



*“Faith in the resurrection opens us to fraternal communion beyond the threshold of death (RoL 24)*



Yesterday, 7 August at 10:45p.m.  
in the community of Albano Laziale (RM) - Casa madre,

**FRANCA M. TERSILLA BARTOLINI**

93 years old and 63 years of religious life  
has returned to the Father’s house

The day after the Feast of the Transfiguration, the Lord Jesus, the Beautiful Shepherd came to take Sr. Franca leading her to the Father and in the Spirit immersed her in the marvelous light of His glory.

Franca was born in Capoliveri - LI (Island of Elba) on 1 August 1919 and was baptized on the same day in the Parish dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, where the Pastorelle Sisters worked for many years.

Second of three sisters, Franca was very attached to her twin sister, however she separated from her to enter the Congregation in Genzano (RM) on 13 August 1942 in the course of World War II. After a brief time for formation, she was sent in the apostolate from 1943 to 1947: in Farfa Sabina (RI), Lavena - Ponte Tresa (VA), Massa Martana (PG) and Marciana Marina (LI), sharing with the sisters the hardships and insecurities of those who are continually forced to flee from the dangers of war. Only 6 January 1948 she returned to Genzano to enter the novitiate and on 26 September 1949, she professed the private vows at Genzano which was then the Mother house and took the name of Sr. M. Tersilla.

In her written testimony dating back on 1988, Sr. Tersilla recalls that *“.. In September 1943, after the bombing in the area of Montagnola in Rome, Primo Maestro gathered us all in the Chapel addressing these words: “If no one among you, priests and sisters will commit sin, if no one will die in the bombings; I, at the end of the war, with an act of gratitude, will build the Temple of Our Lady Queen of Apostles”.*

From 1949 to 1953, we find her devoted mainly in the kindergarten in the parish communities of Lentella (CH) and Cardinale (CZ). Following the recognition of the Institute by the Sacred Congregation for Religious which occurred on 21 September 1953, on 7 October of the same year at Massa Martana, after a course of spiritual exercises and the reading of the Constitutions, Sr. Tersilla, along with 7 sisters of the first hour professed the simple and public vows in the hands of Blessed Giacomo Alberione.

Sr. Tersilla, of resourceful and determined character, dedicated herself with passion and joy since the beginning of her life in the Congregation in the pastoral ministry, which spirit she

directly breathed from the Founder. In the care of children in the kindergarten and the young people through catechism and the embroidery school, she expressed her spiritual motherhood without ever neglecting the care of the community life and prayer time. Her love for the Congregation and her sense of humor that always accompanied her, made her a gracious person in relationships and sensitive to the needs of the Christian communities.

On 9 August 1954 she made her Final Profession in Albano Laziale, in the actual Mother house, then went back to Cardinale where she was much appreciated by the parish priest and the civil authorities; she remained in this place until 1961. She was transferred to Crosia (CS), but after a year of pressing request by the population, she returned to Cardinale and remained there until 1965, where she devoted herself primarily to the care of young women.

In fact, it is the Town Mayor himself who made the request to the Superior General of the return of Sr. Tersilla to Cardinale in these words: *"I believe that the return of Sr. M. Tersilla at this time would be indispensable on the effect of maternal calling ... any initiative would be left to Mother M. Tersilla, who with her tender touch and experience would bring about peace ... "*

From 1965 to 1981 she was assigned at Corinaldo (AN) as superior, then at Vicenza - S. Agostino and in Sestri Levante (GE). After a time of rest and up-dating at Albano Laziale, in 1983 was transferred to Lignano Sabbiadoro (UD) until 1989, the year when she requested the transfer of Province to care for her sick twin sister.

In her request for transfer she expressed thus: *"I thank Jesus Good Shepherd for my 47 years spent in the parish in collaboration with the priests in the service of the community, grateful for what they have given me in order to live with joy my Pastorella vocation"*.

In November 2006, as a consequence of her deteriorating health, she was brought to Albano, where she was assisted by the sisters with great generosity and kindness. Several times in my personal encounter with her, she expressed her gratitude for the loving care she received from the sisters.

Even in these recent years marked by illness, Sr. Franca conserved with clarity her interest on the Congregation's journey, desiring to be informed and participate in prayer and offering.

In her long life, she shared almost the entire journey of the history of the Congregation: her difficult moments and also the intense moments of the Founder's teaching toward the new community. She also saw the extraordinary development of the Institute and her missionary expansion.

Now, Sr. Franca, from Heaven you can accompany our religious family and continue to pray for all the Pastorelle and the entire Pauline Family. Thanks for your witnessing of consecrated life and for all the love you have manifested to the Congregation and to the people of God. May the Father welcome you in His mercy together with the sisters who already enjoy the vision of his face.

*Sr Marta Finotelli*  
superior general

Rome, 8 August 2012  
*Feast of St. Dominic*