



On the Feast of the Birth of Mary Most Holy, September 8, 2023, at 6:00 PM, in the Casa di Cura Aurelia Hospital in Rome, the Divine Master definitively called to himself our sister

**SR. M. BERNARDINA – VITTORIA LINGUA
born on September 25, 1944, in Marene (CN).**

Baptized in the Parish of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 28, 1944, she was raised in a family that was already familiar with the Pauline Family, and especially the Sister Disciples. Two sisters of her mother, Maria Chiavassa, were already religious and missionaries for some time: Sr. M. Onesima Chiavassa and Sr. M. Pia Chiavassa.

On September 8, 1964, she entered the Congregation in Alba (CN), in Casa Madre, as an aspirant and she immediately showed herself to be a young woman who was generous, meek and sociable, with high intelligence and a marked sense of responsibility, who offered herself for the most tiresome work. In her request for admission to the religious profession, she declared that she felt inclined to the works that require more self-denial and fatigue. These youthful characteristics were never abandoned throughout her consecrated life, and she lived them with uncommon coherence and serenity.

Upon completion of the novitiate, she made her religious profession on March 25, 1967, in Rome and her perpetual profession on June 3, 1973, in Marene (CN) in the parish Church in which she was baptized and raised in the Christian life.

From the first years of religious life, she was sent for studies until 1971, when she obtained her diploma as a professional nurse from Policlinico “A. Gemelli” of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore – Rome. She continued in her professional formation and in 1972 obtained the Certificate of Competency in administration of the Nursing Assistance at the Hospital of S. Giuseppe Cottolengo in Turin. In 1974 she obtained a Certificate of Specialization in Physiotherapy at the Ospedale Maggiore of Milan. She was then sent to the community of Sanfrè, where she was able to fruitfully put into practice the capabilities she had acquired. In fact, from 1974 until 1993 she distinguished herself for the care provided to the sisters, the spirit of prayer and of sacrifice directed toward lightening the physical and psychological sufferings of the sisters who were

more fragile, helping them to face also the passage of death in a paschal spirit, as authentic disciples of Jesus Master. We recall that, during this time, she also cared for Mother Scolastica Rivata, and accompanied her in her illness, in the long and purifying silence that prepared her for death. She is a privileged witness of the last period of her life which gathers her heritage of love for Jesus Master, for the specific vocation of the Sister Disciples and for the entire Congregation.

In August of 1993 she was in Rome, in the Regional House: she accepted the appointment as a regional councilor, a service she would fulfill for two terms with the resolution to enhance the regional government with specific attention to the elderly and infirm sisters, who were beginning to increase in number in Italy. In 1999 she was assigned to Albano Laziale, in the Divine Master community, and continued in the roles of head nurse and physiotherapist. At various times she was local councilor or vice superior, always untiring in her department, day and night, offering serenity and security to everyone: sisters and service personnel.

Due to the great esteem she had acquired among the sisters, the doctors, the health care workers with whom she had to interact periodically, she was sought for her counsel, her opinion, and especially for her patient smile that was nourished by the daily Eucharistic adoration, to which she was especially faithful. She did not spare herself in the service of charity, untiring in the offering of herself, to the point of neglecting her own health.

In a recent conversation with Sr. M. Paola Gasperini, Provincial Superior, she confided to her that she was grateful to the Lord for having received two vocations from him: «One is the vocation as a Sister Disciple and the other is the vocation of being a nurse, and I will never tire of either of them», she said.

In the hope of resolving a serious pathology of the mitral valve, in April, immediately after Easter, she underwent a delicate and risky surgery, the consequences of which she was well aware. She knew that she would not be able to return to the community, but with courage and lucidity she faced the challenge, entrusting herself to Divine Providence which always cares for his children. These have been for her and for us months of suffering, and of choral and trusting prayer, imploring the grace of healing or at least that she might be able to leave the intensive care unit to conclude her earthly pilgrimage accompanied in community by the sisters. The Provincial Superior and the sisters who were able to visit her, observing the restrictions imposed by the department, bear witness to her struggle for life, the trusting abandonment to God's plan for her, which is different from ours, entrusting herself to the care of the doctors, well aware of her extremely fragile state of health. When they were able to pray the Our Father together, with a weak but firm voice she would repeat lucidly: «may Your will be done», at times betraying the emotion with a tear that rolled slowly down her cheek. We are witnesses to her complete and conscious participation in the adhesion to a project that is incomprehensible to the human mind, but coherent with her life as a disciple of Jesus who journeyed with her Master, to the end, the paschal journey of suffering and death for the true and abundant Life..

On the day we celebrated her birth, the Blessed Virgin Mary came to meet her and as the Mother who knew well the suffering at the foot of the Cross of her Son, she presented her to God the Father as an authentic disciple, conformed by love to her blessed Son, our Master.

Sr. M. Bernardina, with the oil of charity you filled the lamp of your life and of our Congregation, and we thank you. In health and in sickness you bore witness to everyone that it is possible to give more, each day, in the small and great actions of service to life; to give untiringly and with a smile, without seeking personal compensation or considering yourself a heroine, but only because you are a disciple of Jesus. From Paradise, continue to protect and to sustain the brothers and sisters who face fragility and sickness daily and the persons who care for them.

Sr. M. Michaela Moneth'