



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



Today, 19 February at 12.00 (local time)
at Pompéia Hospital, Caxias do Sul/RS (Brazil), our sister
LUCIANA, Sr FRANCESCA LONGONI
returned to the Father’s House.
She was 88 years old and 64 years of Religious Life.

You will have prepared a pure and sparkling house for the Lord. Receive the Lord into this royal and splendid dwelling. With these words of St John Chrysostom taken from the second reading of today’s Office of Readings, we thank the Father for the gift of Sr Francesca’s life and vocation. Over the years, she has prepared in her heart a worthy dwelling for the Good Shepherd, her Spouse, as she loved to call him, the one she has loved and followed with joy and fidelity as a missionary Pastorella.

Luciana was born on 29 November in Villasimius (CA) and baptized on 11 December 1932 in her native parish dedicated to the Vergine Assunta. From an early age, she breathed an atmosphere of faith in her family of origin. The youngest of five children, she was born seven years after her sister, Isabella, who also chose a life of consecration.

Luciana entered the Congregation in Albano Laziale – Mother House on 30 April 1954, spending part of her initial formation in the communities of Tonadico (TN) and Lusìa (RO). She entered the novitiate on 02 September 1956. She made her first profession on 03 September 1957 taking the name of Sr Francesca and made her perpetual profession on 03 September 1962.

She carried out pastoral ministry from 1957 at Rossano (CS) and from 1960 at Ancona, where she was also the superior of the community. In 1963, she was at Albano Laziale – Mother House – performing various tasks.

In 1963, she left as a missionary for Caxias do Sul – San Leopoldo (Brazil). She was appointed Regional Superior and Treasurer for two terms (1971-1977), in Caxias do Sul-San Leopoldo. Subsequently at San Paolo (1977-1980), she again carried out the duties of Regional Superior and Treasurer. In Terceira Léguã/RS, she continued to serve as Provincial Treasurer, superior of the community as well as being engaged in missionary ministry. From 1987 to 1991, alongside the role of Provincial Treasurer, she was also asked to be a Provincial Councillor. From 1991 to 2001 she continued to be superior of the community of Terceira Léguã making herself available also for other services.

From 2002 to 2007 she was transferred to the Cascavel/PR community where she was engaged in the pastoral care of health. From 2007 to 2011 she returned to Terceira Léguã/RS to dedicate herself to pastoral ministry. In 2012 she was in the community of Caxias do Sul –

Ss. Trindade and from 2014 to 2016 she was in the community of Caxias do Sul – Cohab. In 2007, for reasons of health, she returned to the community Caxias do Sul - Terceira Léguas. Here she continued to be available by doing small community services. In 2019, due to poor health, she moved to the community of Betânia – Caxias do Sul.

From the time of her initial formation, Sr Francesca has been described as a person with a joyful, decisive and sociable character. A woman of faith and deep prayer life, with a spirit of sacrifice; a person who lived her poverty with a practical intelligence and a great love for the Congregation. She proved herself a mature and welcoming person; responsible and capable of self giving and gratuitousness. Right to the end, she kept a grateful heart towards the Good Shepherd for every little thing and the sisters and the people she met.

The sisters testify as follows: *When she arrived in Brazil, despite her young age, she was asked to take on the responsibility of the community of San Leopoldo where there were many aspirants, postulants, novices and sisters. She accepted this mission with faith and carried it out with great courage. She had a particular zeal for formation, studies and the mission of the Pastorelle. With a strong missionary spirit, she promoted new openings. She had great love for the Primo Maestro and encouraged us to read his writings and to live his teachings. She was a sister with a deep spirit of prayer, with her life and mission rooted in her relationship with Jesus Good Shepherd. She had zeal for vocations and had a gift for administration which she carried out with care, bearing witness to the spirit of poverty and providing for the needs of the sisters and the mission.*

In this last period of her life spent in sickness, she lived the Paschal Mystery with courage and faith, united to the Cross of Christ, offering everything for the Congregation, the Church and humanity. For some years now, she had been preparing for the encounter with her Spouse and her only regret was that of not being able to correspond to his Love as she would have wished. She loved to describe herself as a “Sardinian donkey” and trusted in the merciful and unconditional love of the Good Shepherd.

Let us cherish in our hearts and memory her words left as a testament to the sisters in Brazil: *“Despite all my humanity, I leave this homeland serene, I go happy and confident to meet Jesus in Heaven. I offer my poor life to the Father with whom I have shared all that I am. I have lived according to the intentions of the Pope, especially Pope Francis, for priests, for vocations, for the Congregation and for each one of you, so that you may be true Religious.”*

As testified by the sisters, Sr Francesca has loved and served the Church and the Congregation in Brazil with particular intensity, also receiving much love and care from everyone. We thank the sisters who have supported Sr Francesca in a special way in this last period of trial due to her illness, and giving her the necessary care with great love, patience and generosity.

We entrust Sr Francesca to the Father’s mercy, and we thank him for this sister of ours with a missionary heart imbued with the love of Jesus Good Shepherd and the faithfulness of the Mother of the Good Shepherd, capable of remaining with the Son even at the foot of the Cross.

Dear Sr Francesca, we entrust to your intercession our brothers and sisters in Brazil, our pastoral presences and, in particular, the vocation ministry.

Sr Aminta Sarmiento Puentes
Superior General

Rome, 19 February 2021

