



Dear Sisters,

Today, April 23, 2021, at 8:40 AM, in the community of Albano Laziale (RM), the Lord Jesus desired to celebrate the eternal Passover in the life of our sister

SR. M. SILVANA ELVIRA PANCARO
born on January 31, 1931, in Cosenza (Italy).

Remembering our sister, Sr. M. Silvana, means celebrating the faith and trust that sustained her throughout her earthly existence and, simultaneously, in the spirit of the Apostle Paul, celebrating the missionary nature of our Congregation shortly after receiving its Pontifical Approval.

Her vocational story unfolded in these stages: she was a young woman, the gift of a land in the extreme south of Italy, Cosenza. She came from a beautiful family, rich with 8 children: 3 brothers and 5 sisters. Elvira entered the Congregation in Alba (CN) on September 8, 1947, in the freshness of her 16 years, open to life. Filled with enthusiasm, she disposed herself to follow Jesus Master with generosity and joy. After the initial formation, she made her religious profession on March 25, 1951, and her perpetual profession on March 25, 1956. Her consecration was crowned by an immediate call to the mission in a land completely unknown to her, Japan. With the style of simplicity and trust in the grace of God characteristic of her, she accepted this new destination: she was not frightened by the distance, nor the difference in culture, nor the language. At the conclusion of a course of Spiritual Exercises in Japan, Sr. M. Silvana was able to write: *«Reflecting upon my life, 55 [years] of Christian life, 40 of religious life, 30 of missionary life, of the graces received: Baptism, Eucharist, all the gifts of grace, my first thought was to give thanks for all the love and mercy of Jesus and then to ask pardon for my lack of correspondence, but now with a new desire to begin again, to give thanks»* (Tobuki, August 4, 1986).

In the new mission, Sr. M. Silvana established a workshop for sacred art, an area in which she acquired competence in Cinisello Balsamo (MI) during her time in temporary vows (1952 – 1956). She would then become local superior in Fukuoka (from 1969 to 1971) and local superior in Tokyo SSP (1971 – 1973). From 1973 to 1980, she offered her collaboration at the Apostolic Nunziature, distinguishing herself for her attention and sensitivity, involving herself in the mission of being part of the representation of the Church in a land that was not Catholic. For a period of one year she was also asked to accompany the beginning of our presence as Sister Disciples at the Apostolic Nunziature in Korea, where she willingly shared what she had learned from her long and qualified experience. In 1981, she returned to the community at the Nunziature in Japan. In 1985, she was local superior in the community at the SSP in Tokyo, then in 1989, local superior in the DM Community in Tokyo. She defini-

tively returned to Italy in 1992, fulfilling various services at the Vatican Switchboard. Since her return from the missions, she experienced cancer twice: in 1997 and 2006, which she faced courageously. While her physical energy was diminished, it did not decrease her joy in serving the sisters.

In 2008 she was transferred to Albano for health reasons. Sr. M. Silvana always had a special care for her spiritual work, also providing a detailed account, especially to Mother M. Lucia Ricci. From this emerges: *«the more I remain hidden and in silence, the more I experience peace»; «I desire to allow myself to be guided by Mary Most Holy, in the Adoration; little by little learning the contemplation of which I am incapable»; «learn to rejoice in everything, in the spirit of the Beatitudes, to find my strength in the Eucharist» «I will make beautiful adorations, center my day in Jesus Eucharist»; «to love more my priestly apostolate, especially when it requires more sacrifice. Gaze upon, think about the Madonna, my model of serenity and happiness».*

Sr. M. Silvana left us as a consequence of the worsening of her multiple pathologies.

In a letter addressed to Sr. M. Fiorella Asaho, Provincial Superior at that time, she manifested her love for the land of her mission: *«Dear Sr. M. Fiorella, I send you my heartfelt greetings and lively remembrance in prayer. Thank you for everything, for the calendar I always have before me. The Pauline priests who came for the General Chapter came to visit me; it was a great joy and surprise. I was very happy, truly moved. I received it as a gift from Jesus Master. I give thanks and praise for all the gifts of grace offered to me by Jesus, for the Pauline priestly mission in the land of the Orient, in Japan. I desire to be grateful for my entire life and in eternity. Please greet all the sisters whom I remember with much love and gratitude. I have received it as a gift from Jesus M»* (February 11, 2015).

The Provincial Superior of Japan wrote to Sr. M. Micaela Monetti: *«It is with suffering and profound faith that we received the news of the death of Sr. M. Silvana Pancaro. On behalf of the Province of Japan, I am sending our sincere condolences and many prayers of suffrage. On April 16, Sr. M. Giovanna Uchino told me that her condition was serious, I communicated this to all of the communities and we accompanied her in prayer. We immediately offered the Holy Mass for her. She worked as a missionary in Japan for more than 30 years, arriving in Tokyo by sea on April 30, 1956. We prayed that she might be in the arms of the Risen Lord.*

Sister Silvana had no ideal of the kind of mission that awaited her when she was sent to Japan, but she probably received a special mission to fulfill in poor Japan, following the war. In time she gradually opened the way for a new type of service. How much patience she needed without understanding the language! Together with the sisters, Sr. M. Silvana prepared many statues of Jesus, of the Madonna, of St. Joseph, etc. in the reproduction of "sacred art". And when she went to the Vatican Nunziature, she instructed the sisters and offered her service at the Society of St. Paul, she was always gentle and smiling. The sisters learned to prepare delicious Italian food.

May the Risen Lord reward her a hundredfold for her consecrated life and for her life given in mission! And may she obtain for our Congregation and for the Japanese Province a renewal of life and fidelity to our charism, as she taught us, and for the grace of vocations».

As we prepare to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Vocations with the entire Church, we trust that her presence before the Divine Master may obtain for all of our communities a renewed vocational awareness and a courageous missionary spirit.

S. H. Paolo Mancini