



*“Faith in the resurrection
opens up fraternal communion
beyond the threshold of death ...”.*
(RoL 24)



Today, 20 January 2021 at 15.15,
in the community of Negrar (VR), our sister
MARIA, Sr CLAUDIA PIEMONTE
returned to the Father’s House.
She was 87years old and 63 years of Religious Life.

The words of the second Collect from today’s liturgy, *“In your provident plan, you need men and women too who will make you known, and you remain voiceless without our voice. Make us worthy heralds and witnesses of the Word that saves,”* contain the life and mission of Sr Claudia, a Pastorelle sister rooted in love for Jesus Good Shepherd, dedicated to the ministry of pastoral care and a faithful witness of the Word that saves.

Maria, the second child of three daughters, was born in Cesinali (AV) on 11 April 1933 and baptized in the parish church of San Silvestro Papa on 30 April 1933. From a young age, she was committed to Catholic Action and held the position of Diocesan President. Her parish priest described her as an active young woman who fulfilled parish commitments very well. She was the first vocation of the Pastorelle sisters from the city of Avellino. She was accompanied by Fr Ferdinando Renzulli, who was a great admirer of Fr Alberione, the Pauline Family and, in particular, our pastoral charism. Fr Ferdinando himself recommended to Sr Claudia to enter the Pastorelle sisters, because he believed that her gifts were suited for living our charism.

Maria entered the Congregation in Albano Laziale-Mother House on 21 March 1954 and on 02 September 1956, she entered the novitiate. She made her first profession on 03 September 1957 and her perpetual profession on 03 September 1962 also in Albano Laziale. After her first profession in 1957, she carried out pastoral ministry in Polpet (BL) and was superior of the community. In 1963, she moved to Vicenza – Immaculate Heart, where she was mainly involved in family ministry. In 1967, she left for the mission in Brazil and fulfilled her first missionary activity in the *“Scuola Istituto Divina Pastora”* in Jabaquara – San Paolo. In 1968,

she was superior in the community of Jardim – San Paolo – while in 1971 she was put in charge of the Junior Professed. In 1976, she transferred to Assis/SP for one year.

From the time of her initial formation, she was described as a kind, generous, altruistic, docile, happy person, gifted with a practical intelligence, hardworking and a lover of the pastoral apostolate; it was clear that she would have given much to the Institute. The sisters remember her as a person who had great love for the Congregation, with a robust faith and capacity for sacrifice. She was a sister determined to do good; she loved reading, was frank, prudent, had the ability to weave relationships with everyone and was able to look “beyond”. Her love for the Congregation and her ardent apostolic passion allowed her to face generously the various missionary endeavours and the various services entrusted to her, though these might be demanding and, at times, when she was no longer young.

Her “yes” and the offering of her life were a great gift to everyone. The sisters testify that Sr Claudia always said yes to every request and anywhere she’d been, she had never shown fatigue, even that caused by the language. She had always dedicated herself entirely to people without ever holding back. The gift of herself was for everyone and she knew no borders. It was not easy for her to withdraw from pastoral activity and accept the limitations that come with ageing and illness. However, the Lord gave her grace and after the initial difficulties, she found much serenity and peace. Until the end, she remained a passionate reader, always attentive to the political and social situations.

The sisters in Brazil remember her with gratitude and hold that *her missionary presence was a gift of prophecy, pastoral dynamism and holiness. A woman of a faith as strong as a rock, courageous, enterprising, with a broad vision; she contributed immensely so that our pastoral mission could be lived in the midst of the most challenging realities in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. She understood the need to have sisters who were well prepared so that we could be a significant presence in the Church and in the world. Sisters who were creative in seeking alternatives and new ideas for evangelization.*

In 1977, after ten years of intense mission in Brazil, she returned to Italy, to Albano Laziale-Mother house, for a period of study. In 1980, she was appointed as superior of Albano-formation/studies.

At the 3rd General Chapter, celebrated in Ariccia (RM), she was elected superior general on 12 July 1981. Sr Claudia, who was not of the Capitulars, was in Alba guiding a group of sisters to the places of origins of the Pauline Family, when she was asked to take on the service of leadership of the Congregation.

Sr Claudia succeeded Mother Celina Orsini and resided in the Generalate in Rome – Eur Mostacciano. She fulfilled her service with great generosity, passion and interest in the development of the Congregation, taking care, in particular, that the studies that sisters undertook, were in function of the mission. In 1987, at the end of her mandate, she spent a sabbatical year at Tor San Lorenzo (RM).

In 1988, Sr Claudia went to the mission in Santa (Peru') and stayed for about ten years. Here she left the mark of her *presence dedicated to defending the rights of all, especially the poor, women in difficulty, abandoned children and young people who did not have the opportunity to study. She was able to arouse concrete solidarity and to show the caring face of the Good Shepherd who cares. She was a mother, a sister and a friend of peace to the people of Santa in times of social violence. She was a great gift to everyone.*

A layman, in a poem, written for her farewell expressed himself as follows' *You have sown in this fertile land of the "Valle de Santa", seeds of love and peace. The "Señor Crucificado" rejoices in having such wonderful children like Fr Sandro and you.*

In 1998, she was entrusted with the service of Delegate Superior in Seoul-Kirum Dong (Korea), a request that found full availability in Sr Claudia; a new "missionary adventure" that she accepted with great generosity and courage. The sisters testify that Sr Claudia was an innovator for the Delegation, laying the deepest foundations in all the Areas through spiritual care and systematic studies in the seminary. The sisters recall with gratitude the involvement of the Delegation in the service of authority, and how she was able to communicate beyond the limitations of the different language and culture.

Returning to Italy, she continued her pastoral mission in the following communities: Negrar (2002); Bettola di Peschiera Corromeo – MI (2003) dedicated to the training of pastoral workers and to the service of community superior; from 2009 in Saliceto Panaro (MO) and in 2011 in Grugliasco (TO); from 2012 again in Saliceto Panaro.

In 2017, due to the precariousness of her health, she moved to the community of Negrar, where the sisters remember her as a discreet and grateful presence in the community, the workers and the doctors, and always thanking them. In her last days, she thanked everyone and asked to pray with her in asking the Lord for forgiveness if she had not fully responded to what he had asked of her. She prayed with the sisters and the workers right to the day before her death.

We thank all the sisters and the health personnel who looked after Sr Claudia with such loving care and made sure she never lacked the books and magazines that she read with great passion.

We entrust Sr Claudia to the mercy of the Father. We thank the Good Shepherd for giving us the testimony of such a zealous Pastorella, open to the needs of humanity and the Congregation, wherever she has been and throughout her life.

We entrust to the intercession of Sr Claudia, the itinerary of the two Italian Provinces on their way to uniting as one Province of Italy-Albania-Mozambique, so that they may receive abundant graces, and in particular holy vocations and renewed missionary enthusiasm.

Sr Aminta Sarmeinto Puentes
Superior General

Rome, 20 January 2021