



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



Yesterday, 17th of September 2012, at 11.50 p.m.
in the community of Pescara,
our Sister **GRAZIELLA PIERA ZANELLA**
returned to the Father's House
She was 68 years old of which 49 years in religious life.

"Lord, do not delay" (Psalm 69) I am ready!". Sr. Graziella, with a faint voice, said these words to me over the telephone, three days before she passed into the next world to the Father. Words that she has persistently repeated to the Sisters of her community during the last days of her earthly life, adding: *"Lord have mercy on me, on us! I want to go to heaven!"*

With this certainty in the heart, Sr. Graziella consigned once for all, her life to the Good Shepherd and fulfilled what she wrote in 1968, before her perpetual profession: *"I feel unworthy of this grace for the lack of correspondence, but I trust in the divine mercy that is always abundant with those who repent. I also feel to be incapable, with my own strength to carry out what I am about to promise to the Lord; but even here, I am trustful of Christ's words: "Whatever you ask of the Father in my name, you shall have it."*

Sr. Graziella was born on March 9, 1944 at Piove di Sacco (PD) from a simple hardworking Christian family. She was the last of six children, was baptised on March 13, 1944 and confirmed at Budrione (PD) on June 8, 1952. In her parish she matured her religious vocation and entered the Congregation on August 16, 1961 at the Mother House - Albano Laziale, there she began her formation and on September 2, 1962 entered the novitiate and in September 3, 1963 at Albano took her first vows and was given the name Sr. Piera. She remained in the Mother House for a year as a student.

From 1964 to 1966 was sent to Lignano Sabbiadoro (UD) where she was engaged in the propaganda and adapted herself as the cook in the Kindergarten. She then returned to Albano for her studies and obtained her Diploma di "Scuola Magistrale". Here she also prepared for her perpetual profession, which was held in September 3, 1968.

Sr Graziella was of good character, very generous and available to everyone, loved and privileged the poor, she had a sober life style, seeking only the essentials. She did not easily speak about herself but knew how to be sociable and caring, always ready to create communion and to seek peace in relationships. She had a rather humorous spirit that knew how create a

cheerful atmosphere and smooth out tense situations.

She loved the Congregation, fraternal life, prayer and sought every day to incarnate the certitude, which accompanied her since her first profession, *“With the Lord’s help I am certain to be faithful to Him all my life”*.

From 1968 to 1981, she spent thirteen years in the apostolate devoting herself primarily to teaching and pastoral care of families of the parishes of Cavatigozzi (CR), where she undertook her training as Kindergarten teacher then to Castanea (ME) and Pannarano (BN).

After a break at Albano for her sabbatical year, from 1982 to 1998 she returned to full time pastoral ministry at Taranto and at Rossano Stazione (CS). From 1988 to 1990 returned to Albano to help in the various needs of the Provincialate.

In 1990 she resumed pastoral ministry, for eight years at Doria (CS) and then fourteen years at Pescara, where she expressed her pastoral passion dedicating herself to the teaching of religion in the elementary school, coordinating the Catechesis for first communion and Confirmation, the animation of the liturgy and the formation of the Altar servers and the coordination of Caritas. She did not neglect the widows, dedicated time to the welcoming centre for gypsies and visited families and the elderly. In 2008 she was sent for a year to the parish community of Samassi (CA) only to return to Pescara where in July 2011 was diagnosed with lung cancer already at an advanced stage.

Sr Graziella lived with serenity every stage of her illness and continued devoting herself to the people right up to the end: *“I love the people even if I feel the heaviness of the years, the new insertions, and the new methods of perceiving pastoral care ...”*. Three days before leaving this world she confided in one of the Sisters: *“Thank you for the care that you have shown toward me. I loved the Congregation and I thank the Lord for He has always shown me mercy. I have always felt loved by Him. I thank the parish priest and curate for their pastoral zeal and their generosity towards the poor. I thank Caritas, the catechists and all the people of the parish I have loved you all. I thank the doctors who took care of me until the end. I am ready!”*.

Thanks to you too Sr. Graziella for your witness of life which has taught us how to live and die as a good Pastorella. *“One who lives well, dies well. You have the gift of dying trustfully when you have sought to do God’s will, and on your deathbed, you are able to accept death. Jesus then will give you his the last loving command: “Veni sponsa Christi, accipe coronam”*. (Blessed G. Alberione PrP VI, 1953, p. 149).

Remember us your Sisters, your family members, the people from the different parish communities whom you have loved without any reservation and intercede for all of us divine mercy.

Sr Marta Finotelli

Superior General

Rome, September 18, 2012

S. Joseph of Copertino