea Flora Bovetti,
born on October 23, 1919, in Narzole (Cuneo).**

From the birthplace of Blessed Timothy Giaccardo, she was nurtured in a family that was united and discretely numerous. She could also count on beloved relatives within the Congregation, since two other family members shared the same vocation and mission as Sister Disciples: Sr. M. Vincenzina Fea (+1998) and Sr. M. Speranza Torta, who is nearly one hundred years of age. Flora lost her mother at the tender age of four. Her father married a second time. This had a profound impact upon the young girl. In the freshness of adolescence, at the age of fourteen, Flora entered the House in Alba on January 7, 1933. She entered the novitiate in 1939, with Mother M. Tecla Molino, made her first profession on March 25, 1940, and her perpetual profession on March 25, 1946. During the years of formation, she carried out her mission in Marseilles, (France). She was a student at Alba in 1940. In 1943, she assisted in the Liturgical Apostolate Center in Milan, and then in Livorno. The "yes", decisively pronounced at her perpetual profession, would immediately find an arduous application in the new mission entrusted to her: to go to Poland, immediately after the war! The Pauline Family had already been established there in 1935, but it was almost destroyed by the war and the consequent social and political difficulties.

Sr. M. Timotea, who was chosen to give continuity to the life of our Congregation in that nation, observed: *"It took a lot to convince me to accept. There was wailing and tears, but when the Lord wants something, he will guide everything for the greater good and he gives the dispositions. Thus, little by little, I prepared myself to fulfill God's will"* (from her diary). She was sent (to Poland) together with Sr. M. Edwige Wronski, the only Polish sister who had made her profession in Italy, and another young Italian sister. Overcoming her own resistance, as well as that of the family that was very close to her, she obtained the grace to abandon herself to God's will. *"I no longer resisted. I accepted the obedience with faith, and I felt completely changed"* (from her diary). This opened for Sr. M. Timotea a new chapter in a life of heroic faith, arriving in a land devastated by the terrible consequences of the Second World War and the Communist regime. Upon their arrival in Poland, they concerned themselves with the Pauline brothers who were there. They worked to foster the return to Italy of Fr. Tarcisio Ravina, SSP, who was in prison, and assisted Fr. Giuseppe Luigi Labędz, who was a young seminarian at that time, in his journey toward the priesthood.

With that authentic Pauline spirit in which one becomes "all things to all people", she renounced her Italian citizenship in order to assume the Polish citizenship, as a condition for remaining in Poland. In that particular situation, under the Communist regime, the sisters had to adapt themselves to a form of work and mission that would guarantee their survival. In that difficult time, in spite of everything, she continued in her life of prayer and the search for new vocations. In 1963, M. M. Lucia Ricci, then Superior General, appointed her as *"Regional Delegate for Poland and Novice Mistress"*, thus confirming her role in leadership. Despite many difficulties, the life of the Sister Disciples was reborn. Sr. M. Timotea communicated to M. M. Lucia that she had written her recollections of Poland from 1946 – 1968, and concluded: *"The Lord guided our steps with paternal goodness as Father. Despite this, there were serious dangers. Everything passed and may*

God be glorified” (February 6, 1993). At the end of 1968, when the life of the Polish sisters had developed discreetly, she was asked to return to Italy. Once again Sr. M. Timotea fulfilled this obedience in faith. She began a new service, at the Vatican telephones, where she was greatly appreciated, especially for her knowledge of various languages, particularly Polish.

As her health began to decline, she was transferred first to Turin (1989) and then to Sanfrè (2003). During these years, upon her return to visit the sisters in Poland, she expressed her heartfelt gratitude to M. M. Paola Mancini: “It is right and necessary that I express my heartfelt gratitude for the permission to visit the Sisters in Poland and the Pauline brothers. Heartfelt thanks. I was welcomed by all with respect and affection. I saw how the Sister Disciples in Poland are loved by the Lord and appreciated by the Church, for the apostolate they carry out with such dedication. They are multiplying because they are active in the apostolate for vocations, including in the Ukraine, with much prayer... What beautiful hope! (July 25, 1999). In the spirit of St. Paul for the churches he founded, she manifested affection for the Polish sisters: “I ask that you give my warm and fraternal greetings to the sisters in Poland because they are dear to me and I carry them in my heart. Another greeting for the Virgin of Czestochowa, whom I greatly love” (to Sr. M. Paola Mancini, March 22, 2002).

In her last letters, addressed to Sr. M. Regina Cesarato, Superior General, she manifested how the Lord is preparing her for the final meeting with him: “On my part, I am preparing myself daily for the meeting with the Bridegroom, Jesus. I always have in my heart the longing to encounter him as good and merciful, since he died upon the Cross to save me. My hope is in him” (February 26, 2006). She expressed her gratitude for the charismatic animation of “all of us, as we desire to become holy Sister Disciples, like M. M. Scholastica, filled with the spirit of Blessed James Alberione. I also want to please God in all things, and even if I experience some difficulties, I go ahead in confidence, because he is the one who sustains me. Every day he gives me himself in the Eucharist, and offers himself in the Holy Mass. My little and poor heart is his tabernacle. I feel that he lives his Life in me. Thanks be to God for everything! I will sing his praises in eternity!” (July 18, 2010).

Dear Sister, your life was lovingly consumed like a candle, live in the joy of the eternal song of praise to the Most Holy Trinity, recalling the Pauline Family which journeys through time and prepares itself for the first Centennial of its existence. Live in God!

Sr. M. Paola Mancini

Sr. M. Paola Mancini