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Dearest Sisters,

Last night, the Lord visited the infirmary wing of our Divine Providence community, Alba, Italy to call to himself one of our sisters who was over a hundred years old:

MILANI VITTORIA – SR. MARIA FEDELE
born in Taglio Di Po (Rovigo), Italy on 23 December 1915.

Sr. M. Fedele entered the Congregation in the community of Rovigo on 17 Sept. 1937 and spent most of her initial formation carrying out the “propaganda” apostolate in Bologna. She was then sent to Rome to make her novitiate, concluding it with her first profession on 19 March 1941. Immediately afterward, she returned to the diffusion apostolate, this time in the communities of Lecce and Rovigo.

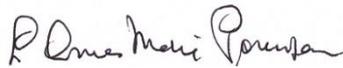
But she was quickly called to be a pioneer for she was asked to help found the Institute’s first community in Spain. Chronicles of the time recount that Sr. Fedele, Sr. Candida Perrone and Sr. Costanza Bianciotto left for Spain on 16 August 1946. In keeping with the desire of M. Timothy Giaccardo, they made a brief stop-over at Lourdes and another in Bilbao, before reaching Barcelona, their destination. However, once there, our missionaries discovered that the place where they had arranged to stay was not prepared to receive them. They wound up in a dark, humid basement without any doors and infested with bugs. But nothing could frighten those courageous young sisters, whose hearts burned with desire to take the Gospel to far-away lands. They quickly found a modest apartment and began to carry out the propaganda apostolate with books published by the Society of St. Paul. They knew only a few words of Spanish, but they were determined to make a place for themselves in the city and meet all the challenges to the Pauline mission.

On 24 January 1947, Sr. Fedele and three other sisters arrived in Valencia to open a community there. They ate their first meal on the two wooden crates holding the books they had brought with them, and around that “table” they made their plans for the future. These young missionaries began their new life in extreme poverty, initiating the propaganda apostolate with the diffusion of calendars. The first thing they did was to set up a chapel so as to rejoice in the tangible presence of Jesus, their Master.

In 1952, Sr. M. Fedele was asked to open a community in Valladolid and to serve as its first superior. In 1957, she was appointed superior of Valencia. At the end of her term of office, she returned to Italy and willingly accepted an assignment to the Udine book center. After a short period in Naples, she was made superior of the Potenza community, and then spent some time in Rome and Viterbo before leaving for Trieste in 1972, where she had been asked to take charge of the St. Paul Film Agency. She remained in Trieste for 12 years, working in either the FSP film agency or book center. At home, she served as cook for the community or else worked in the laundry room. In keeping with her name (“Fedele”), she was always a wise and faithful presence in the community and a true witness to the most important values of the Pauline vocation. She nourished a special love and concern for the first members of the Holy Family Institute, which met in the FSP community of Trieste for their spiritual retreats. She knew each family personally, took an interest in their lives and offered words of faith, encouragement and kindness to all.

In 1985, Sr. M. Fedele was sent to Mestre, where she served the community as cook. In 2002, she was transferred to Alba, where she continued to be a witness to the values of the Gospel and a serene and faithful presence in the community up to the end of her life, having transformed the name she had received on the day of her profession into a concrete program of life and love.

Sr. M. Fedele did not have any particular health problems other than the gradual decline caused by advancing age. She contracted the flu a few days ago and it was this illness that opened to her the gates of heaven. We are sure that she is now interceding for us before God and we entrust to her in a particular way our communities of Spain, which she deeply loved and to which she dedicated the most beautiful years of her life. We also entrust to her the Holy Family Institute, at whose birth she had assisted and whose early development she followed with great satisfaction. Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General

Rome, 23 January 2017