



Dear Sisters,

On November 25, 2022, the vigil of the celebration of the 51st Anniversary of the eternal Passover of our Founder, Fr. James Alberione, from the Divine Master community in Santiago, Chile, Jesus called to the eternal wedding feast our Sister

SR. M. GERVASINA - RAFFAELLA POTENZA
born on November 15, 1933 in Rocca di Neto, Catanzaro - Italy.

At the age of sixteen, on July 18, 1949, she entered our Congregation in Rome. She was born into a farming family that was pious, united, hard-working, humble and simple. She is the tenth of the children of Caterina and Pasquale, who were always remembered with simplicity for the love that kept them united. Mamma Caterina had a great love for missionaries and encouraged Raffaella to support them by her prayers. She taught them to recognize the presence of God with prayer, the Eucharistic celebration, and devotion to the Virgin Mary by reciting the Holy Rosary. Thus, in daily prayer, she felt that her heart was embraced by the loving tenderness of God. The vocation was a grace, an intense flame that burned within her, so that she experienced the urgency of responding to Jesus with profound joy. When she entered the Congregation, knowing that she had to leave her parents and the brothers and sisters she had always loved, she felt that her life was definitively entrusted to the hands of God.

After completing the regular novitiate in Alba (CN), on March 25, 1952, she made her religious profession among the Sister Disciples. On March 25, 1957, she made her Perpetual Profession, always in Alba, Casa Madre.

At the age of 27, she began her missionary life overseas, departing for Brazil, where she would remain for 25 years. On July 15, 1984, in a letter written from Rio de Janeiro and addressed to Madre Maestra, she wrote: «24 years ago today I left Rome for Genoa to come to Brazil, with all my youthful ardor and zeal, to spend myself generously for the Lord, for the Congregation. I am happy, and now if I were to leave for a new land, I would be willing to accept everything with new and greater awareness of what is no longer an offering, but an oblation; that is, with greater strength and sentiments, because I see that the things we do down here cannot be compared to the joy and happiness we

will have in heaven above, therefore I seek to continue to live – to consume myself by giving light».

In the years spent in Brazil she fulfilled numerous tasks, but especially that of “being all things to all people” and spent her days doing good and gaining the esteem and affection of the sisters. All of her service was marked by sacrifice, apostolic initiatives in the development of the mission, and sharing with the sisters, keeping a beautiful memory of each one.

She arrived in Chile in 1985, assuming various apostolic services: she was a counselor in Santiago; superior of the delegation, for numerous terms. In 1997 she was sent to Concepción at the home for diocesan clergy, where her mission was for the Priests and the Liturgical Apostolate.

She distinguished herself as a wise and experienced sister, always seeking the communion that would support the mission. On January 20, 2001, she wrote to the Superior General at that time, Mother M. Paola Mancini: «Among ourselves we strive to do everything possible to help each other be a living and active Presence in the place in which we find ourselves. What I consider indispensable is the coherence of life, the patience, allowing the necessary time for certain situations that might cause us discomfort, but which also help us to grow in virtue; they are little things and they recall to our mind and heart and tell us: the Lord is with us, therefore we are not afraid».

All of her witness as a Sister Disciple of the Divine Master was a service of love, of joyful donation and of happiness that radiated like a light of harmony and unity. In her writings we read: «I am like a new leaf in Jesus Eucharist, all of my trust and my abandonment are in Him, following the example of Mary: May your will be done».

The sisters of the Delegation of Chile recall her commitment to learn the Chilean Spanish, and all of the costumes of the country, the idioms, the language, the traditional dances, the local and typical customs. She made herself lovable for her nearness to the people, always respectful and affectionate. They esteem her commitment to develop the liturgical apostolate centers in Santiago and Concepción, improving everything with a beauty that was worthy, creative, diligent and harmonious.

Her community adaptation was always humble, simple, honest, tolerant, patient, joyful, respectful and fraternal, seeking the unity of all the sisters. With the young women that began to know us in the pastoral work for vocations and with those in formation, she fully manifested her maternity, her joyous welcome, the tenderness that characterized her, the protection, the fidelity to her vocation and mission. Her fraternal affection, her cordial and loving treatment with the members of the Pauline Family in Chile was surprising. The Bishops, Priests, Religious and all the faithful, Friends of the Divine Master our Pauline Collaborators remember her with affection. She knew how to win the respect and good will also of the Chilean Police and other civil functionaries.

The sisters of the Delegation of Chile are immensely grateful to Sr. M. Gervasina, who freely chose to remain with them until her death: for each of them she was an Angel of light. They wrote of her: «We will miss her physical presence, but we know that we

have gained a great intercessor in Heaven, who will encourage us to remain faithful to the vocation and mission entrusted to us in the Church».

Since 2012, with the decline in her health, she remained in the DM Community of Santiago, and thanks to the nursing care of Sr. Elbia, she faced, day after day, the precious time of purification in her illness, like gold in the crucible. Progressively she lost the ability to speak, but her gaze, always lively, transmitted the depth of her soul sustained by the clarity of her final goal: Paradise. Comforted by the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, by the care of the community and by the prayer of all, her life ended, as she lived, in serenity and peace.

Now that you contemplate the Face of God, whom you loved and sought throughout your life, we ask you, Sr. M. Gervasina, to continue to watch over the sisters of Brazil and of Chile, to stir up in everyone the missionary spirit of the beginnings and to intercede for new and holy vocations.

Sr. M. Gervasina Ronchetti