



Dear Sisters,

On May 9, 2024, at the Saint Francis Hospital in Nagasaki (Japan), at 6:46 PM, Jesus Master definitively called to himself our sister

SR. M. THECLA – HIDEKO NISHIDA
born on January 1, 1929, in Daegu (Korea).

She was born into a family of medical doctors, Catholics from generation to generation, coming from Nagasaki, a land that had known persecution and the testimony of the martyrdom of innumerable Christians.

Sr. M. Thecla entered among the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master on September 3, 1951, precisely at the beginning of the missionary journey of the Congregation, with the arrival of two Italian missionary sisters in Japan on May 2, 1950. She was sent to Italy, where she entered the novitiate at Alba in 1953, and on March 25, 1954, she made her religious profession.

Upon her return to Japan the following year, she was immediately assigned to accompany the young women in the initial formation. On March 25, 1959, she made her perpetual profession in Tokyo, at the Divine Master community.

For a long period of time she was involved with the formation of the young candidates and established the foundation for the charismatic and missionary development of the Congregation in Japan. She was an example and inspiration to her niece, Agnes Chisako Nishida, who would later become Sr. M. Angela Nishida, General Councilor (1993 – 1999) and the first Provincial Superior of Japan in 2001.

Under the spiritual guidance of Sr. M. Thecla, through the depth of her faith, her love for the Pauline vocation and her maternal care, many Japanese sisters received the precious treasure of the specific charismatic formation.

Sr. M. Thecla was the local superior in Osaka, in Yotsuya and in Fukuoka, besides other responsibilities of authority as Regional Secretary, Councilor and Regional Superior. Among other things, she worked for various years for the construction of the convent for the sisters, at a time in which the Congregation was growing in Japan and the number of sisters was increasing. In the face of external and financial difficulties, she was able to undertake difficult tasks to protect the sisters. She did this with courage, without making excuses, even when she was being heavily criticized. She served the Church with a missionary heart in Canada



and in the United States (1982 – 1988) and she was always exemplary for her open-mindedness and her polyhedric perspective.

The testimony of the sisters enables us to understand the lifestyle of Sr. M. Thecla and her journey of maturation in the faith: «When I was transferred to a community, I had a painful experience: every day I had to ask the Superior what I needed to do that day, otherwise I had no work. At that time, I spoke with Sr. M. Thecla Nishida and she told me: «When everything is taken away, when humanly speaking there is nothing to count on, then we learn to understand to whom to turn. This is the moment of experiencing the exclusive trust in God. I have also gone through a period in which everything I had, as a human being, and everything I could count on was taken away from me. I experienced a period in which I did not even belong. I spent every day in tears. The experience of that period was precious, because it helped me to look only to God and to entrust myself to him alone». And she told me: «You must also have at heart the present moment». These are words that I remember well, and they support and guide me throughout life».

In 2023, she experienced frequent difficulty swallowing. In order to provide suitable care, she was admitted to the Casa di Cura San Marco-En. It was here that she celebrated, with the characteristics of the Paschal Mystery, her 70th anniversary of religious profession. At the beginning of April 2024, with the complication of her general clinical picture, she was admitted to the Saint Francis Hospital where she concluded her earthly pilgrimage, in the peace and serenity of the good and faithful disciple. With her, vigilant in prayer and fraternal care, were Sr. M. Irene Murakami, the local superior, and some of the sisters.

Walking together with the Church, which is preparing for the Jubilee as Pilgrims of Hope, we ask you, Sr. M. Thecla, to intercede for the graces necessary for the new vocations and for all the sisters of the Province of Japan, which has begun to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master in Japan.

Rome, May 10, 2024

Sr. M. Micaela Monetti

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