



*"Faith in the resurrection  
opens us to fraternal communion  
beyond the threshold of faith ..."  
(RoL 24)*



Wednesday, 25 July 2018 at 5:45 p.m.  
in the Hospital of *Lezhë* (Albania), our sister  
**GRAZIELLA SR MARIA LEONIA BETTILI**  
went back to the house of the Father.  
She was 76 years old and 54 of religious life.

On the day when the Church celebrates the Feast of the Apostle St. James the Greater and we hear the resounding words of the Gospel acclamation: *I chose you to go and bear fruit and your fruit remains*, the Father calls our sister to him. Born on October 8, 1941 in Palù, municipality of Zevio (VR), in a large family, Graziella is the youngest of eight children. She was baptized on 19 October of the same year in the parish of San Zenone in Palù. Educated in the Christian faith and trained in sacrifice since childhood because of the death of her father Leonildo, who was shot during the Second World War for having offered hospitality to allied prisoners who escaped from a concentration camp located in the municipality of Zevio.

Graziella entered the Congregation on 5 November 1962 in Casa Madre in Albano Laziale, where she spent the first years of formation and on 2 September 1963 she entered the Novitiate. On 3 September of the following year, she made her first profession and was immediately sent to Ripabianca (PG), where she was involved in teaching and in the pastoral mission. In 1973 she returned to Casa Madre Albano to equip herself for the education service. From the following year until 1980 she was in Sestri Levante (GE), while from 1980 to 1990, due to her sensitivity toward the most needy places of evangelization, she was at Gizzeria (CZ) and Doria (CS). With energy and love she gave herself to the pastoral mission: from teaching in the different schools to liturgical animation, from visiting families to the proclamation of the Gospel. Sr. Graziella was described by her formators and by those with whom she carried out the pastoral ministry: *A simple sister, open to common life, good-natured and with good practical sense. She loved poverty and work; loved and cared for community life. She loved being with the youth to whom she dedicated herself with generosity so that they may discover their own vocation. She lived everything with great depth and dedication.*

After the fall of the communist dictatorship in Albania and a reflection of a possible opening in the “Land of the Eagles”, Sr. Graziella was in Rome - Axa, in the interprovincial novitiate community from 1990 to 1991, then in Albano Laziale to attend a course on Missiology, while awaiting for the missionary opening. From 1992 to 1996 she was went at Pannarano (BN) where she served also as a community superior.

In 1996, Sr. Graziella together with the first group of Pastorelle, left for Albania, Ungrej of Kashniet, in the Diocese of Lezhë. Her pastoral sensibility, her love for the Congregation and the Church, are well expressed in all these years, through her generous dedication to people of all ages and groups, without stopping even before the difficulties of the language and cultural adaptation. The initial difficulties in a land devoid of structures and roads were faced by Sr. Graziella with great courage and was able to reach the most inaccessible and abandoned places.

Sr. Graziella died in Albania in the land she has loved and served for a good 22 years, giving herself with compassionate and joyful care, when a sudden ailment constrained her to go to the hospital in Lezhë, where she breathed her last at 5.45 p.m. due to cardiac arrest.

In one of the Canonical visits, Sr. Graziella, thus expressed: *There are moments of difficulty in life, but prayer and fraternal help are stimuli to grow in faith. I have always felt the presence of Jesus passing by in every person whom I approach and He wants to give salvation.*

Thank you, Sr. Graziella, for having generously lived your pastoral motherhood in the Congregation and in the Church, especially for vocations. We entrust to your intercession the intentions of your family members, the journey of the Albanian Church and of the Congregation.

*Sr. Aminta Sarmiento Puentes*  
Superior General

Seoul, 27 July 2018