



Dear Sisters,

On Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at the Hirata Clinic, in Nagasaki (Japan), at 4:05 AM, Jesus Master definitively called to himself our sister

SR. M. LUCIA – HIROKO TERESIA MATSUMOTO
born on June 30, 1934, in Hirado – Nagasaki (Japan)

Born into a Catholic family, the little girl was brought to the baptismal font on July 1, 1934, and, together with the gift of faith, received a new name: Teresia.

Thanks to the pastoral and vocational activity of the first Pauline priests and brothers, the young woman came to know the mission of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master and she was attracted to it. On March 26, 1950, at the age of sixteen, she left her family and entered in Fukuoka, at the community of the Society of St. Paul, awaiting the arrival of the first Italian missionaries. In 1999 she wrote some notes about her vocational story: *«One day, after school, near the time of graduation, I was with five classmates following a brief Eucharistic visit as usual, we sat on the stone steps in front of the Church and began to chat. A man who came to spread the Bible with the priests of the Society of St. Paul in Fukuoka approached and spoke to us. He spoke about a new Congregation of sisters who collaborated with the Society of St. Paul: “The Sisters pray a great deal before the Blessed Sacrament. They also embroider and sew things for the Church”. When I heard this I was fascinated. At the time, I was not aware that the Congregation of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master did not exist in Japan yet, but I decided to join them.*

The convent in Fukuoka, where I and another friend arrived in March of 1950, was the bookstore of the Society of St. Paul. Three aspirants awaited the arrival of the sisters and carried out the apostolate of the PDDM. The Italian priest of the Society of St. Paul, who would be our superior until the arrival of the sisters, and these three aspirants welcomed us. Forty days later, on May 2, 1950, two sisters – Sr. M. Ilaria Vaia and Sr. M. Cordis Drudi – arrived from Italy via the United States. It was a memorable day, forty-nine years ago. God continues to call in many ways. He invites all Christians to live and bear witness to Jesus in the Eucharist. Each day I renew the spirit of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master, that they may “respond to this vocation following the Master more closely and giving themselves unreservedly to God who is loved above all things”».

Upon completing the novitiate, on May 5, 1954, Sr M. Lucia Matsumoto made her religious profession in Kawaguchi, with the six companions who constitute the first native Japanese group of Sister Disciples. On October 20, 1957, she was sent as a missionary to Montreal, Canada, where she made her perpetual profession on May 5, 1959. She remained in Canada



until June of 1968, when she was sent to Rome, Italy, then to Nice (France). She then went to Sanfrè and Alba to live her vocation and mission of prayer and service in charity.

She returned to her country in the same year, and spent some years in the communities of Tokyo and Osaka, primarily serving in the embroidery workroom or in priestly service.

Her consecrated life was spent in fidelity to the mission of the Sister Disciple, in Eucharistic, priestly and liturgical service in the various communities in Japan, dedicated especially in the embroidery and sewing workrooms. Aware of the apostolic value of this commitment that is the fruit also of a cosmic and synergistic contribution, she wrote: *«At the moment I am dedicated to adding the final embellishments to the fabrics and beautiful threads of many colors, that have come to me through the work of many persons whom I cannot know or see the ability and the work, beginning with the marvelous silkworms. I embroider stoles and vestments, hoping to give them a beauty worthy of Christ. "O Lord, you who are in Beauty itself, how marvelous are your works of creation! May your beauty be reflected in that which is used for the sacred rites, above everything else in the world". Purify and sanctify my hands and my heart, that I offer as a small instrument. This is for your holy banquet and destined for the use of your holy priests».*

In 1979 she was appointed superior of the DM community of Tokyo Hachioji; in 1988 superior of the community at the Society of St. Paul in the Provincial House, and in 2002 for the community of Nagasaki.

Despite the fragility of her health, she demonstrated great enthusiasm and generosity in the mission that she fulfilled with the characteristic silence of one who cultivates a profound interior life. She was constantly seeking a growth that was progressive, coherent and demanding, without giving in to easy compromises. She often asked herself: *«Is it enough?»*. In order to progress on the way of holiness, she believed in confrontation and in fraternal correction; she humbly questioned even the youngest sisters for suggestions and advice. Even in the last years of illness and old age, her beautiful eyes, with a transparent and profound gaze, transmitted hope and joy for the awareness of being, every day, closer to the final encounter with her Master Jesus, her beloved spouse.

In March of 2017, it became necessary to admit her to the Hirata Clinic in Nagasaki, near our DM community in order to provide the suitable care for her health. The sisters often went to visit her, but lately it became difficult for her to eat and speak: her physical frailty became even more apparent. However, she persevered, participating in the recitation of the prayers and consciously receiving the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Until, early in the morning, when it was still dark, she heard the cry that announced: *"The bridegroom is here! Go out to meet him!"*. And she, ready with her lamp burning, rose to enter into the Wedding feast (cfr Mt 25:1-13).

Now, as we prepare for the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Sister Disciples in Japan (1950 – 2025), Sr. M. Lucia is for us a witness of hope and trust that nothing is impossible for God and that, even in sterility and old age, His Word can sprout new and generous life. May the intercession of the Japanese Pauline Community of Heaven, of which Sr. M. Lucia is now also a member, obtain for us and the entire Church, the gift of new and holy vocations for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.