



Dear Sisters,

On September 25, 2020, at 6:25 PM, from the community of Sanfrè (Cuneo), Jesus Master called to eternal life our sister

SR. M. DOROTEA - CATERINA BRUNO
born on May 11, 1929 in Narzole (CN)

the same place of origin as Blessed Timothy Giaccardo. The family consisted of the father Giovanni, a farmer, the mother Margherita Alessandria, a housewife, and six children: two brothers and four sisters. The pastor of San Bernardo Parish in Narzole presented her to the Institute as a "*most exemplary*" young woman.

In her decision to enter among the Sister Disciples, the sixteen-year-old young woman received the encouragement of her family. She entered in Alba on August 10, 1945, preceded by her sister Teresa, who was one year older. Teresa entered the Congregation in 1941, and received the name Sr. M. Ave at profession. Her brother, Tommaso, who was 4 years younger than Caterina, entered the Society of Saint Paul in Alba in 1943. This Pauline priest was a zealous missionary in Colombia and died in 2018.

Following the initial formation and novitiate, she made her first religious profession on April 4, 1948, and her perpetual profession on April 4, 1953, always in Alba. During these first years of religious life she was in the priestly ministry in Albano (1948), in Alba (1952) in the tailoring workshop, in Rome (1953) in the sewing workroom.

Given her generosity, spirit of prayer, and openness of heart, she was chosen as a missionary to establish the presence of the Sister Disciples in an immense and promising land: India, where the Pauline brothers were already present. Thus Sr. M. Dorotea Bruno, at the age of 25 and a few months following her perpetual profession, boarded the ship on January 31, 1954, in Naples together with Sr. M. Joseph Capra. The final destination: Allahabad (Prayagraj), India. Some of their letters to Mother M. Lucia Ricci were published in the internal bulletin, which permitted the sisters from around the world to accompany them on their journey:

Karachi, February 10, 1954: Today, the feast of St. Scholastica, we feel that we are closer to you, to all the Mothers and Sisters. With immense joy we received your first letter in Aden and we offer our heartfelt gratitude, asking only one thing: pray a great deal for us that we might consume our lives in love as Sister Disciples. On our ship, "Asia", there is no chapel and the Holy Mass is celebrated in a room (the ballroom!) Poor Jesus, how he adapts himself! There are 15 missionary priests and 12 missionary sisters. Last night one of the priests asked if anyone had an image of the Madonna that could be placed in the common room where we gather for prayer. No image was found except that of our beautiful image of the Queen of the Apostles. We offered it and placed it with joy and pride upon the improvised altar, with lit candles and a beautiful crown of Apostles in prayer. Our Madonna appears to be even more beautiful and we believe that she is also very pleased, she certainly found her place as Queen even on the ocean! - Everyone admired the beautiful image, others asked about the title under which our Madonna was honored: we were very happy to

be able to explain as best we could. We are comforted by the hope that we will soon have our own house with a chapel, no matter how poor it may be, but with a Tabernacle, where we will find JESUS.

From Allahabad INDIA: *Today, May 13, a beautiful day for the Shepherds of Fatima, is also beautiful for us, since on this date we have been in India for three months. The Madonna who has led us continues to watch over us in an extraordinary manner, thank her also for us. We are well, do not worry, we feel the heat, but we will get used to it; at night we sleep under the stars, we are at peace when at night we see the luminous points of Heaven from our beds. We can get used to everything in simplicity, since God is good and he gives us the grace! For over a month we are taking care of the kitchen; we cook Indian style for the boys, bread is prepared twice a day. Our small house is very beautiful; it gives the sense of a monastery, with a beautiful and long veranda, a closed courtyard, the kitchen, the laundry, it is truly beautiful, only the sparrows are missing to fill up the empty nest (Bollettino Divin Maestro 1954).*

Sr. M. Dorotea would remain in India for about forty years, until 1994, with an interval of a few years in Italy (1969 – 1971). She was local superior for various terms, 1964 in Mumbai, 1971 in Bangalore, from 1972 she was Novice Mistress and in 1977 Junior Mistress and Regional Councilor; in 1986 she was local superior in Mumbai and, in 1989, local superior in Bangalore.

In some later letters to Mother M. Lucia Ricci, she expressed her feelings: «I always remember India, and I thank you for having sent me to that nation. Perhaps there were many times I was not able to appreciate this gift, but at the same time I am also aware that I dedicated the most beautiful years of my life; now I accompany it with my poor prayers». (Alba, February 4, 1997). I am grateful for the 50th of profession and for the accompaniment «in the struggles of the mission in India, especially at the beginning. Thank you, Madre Maestra, for all the assistance and understanding, especially toward India. You understood in depth the Indian soul and loved this very mysterious India. I thank the Lord every day because, through you, he has chosen and sent me to that land which I love and in which I have spent the most beautiful years of my life» (April 4, 1998).

For the 50th anniversary of foundation, following the invitation of the Sisters, she returned to visit India: «I am grateful for this gift. It was truly beautiful to find myself among the sisters, especially those of the first hour who worked with the dedication required by the beginning of our foundation. The 50th was celebrated with solemnity. Another aspect is the marvelous journey that was made over these years. If they are faithful to the Lord, he will continue to bless the Province of India; the shadows are everywhere, but we can look trustingly to all that is light!».

Sr. Rose Mary Muttasserill, Provincial Superior of India, wrote: *We, Sister Disciples of the Province of India, are saddened by the news of the death of one of our two pioneers in the Indian Mission. We remember her with love and owe her a profound debt of gratitude. We appreciate the many personal qualities of Sr. M. Dorothy Bruno; especially her profound love for the Congregation and the Founder, her appreciation for the Indian vocations, the collaboration in their formation at the beginning and her support for their perseverance; her unrestricted love for the Pauline Family in India; the acceptance of the culture, adapting herself to the difficulties of the beginnings and to a lifestyle of the poverty of that time to give life to the Congregation in India, sacrificing for this purpose her best youthful energies.*

Sr. M. Dorotea, marked by the missionary life, is distinguished for her kindness, the love of silence which she affirmed to appreciate since her entrance into the Congregation. Through her life witness and her words, she communicated to the sisters of India the values inherent in our vocation as Sister Disciples: the Eucharistic apostolic spirit, a lifestyle characterized by sobriety, simplicity and industriousness, joy and fraternal love.

Upon her return to Italy, she spent some years in Bordighera, then in Alba DM (1996) and in 2003 she was in Sanfrè assisting with various services for as long as her health allowed; always willing to help each sister. After spending some years in total dependence upon the loving care of the sisters due to various health issues related to age, she went to the eternal homeland.

From heaven we ask her to intercede for us that we may be able to face, with Christian fortitude, the difficulties caused by the pandemic that are also affecting India, and that the young Pauline generations may be inflamed with missionary zeal!

S. H. Paolo Mancini