



Dear Sisters,

Today, April 22, 2026, from the hospital of Nishitokusyukai (Hachioji, Tokyo, Japan), at 11:17 AM (local time), his Disciple and our sister crossed the threshold of death with the Divine Master:

**SR. M. LETIZIA – NOBU MARIA HIROTA**  
**born on January 5, 1933, in Hirado - Nagasaki (Japan).**

*Nobu* was the fourth of seven children. The Japanese name, *Nobu*, is often associated with virtues such as ambition, perseverance, and continual development. Historically it was used among the aristocracy and the samurai, and may also be interpreted as “honest” or “noble” in some contexts.

The parents of *Nobu*, who in baptism received the Christian names of Michael and Teresia, lived with the family in Hirado on a small island connected to the main island of Kyūshū by the Hirado Bridge, in the precinct of *Nagasaki*.

Following the Christian tradition, only three days after her birth, on January 8, 1933, together with Baptism, *Nobu* received the name *Maria* and was educated in the faith.

The city of Nagasaki is the historical center for Catholicism in Japan, noted for hosting the oldest and largest Christian community, which survived centuries of harsh persecutions (since 1614) as *kakure kirishitan* (hidden Christians). In fact, on February 5, 1597, twenty-six Christians (St. Paul Miki among them) were crucified on the hill of Nishizaka.

*Nagasaki* is also world renowned for another terrible event. On August 9, 1945, three days after Hiroshima, the United States unleashed a second atomic bomb over Nagasaki. The plutonium ordinance exploded at 11:02 AM, causing about 74,000 deaths and leveling the industrial zone to the ground. Together with the excess of goodness and love with which God loves us, to our day, humanity encounters the evil of hatred and war, together with its consequences of enormous suffering and destruction.

In 1945, *Maria Hirota* was still a young girl, but she certainly remained deeply affected. Her choice to offer her life to God is certainly a positive way of transforming the reality.

Maria entered our Congregation in Fukuoka on March 14, 1955. Frail in health, as a postulant she spent a prolonged period of time with her family but then returned because of her strong desire to consecrate herself to God. Thus, at the conclusion of the Novitiate, she made her religious profession at Tokyo Mitaka DM on March 25, 1959, and the perpetual profession on March 25, 1964.



Certified in cutting and sewing, throughout her life Sr. M. Letizia placed her practical talents in service. We find her in the various tailoring and sewing workshops in our apostolic communities, especially in Tokyo DM, but also in Fukuoka, Nagoya, and Osaka. Only once she was changed from the sewing apostolate, from 1979 until 1986, when she collaborated in the painting workshop of Tokyo DM.

Sr. M. Letizia was a person of silence who organized her day, like every Sister Disciple, between prayer and apostolic work, living in the presence of the Lord. The Eucharistic Celebration and Adoration were her preferred nourishment and the source of her strength to overcome the various health problems and trials of human existence.

Sr. M. Giuditta Tokuno, the Provincial Superior, wrote the following testimony about Sr. M. Letizia: «She dedicated herself primarily to the sewing apostolate, serving the Church through the production of many sacred vestments and habits for our sisters. Putting her crafting ability to work, she made obi and similar items from fabric, cases for Japanese-style veils and rosary pouches that were greatly appreciated by many people.

In 1987, her cardiac and circulatory problems worsened and it became necessary to implant a *pacemaker* at the Toranomon Hospital in Tokyo and, despite those conditions, she continued to live in community. She was also afflicted with thoracic spinal canal stenosis, as well as many other ailments... but she continued to live the religious life with all of her strength. With the appearance of other serious health issues, in November of 2025, she was received in the convalescent home of Sanai, located near our Divine Master house, where she spent her days in tranquility. On March 6, when I went to visit her, she was intubated with oxygen, but she was lucid and able to receive the Eucharist.

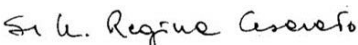
On the morning of April 22, the clinic notified us that Sr. M. Letizia had fallen from her bed and was unconscious. She was brought by ambulance to the hospital of Nishi-Tokusyuuikai, where she was called to the Father's presence. She was 93 years of age, having spent 71 years in religious life. This departure to Eternity, it seems to me, is typical of a sister who has always responded with docility to God's call. Despite being afflicted by many ailments, she always continued to carry out her apostolic ministry for the good of the Congregation and of the Church, joyfully offering herself.

I am grateful for her work, for the assistance of her family, and for the offering of her life that contributed toward drawing many people to God and to the Church».

Jesus Master, who called Sr. M. Letizia to be his disciple, certainly accompanied her in every moment of her life to bring to completion God's plan for her, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, who is given to us in superabundance during this Easter season.

Sr. M. Letizia, now that you have completed the race of your faith, we give thanks to God for you and ask you to intercede for the evangelization of Japan, for peace in the world, and for the gift of new vocations to the Pauline Family. Live in God and rest in peace!

Rome, April 22, 2026.



Sr. M. Regina Cesarato