



Dearest Sisters,

As the Church began to celebrate the First Sunday of Lent, at 7:00 PM yesterday evening, in the Giacomo Alberione community of Albano, one of our sisters was called to dwell forever in the shelter of the Most High, in the shadow of the Almighty (cf. Psalm 90):

**LAUDA PHILOMENA Sr. MARIA**  
**born in Greci (Avellino) on February 21, 1932**

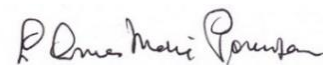
Sr. Maria was known for her noble and dignified demeanor, always elegant and poised, her gentle and delicate manner, so refined, and courteous. She was the very embodiment of kindness, always respectful, polite, and gracious. These qualities greatly facilitated her interactions and relationships with people from all walks of life from that very special *pulpit* of our Pauline book centers.

Sr. Maria entered the congregation in the house in Rome on November 20, 1948, at the age of sixteen, after having obtained a basic business diploma. She soon learned the secrets of bookbinding and to savor the scent of printed paper, which in the Pauline printing department was transformed into the scent of the Gospel. With a deep desire to give, she made her novitiate in Rome followed by first profession on March 19, 1952. Six years later she pronounced perpetual vows.

Listening to Primo Maestro, Sr. Maria absorbed the call to make continuous progress and to acquire the necessary knowledge for all areas of life, making full use of every means of communication for the spread of the Gospel. Beginning in 1953 she served in the book centers. She saw them as a place to carry out every Pauline initiative and where she could offer herself and serve the Lord daily with joy. To carry out her mission more effectively, Sr. Maria longed to live in an environment dedicated to study. In 1969, she wrote to the provincial superior: *“The desire for greater education has always been present in me and in all of us who live immersed in the culture, carrying out an apostolate that is predominantly cultural... As apostles of truth, we must commit ourselves to knowing it... We need continuous updating through more frequent conferences... We need to become familiar with the various currents of thought and cultural movements....”*

For nearly seventy consecutive years, Sr. Maria served as a skilled, active, and creative member of the book center staff in Udine, Palermo, La Spezia, Naples, Como, Biella, Reggio Calabria, and Brescia. She attentively followed every event, promoted the latest publications that shaped the Church’s journey, carefully arranged window displays, and provided personalized service for each patron. Many sisters emphasize just how exceptional she was in her role. And all this until five years ago when her health progressively declined. She left Brescia for the Giacomo Alberione community in Albano. Due to severe osteoporosis and muscular atrophy that stiffened her limbs, she could no longer walk and more recently, she could not speak. She passed away slowly, in silence and peace, to open herself to the light of God. As Fr. Alberione said, “It is beautiful to close one’s life in the arms of God, to go to heaven where the congregation continues. Death then is not a sunset but a dawn. It is the sunset of the present life, miserable, poor, uncertain and mortal, and it is the dawn of eternal life—happy.”

Affectionately,

  
sr Anna Maria Parenzan

Rome, March 8, 2025