



Dear Sisters,

Today, March 9, 2019, at 8:45 AM, in our community of Sanfrè, the Lord called to the eternal Passover

SR. M. CHIARA - TERESA ZANOTTO
born on January 29, 1928, in Selvazzano Dentro (PD).

Teresa entered the Congregation in Alba (CN) on September 4, 1942. She grew up in a large Christian family that was rich in faith, with good parents and eight children: 5 sisters and 3 brothers, and provided with a solid education, in the faith and in life, by the coherent witness of her mother and father.

In the story of her vocation, Sr. M. Chiara could affirm: *«Because of my experience in the family, it was not difficult for me to enter into every aspect of the religious life, for **example**, obedience and community activities. **I was** always ready to accept the dispositions of the superiors and the discipline at the very beginning of the life of the Congregation».*

She also affirms: *«I have always had the desire within myself for a life that was different from the ordinary».* Following the novitiate, which took place in 1946 - the most difficult year for the juridical recognition of the Congregation - she made her religious profession on May 24, 1947, in Alba (CN).

As a young professed sister she was called to the missions overseas and left for America: Canada and the USA. Together with other sisters, she boarded the ship at Le Havre (France), during the final week of November in 1948. In *Divin Maestro*, for the month of January 1949, it is noted: *«The following Sisters arrived in Sherbrooke, their new home: Mother Maria Marcellina Brentali, Sister Maria Cecilia Bianchi, Sister Maria Chiara Zanotto».*

In 1951, after spending three years in Canada, Sr. M. Chiara went to the Diocesan Seminary in Fresno in the United States. She made her perpetual profession in Fresno (California) on May 24, 1952.

Sr. Chiara recounts: *«At the beginning there were thirteen seminarians. After nine years I left the seminary with 150 seminarians. Also here they began in poverty; we began the adoration for the laity guided by the sisters Pious Disciples, and then these days of prayer were concluded by the seminarians».* In 1959 she was at the Bishop's residence in Fresno, a service provided by way of exception with the direct permission of Primo Maestro. In 1973 she went to Dearborn, then in 1975 she was appointed local superior in the Fresno community.

In 1984 she returned to Italy for health reasons. Mother M. Lucia Ricci invited her to accept this re-entry with faith: *«The Lord knows everything: how much you labored for love of him, at the service of his ministers, for the Congregation. He knows what you accepted, suffered and offered in faith and in prayer. Now continue to trust in him for that which regards your health. I pray to the Madonna and our saints with you and for you that the Lord may respond to all your needs»* (May, 11, 1984).

Following the necessary treatments, Sr. M. Chiara was sent to the sewing workroom in Milan, then in 1986 to Cinisello Balsamo with the same ministry, and also as local councilor. In 2001 she went to the community of Sanfrè (CN) where she went to the workroom for as long as her health permitted.

Her prompt notes of thanksgiving for feastday greetings and on other occasions manifest the profound life of this sister in which her spirit of faith and interest for vocations was evident: *«I continue to pray and to offer all my personal discomfort for vocations in the USA. I continue to have faith against every hope. Jesus will bring to completion his work of love. The Lord knows the paths along which to lead us for his glory and for the salvation of many souls. His ways are mysterious, but always filled with peace and grace»* (to Sr. M. Paola Mancini, August 25, 1994).

«Personally I never lost confidence or hope no matter what difficulty may arise. We were sent to this vast America to fulfill in the Church the mission of the Pious Disciple in a spirit of wisdom. Jesus Master will send us the vocations who only thirst for God. He will look upon our poverty, but his love will surpass our every desire. Every time has its story. Comfort comes from the certainty that Primo Maestro was enlightened by God, therefore the Congregation belongs to him. We are called to be his instruments, docile to his grace» (September 9, 1995).

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of religious profession was, for her, an occasion of renewal in her commitment to the spiritual life: *«In our 50th anniversary of religious profession everything was more than a gift of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for the great mercy he has always shown to me in grace and fidelity. Now it remains for me to work to become holy, and thus to look in everything for the Glory of God, seeking in everything God alone and the salvation of souls, working for love of him, that in his goodness he may grant us the gift of beautiful and holy vocations»* (July 12, 1997).

With pride she could say: *«This year is my 50th anniversary of consecration. This year is also 50 years from the time in which the Congregation was definitively approved by the Church with its own name of Pious Disciples. We are the first Pious Disciples to make profession with the Constitutions specific to the Congregation of the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master»*.

She wrote to Sr. M. Regina Cesarato, the Superior General at that time, almost as a synthesis of her life offered for love and with complete love, in conformity to the Divine Master: *«I accept with fervent love all that Jesus asks of me, day after day, in suffering for priests, especially in my adorations before the Blessed Sacrament»* (August 20, 2007).

Sr. M. Chiara brought to completion her earthly pilgrimage in that atmosphere of faith and peace that gradually increased until she attained the fullness God wanted for her! In this vocational year as a Pauline Family, we entrust to her those intentions that animated her consecrated commitment: priests and vocations! We are confident of her intercession from heaven.

S. M. Paola Mancini