



Dear Sisters,

Today, March 13, 2026, at the Ramón y Cajal Hospital in Madrid (Spain), at 1:00 AM, as the the new day was beginning, together with the Divine Master, his Disciple and our sister crossed the threshold of death:

SR. M. PAULA – CIRINA AVECILLA RODRÍGUEZ
born on September 26, 1947 in Valle de Mansilla - León (Spain).

Cirina, the last of 6 children, was born and raised in a profoundly Christian, simple and hard-working family. As an adolescent, she entered the Congregation in Bilbao (Spain) on September 13, 1961, and entered the postulancy there on March 24, 1964. During the month of May, in the same year, she was sent to Rome to continue the initial formation. In accordance with the custom of the time, after receiving the religious habit on September 12, 1964, she went for her first apostolic experience to the community of the General House of the Society of Saint Paul. There she received the gift of coming to know and directly serve the Founder, Blessed James Alberione. She wrote: “this is the period of my formation that I consider a precious gift”. An attentive and intuitive young woman, from that community she recalled especially the person and example of Sr. M. Giuditta Benzo, discovering in her “a profound way of living and serving” the mission of the Sister Disciple “in the way she would like to be in the future”. Enriched with this experience, the young Cirina entered the International Novitiate in Rome-Portuense, at the conclusion of which she made the religious profession on March 25, 1966, 60 years ago, together with numerous other sisters. She returned to Spain in the month of December, where she went to Madrid to continue her studies, which included a course in preparation for university studies. In 1971, the year of preparation for perpetual profession, she began a three-year program in Pastoral Theology and Religious Sciences and obtained the diploma. This preparation was very useful for her future mission as a formator and community animator. On March 25, 1972, she made her perpetual profession in Madrid and collaborated creatively in the Liturgical Apostolate Center. During the month of August, 1974, she was assigned to the community of Bilbao which, at the time, was the location of the Novitiate and the Juniorate in Spain.

An intelligent, lively and straightforward person, Sr. M. Paula, lived intensely not only the great changes following the II Vatican Council, but also the new movements in the religious life and society that her Nation was undergoing. Restless and thoughtful, she had to face new situations, contradictions, misunderstandings and uncertainty that helped to strengthen her interiorly, to deepen and seek answers “in the path the Bishops of Spain were indicating for the new Church and religious life”, as she herself wrote. This social-ecclesial climate was also a great challenge for our communities and for Sr. M. Paula herself who, in 1975, was called to



service in authority as a Regional Councilor. In 1978, appointed Regional Superior, she participated in the Third General Chapter of the Congregation in April of 1981, during which many significant changes took place. Upon completion of her mandate, she lived the priestly mission at the Pauline house of Pinar de Las Rozas (Madrid).

As she wrote in July of 1988, Sr. M. Paula appreciated this experience of life and mission shared with the brothers as an ulterior step in “the maturation of my life as a woman, religious, Sister Disciple” perceiving that “the strength and richness of the Pauline Family are an immense gift that cannot be lacking in the Church”.

Valuing the depth of her thought and openness to life, in 1985, she was again entrusted with the young women beginning the religious life and mission in our Congregation. In 1988, she was appointed as Secretary and Councilor; in 1989 as Novice Mistress, in 1994 as Superior of the Delegation, in 2000 as Local Superior in Madrid, and then again as Councilor and Secretary of the Delegation.

From August 15, 2003, she assumed responsibility for the local community of Toledo for one term. In this new reality, begun in 1995, Sr. M. Paula and other sisters continued the search for a “new” pastoral style in living the vocation and mission of the Sister Disciple, especially attentive to the restlessness and perspectives of the new generations. She offered herself generously and with great hope but, precisely at Toledo, there appeared the first signs of a progressive illness that led her to a complete dependence on others and loss of her cognitive and motor skills. Therefore, in 2011, she was received at our infirmary in Madrid where, for 15 years, the sisters, assisted by external nurses, accompanied her with great love, respect, and dedication.

Thus, even in her body, Sr. M. Paula brought to completion the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ, our Master and Lord, whom she desired to follow and love, above all else, every day of her life of discipleship.

The sisters of Spain offer these testimonies:

“She was a sister with a clear mind, and at the same time, very simple and accessible. In the various services asked of her, she was available for the Congregation. She was a good person, with the ability for listening and closeness, as well as tolerance and patience. With her and from her I learned a great deal and I give thanks to God that I am her sister and companion”.

“It is not easy to enter into someone’s heart, but in Paula’s case I think that her relationship with God was evident in her relationship with the sisters, in her attitudes of serenity and harmony, her ability to listen, to interact, firmly putting into practice her decisions and bringing to conclusion all the directives of the Congregation. She taught and formed delicately what she had learned and she herself put into practice. Her communion with God is a reflection of her union with the persons”.

Dear Sr. M. Paula, together with the sisters in Spain, we all give thanks to God for you. Remember us as we continue our pilgrimage in this world that God loves, and that is so wounded by violence. May you live in God and rest in peace!

Rome, March 13, 2026

Sr. M. Regina Cesarato
Sr. M. Regina Cesarato