



Dear Sisters,

Today, March 30, 2020, at 5:00 AM, early in the morning while it was still dark, in the community of Cinisello Balsamo (MI) at the RSA “Divin Maestro”, the Lord Jesus found his disciple and our sister ready for the eternal Pasch

SR. M. SANTINA - ARNALDA FUMAGALLI
born on November 16, 1936, in Sirtori (CO) - Italy.

On the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1958, at the age of twenty-two, Arnalda entered the Congregation of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master in Alba (CN), leaving her family in which she had been raised and educated in the human and religious values that oriented her in her desire to consecrate herself totally to God, in prayer and in service. She is the youngest of six children and, as a dowry, she brought with her a Christian education, a sense of responsibility, and practical intelligence that would assist in building up the community, everywhere and always. She was already prepared as a seamstress and, together with her clothing, she brought a sewing machine to make the most of the experience she had already acquired.

Upon completion of the initial formation, she made her first religious profession in Rome on May 7, 1961, and her perpetual profession on May 7, 1966, also in Rome. At the vigil of her religious profession, she wrote to the Superior General that she was “*willing to accept any assignment*” and “*If it is the Lord's will, I would be happy to be: a Missionary*”. Thus, during the period of temporary vows, she was assigned to Lisbon in Portugal (1963 – 1965) where she worked in the sewing workroom. Upon her return to Rome, she accepted the responsibility of collaborating with the Postulant Mistress and the “Immacolatine”, or the pre-postulants (1965 – 1967) in Rome and in Cinisello Balsamo (MI). Shortly after perpetual profession (1967) she departed for Caracas (Venezuela) where she would remain until 2016, fulfilling various roles and performing many services: in the Apostolic Nunciature, in the Pauline and the diocesan houses for priests, in our communities of Caracas and of Barquisimeto. With responsibility and amiability, she repeatedly fulfilled various services: local superior, secretary, councilor, vicar for the Delegation. She was always ready to do whatever was necessary, at any time. She was animated by a great love for the Eucharistic Divine Master, the sisters of the Congregation, the young women in formation, and the numerous Friends of the Divine Master who sought her for counsel, sharing, and requests for intercessory prayer. She lived the mission with total dedication and awareness, making use of all the means available to understand the religious, political and social reality of Latin America, and especially of the Venezuelan people. She assumed their sentiments and sufferings, but always with that amiability that characterized her, as she sought to pacify the hearts and heal the divisions. Her greatest concern was the development of the mission, which she demonstrated through her care for

the sisters, and especially the youngest ones.

On behalf of all the sisters in Venezuela, Sr. M. Letizia Villareal, the Delegation Superior, wrote: *Today, upon receiving the unexpected news of the passage of Sr. M. Santina into eternal life, we recalled significant moments experienced with her. We remembered especially her creative and dynamic fidelity to the covenant with the Lord, with her Master; her faith and love for the charism and the development of the mission wherever obedience called her; her constant and trusting prayer, especially in the recitation of the Holy Rosary to the Madonna; her zeal for vocations, and her care in accompanying others through prayer and her presence of silent, reserved and also optimistic witness. She lived with us in generous and altruistic offering, always ready, forgetting herself and never stopping in the face of sacrifice, to fulfill the apostolic works in the Delegation. We give praise to the Lord for this dear sister, with whom he has gifted us, like the Prima Madre, in Venezuela.*

Due to health-related trials, she was forced to return to Italy: a detachment she accepted with docile obedience and with the smile and the kindly acceptance that was characteristic for her. In fact, she returned to Italy because of a preoccupying neurological decline caused by Alzheimers Disease. She was welcomed in the Divine Master community in Albano Laziale (Rm) (2016 – 2019). Lately she was transferred to Cinisello Balsamo (MI), to the RSA “Divin Maestro” in order to provide the necessary treatment for her health, which was becoming ever more fragile. Here she was also able to enjoy the nearness of the sisters in the community and her family members, whom she loved dearly and who amiably responded to her. The sudden worsening of her neurological condition caused her death this morning.

In the collective drama provoked by COVID-19, in which thousands of families mourn the loss of their loved ones and suffer from the illness, the solitude of death and the absence of a Christian funeral, we interpret the serene passage of Sr. M. Santina to eternal life as a gesture of the Lord of Life who promised us the hundredfold, even here on earth.

You who are remembered as the "smiling sister", continue now from Paradise to smile upon us, repeating to us and to the families undergoing trials, especially in northern Italy: *“Do not be afraid. Everything will be okay, because we know that everything works for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to his design. Because those he has always known, he has also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first of many brothers, in life and in death”* (cfr Rm 8: 28-29).

Sr. M. Michaela Ronetti'