



Dear Sisters,

Today, July 19, 2024, at 4:00 AM, as the night was coming to an end, the Lord Jesus visited the community of B. Timoteo in Rome (Italy), definitively calling to himself our sister

**SR. M. BATTISTINA – MENINA NERINA VILLELLA**  
**born on February 14, 1936, in Gizzeria (CZ) – Italy.**

Born on Ash Wednesday, the little girl was brought to the baptismal font barely two days after her birth: on February 16. Having lost her mother at a tender age, Onorina – as she was familiarly called – was entrusted to the care of her paternal grandparents. She lived her childhood and adolescence among the scents of the fields, growing up in a family environment that was solid in human values, rich in faith and Marian devotion. She attended the required school. She enjoyed sewing, embroidery and caring for the house; but in her heart there was a growing desire to “attain holiness” and, therefore, she accepted, as a vocation, the invitation to enter among the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master. Possessing a great spiritual sensitivity, in her vocational story she recounted how her mother – who was deceased – mysteriously guided her in the choice of the Congregation and confirmed her in her life’s journey, through many events.

She was introduced by the pastor, Don Alessandro, as “a true flower from my parish garden” and on May 13, 1953, on the anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady of Fatima and the vigil of the Solemnity of the Ascension, she entered at Casa Madre in Alba (CN).

Upon completion of the regular novitiate, on March 25, 1956, she made her religious profession in Rome and, five years later, on March 25, 1961, her perpetual profession.

Because of her apostolic generosity, together with a marked practical sense and great attention to the life and the persons around her, she was entrusted with numerous responsibilities in various communities in Italy, especially with the Society of St. Paul. Here she was loved and respected for her love for the Eucharistic adoration, for her esteem for consecrated persons – priests and religious brothers – for the joviality and cheerfulness with which she approached daily life in the peaceful certainty that “Jesus is with us and we are with Jesus!”.

In 1964 she was sent as a missionary to Barcellona (Spain) and four years later, in 1968, to Arpajon in France, in both cases, to the community of the Society of St. Paul. This experience profoundly refined the human and spiritual traits of Sr. M. Battistina and, because of the respect, affection and wisdom which she demonstrated in facing life, she was appointed, at



various times, as local superior: a service she would fulfill without interruption from 1976 to 2020 in many and diverse communities in Italy.

When she began a new ministry in the house for clergy in the Diocese of Fabriano – Matelica, she was entrusted with the task as superior of a new community that proposed to fulfill the priestly apostolate in a pastoral manner united with domestic care. It was a new experience for Sr. M. Battistina that required in everything an interpretation, according to the changing times, of the charismatic intuition of Father Alberione, opening ourselves to new dimensions beyond the Pauline Family. She did not always understand, but with her heart she adhered to the request of the major superiors and of the Bishop, transmitting to all, with amiability and religious spirit, care and esteem for the priests, for the spirituality of the laity and of the persons who approached her.

The sisters, lay collaborators, and Pauline brothers all testify regarding her: her charity and generosity, and the hospitality shown toward everyone without distinction. She had a maternal bearing not only toward the priests but truly *toward everyone*. She was capable of also including the laity in the mission: when she was a patient in the “Di Liegro” Hospital in Rome for rehabilitation following surgery, she noticed that the chapel of the clinic was closed for some time. Presenting motivations and dedication, she succeeded in reactivating the chapel by involving many, patients and hospital workers, in prayer.

Beyond presenting proposals in times of change, she was able to adapt herself to what could not be changed: accepting the adversities with meekness and sweetness, and always with a gentle manner.

She was a sister who was always smiling, sunny, solicitous in prayer “she was already in chapel at 5: always the first” and she was always available and attentive to the needs of the sisters entrusted to her care, without neglecting even the little things.

Suffering from a severe heart condition and post-surgery complications, she concluded her earthly pilgrimage, comforted by the sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist, surrounded by the prayer and affection of the community.

Dear sister, now that you live in God, intercede for us, for perseverance in the joy of the vocation. May we gather your gratitude and your sense of wonder: *Many years have passed since I pronounced my Yes to the Lord, but the joy and the freshness of my love have remained intact, rather they have matured over time, refined by trials and difficulties. God, the Love, entered into my story, into my heart. It is the Lord to whom I said Yes and I am infinitely grateful for all the marvels he has allowed me to experience.*

Rome, July 19, 2024

*Sr. M. Micaela Monetti*  
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