



*Faith in the resurrection  
opens us to fraternal communion,  
beyond the threshold of death”  
(RdV 24)*



Today, 9 December 2019 at 10.00 pm (local time)

In Caxias do Sul (Brazil), our sister

**SR SOELI TEREZINHA BRANCO**

returned to the Father’s House.

She was 67 years old and 38 years of Religious Life

At the end of the day, while the Church prayed the Office of Compline, the Good Shepherd called our sister Soeli to himself, fulfilling the words of the short Responsory, *You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. Into your hands, I commend my spirit*, in the act of abandonment of our sister in the arms of the merciful Father who she always sought with a sincere heart.

Soeli, the daughter of Osvaldino, father, and Ecilda, mother, was born in São José do Cerrito - Santa Caterina - (Brazil) on 11 April 1952. She received her baptism in the cathedral of Lages *Nostra Signora Dos Prazeres* on 3 May 1952. Soeli was the first of five children: two brothers and three sisters.

She entered the Congregation on 21 February 1971 in Caxias do Sul - São Leopoldo where she also began her novitiate on 6 February 1979. She made her first profession on 2 February 1981 in Caxias do Sul - São Leopoldo. From the time of her Juniorate, Sr Soeli was in charge of the parish catechetical ministry in Porto Alegre/ RS and the pastoral workers in Getúlio Vargas/ RS. She made her perpetual profession on 15 January 1989 in Caxias do Sul - São Leopoldo. From 1989 to 1994, she was in the community of Campo Grande/MS responsible for the formation of the aspirants, animator of local communities and of the ecumenical group, and worked in support of minors and favelas.

In the testimony given by the sisters, they describe Sr Soeli: *A person passionate about life, who made her own the dream of the Good Shepherd, "I came that all may have life and have it abundantly" (Jn 10.10). Wherever she passed, she tried to sow life, to share life, to fight for life, especially for the least and the marginalized. She detested all kinds of injustices in any area, especially towards the poorest and the defenseless. Passionate for the founder, Fr. Giacomo Alberione, she sought, like him, to make sure that in everyday life everything became an object of prayer and meditation before the Lord. She often repeated that she had learned from her novitiate mistress to live "obedience to life". Zealous and a true spiritual mother, she distinguished herself for the love she had for all the sisters and for a strong spirit of belonging to our religious family, without neglecting a healthy relationship with her blood family, becoming for them too, an example of love and humanity<sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> Attached you will find the full text of the testimonies.

In 1995, Sr Soeli lived a time of formation in Rome in the community of Via Traversari, attending the second two-year Course on the Charism, organized by the Pastorelle internally, and simultaneously attending the Pontifical Gregorian University, where she obtained a License in Dogmatic Theology. This was a powerful international experience of Pauline Family and Church, which saw Sr Soeli constantly committed to living this time of Grace intensely.

On her return to Brazil in 1999, she was sent to the Community of Correia Pinto/SC, where she took special care of the formation of pastoral workers. In 2001, she was appointed Provincial Councilor and secretary, which is why she returned to Caxias do Sul - Bairro Cinquentenário. Later, from 2005 to 2012, she was appointed Provincial Superior for two consecutive terms. During this time of service of authority, Sr Soeli exercised deeply her motherhood and sisterhood towards the sisters. In the course of her mandate as Provincial Superior, despite being diagnosed with cancer, with great courage she faced the various cancer therapies and continuing her commitment to governance.

The sisters testify to the way in which she lived the ordeal of her illness: *We emphasize Sr Soeli's strength, sustained by the Grace of God. During all these years, in which she battled against cancer, she always showed great willpower, commitment and love of life, fighting for it to the end. Although she was in pain, she would say, "I am fine, it will pass". The illness was not an impediment to her in carrying out her mission, always serving the Province and the Congregation in what she could. She never spared herself but consumed herself for the mission.*

In 2014, Sr Soeli resumed pastoral work in Campo Grande/MS living in the vocations community, looking after young people. She dedicated herself with great zeal to the formation of the Pauline Cooperators Friends of Jesus Good Shepherd and in May 2018, despite the precariousness of her health, she accompanied them to Rome for the celebration of the Jubilee organized by the Pauline Family. In 2016 in Campo Belo do Sul/SC, she was in charge of the formation for pastoral workers. However, due to the deterioration of her health, from 2017 to 2019, she transferred to Caxias do Sul - Terceira Léguas. There, as well as being the coordinator of the community of Jesus Bom Pastor, she continued to be responsible for the Pauline Cooperators who she formed with great love and accompanied to the end. She was a member of the Charism Reflection Team.

Sr Soeli armed with great inner strength and apostolic zeal, despite her illness, remained active until the end, gifting her pastoral competence and carrying out demanding community services. We thank the sisters who throughout the illness supported Sr Soeli with loving maternal care, offering her all possible medical treatments. We thank every sister in the Congregation who united herself in trusting prayer in asking through the intercession of Blessed James Alberione the gift of health for Sr Soeli.

Let us bless the Good Shepherd for the gift of the life and vocation of Sr Soeli; for all that He has worked in her and through her in our Religious Family and in the pastoral mission. As we commend her the Father's mercy, we ask her, in this Vocation Year of the Pauline Family, to intercede for us "good and holy" vocations and we entrust to her in a special way the journey of the Pauline Cooperators Friends of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

Sr Aminta Sarmiento Puentes  
Superior General

Rome, 9 December 2019