

Suore di Sant'Anna
Provincia "Carlo Tancredi e Giulia di Barolo"
Via della Consolata, 20
Tel. 011/234.22.30 – Fax 011/234.23.37
Email: sup.provinciale.italia@gmail.com
10122 TORINO

The Provincial Superior
Turin, 16th January 2019

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord"
Lk 1:38

Dearest Sisters,

The prompt and generous availability of Mary marked the life of our dearest Sister Ancilla up to the YES she "pronounced" by welcoming sister death who unexpectedly visited her on 10th January at the San Camillo Hospital in Rome, where she had been taken urgently and where she was diagnosed with brain hemorrhage.

SISTER ANCILLA (FRASCOGNA TERESA) was born in Mugnano (Naples) on 26th May 1947 into a very close-knit and religious family, linked in a special way to the PIME Fathers, a Congregation to which one of their relatives belonged, who had founded a Lepers' Home in India and who supported distant adoptions. The missionary DNA was in the blood of the Frascogna family. In fact Sr. Gennara, the aunt of Sr. Ancilla, who had nourished the desire to go to the missions, having read in the PIME bulletin "*Venga il tuo Regno*" that they, in India, collaborated with the Sisters of Saint Ann, entered this Congregation and became a "missionary" ... in Italy!

Subsequently, through the "example" of their aunt, Sr. Felicia and later on Sr. Ancilla, entered our Congregation. The latter, to Mother General who welcomed her and to whom she had put forth her feelings of not being suitable for teaching, said her YES, in the certainty that God's plan for her would be realized.

In our Religious Family, she completed the following formative journey:

Postulancy on 22nd September 1967 in Turin-Mother House;
Vestition on 8th September 1968 in Turin-Mother House;
Profession on 8th September 1970 in Turin-Mother House;
Perpetual Profession on 29th August 1976 in Rome-Viale Marconi.

She carried out her service as a "teacher-missionary" for the children of the Primary School in our Schools of Rome-Viale Marconi (from 1974 to 1978 and again from 1995 to 2018); Acireale (from 1978 to 1982 and then from 1985 to 1995) and Castelfidardo (from 1982 to 1985).

The same sense of belonging that bound her so much to her natural family, Sr. Ancilla now expressed also strongly in the religious family, for which she enthusiastically spent all her energies, bringing a "family spirit" to the "large" Communities where she always carried out her mission and where, due to the big number and the commitments, one could run the risk of being "invisible" to each other.

In fact, she found it difficult to understand how one could think only of one's own needs without feeling challenged and involved in the needs of the Community.

There, where Sr. Ancilla was present, the Community was transformed into a welcoming "home", full of human warmth mediated by concreteness and daily life: like the preparation of coffee or a snack for a break during the day's work, waiting for those who returned from the Parish late in the evening, the jokes and roaring laughter that relaxed the atmosphere, the ability to notice what one needed and above all, sincere cordiality with which she approached and put each Sister at ease, overcoming in an outright manner the disagreements due to diversity of views.

Such an empathetic “gaze” also involved the people with whom she had the opportunity to relate to, who were struck by her great humaneness and which they remember, greatly moved, even at a distance of time and place.

The conviction that an “educative community” is such only when the Family and the School work in synergy, led her to establish relationships of collaboration with her colleagues, with the parents and with the service staff. In the educational field too she expressed her characteristics: a determined person, attentive to those close to her, jovial and concrete in dealing with and resolving the most diverse situations.

She was a qualified teacher and a true educator. She did not give up if some pupil did not seem to respond to her requests, because she wanted to provide each one with a wealth of values and culture for life. One of her former students confirms: “90% of what I am, I owe to Sr. Ancilla”. And another testifies: “She was beside me day after day until I was able to overcome my stammering”. And together: “Even today that we are grownups, she is our point of reference. If we are like this, it is her merit. We thank the Lord for having met her and we bear within us the certainty that in our every step she will be near us”.

Her main activity, after teaching, was the mission. Very devoted to Saint Therese, she dedicated all her energy to financing projects for our Missions. She organized raffles, charitable lucky dips and bazaars to raise funds, regardless of time and fatigue. On the Sunday before her death, Fr. Lubomir, Chaplain of the Community, during the Eucharistic celebration, had publicly asked Sr. Ancilla, though already ailing, to assume the task of “Treasurer” for raising funds in favour of our School in Adhanur and for Kerala, hit by floods and she had answered “No problem”. On the occasion of her funeral, he wanted to honour her memory by raising funds for this purpose, because Sr. Ancilla would be happy about it. This gesture was her gift from Heaven to the beloved Indian mission.

During her last years, a heart disease forced her to slow down her activity until she finally left teaching. Some cardiac stents were inserted to repair the obstructed arteries and then a three-valve replacement was done in March 2018. Once again, Sr. Ancilla said her YES: she accepted her new condition with serenity and adapted herself to a more tranquil rhythm of life, but always with the aspects that characterized her: presence in the school and attention to the pupils and parents; commitment to the missions and a cordial presence so that the house of Viale Marconi be truly a “home” for the Sisters of the Community and for those who dropped in.

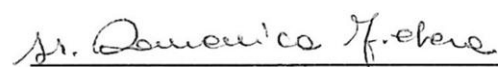
After the surgery which – as she said – “made her look at death in the face”, Sr. Ancilla, besides adopting a new way of living life more suited to her new physical condition, gradually acquired a certain profundity, a new ability of going to the ‘essential’, an interiority made more evident by the increased time given to prayer. Her sharing during the Lectio Divina was always more illuminating, almost as if she could already see the Beyond after death.

At 6:00 a.m. on 10th January she felt ill; she was assisted by her sister Sr. Felicia, who providentially was close by, and was taken to the Hospital where she expired. On 12th January at 10 a.m., in the Chapel of Viale Marconi, the funeral Mass was concelebrated by Fr. Lubomir, Fr. Cesare and Fr. Michele who alternate as Chaplains of the Community. We were moved by the affection that surrounded Sr. Ancilla. The Chapel was packed with people: Mother General with her Council, the Sisters of Stella Maris and Grosseto, her former colleagues, the workers, her former students and numerous families. Also present, united in sorrow, were many of her relatives and nieces and nephews who had come to say goodbye to their dear “Aunt Teresa”. Sr. Ancilla had involved all in her “enterprises” to find useful material for the events in favour of the Missions and also in their organization.

At the end of the funeral celebration, Sr. Felicia thanked those present, for the love and closeness shown towards her sister. We then accompanied the body to the Roman cemetery of Prima Porta, where her aunt Sr. Gennara already rests, the “little saint” as she was called by her fellow townsfolk.

Let us share with our dearest Sr. Felicia the pain and also the certainties of our faith and while we pray for our dearest Sr. Ancilla, let us ask for each other the joy of feeling loved by Him and to love all the people He puts on our path and in particular, to be able to make each of our Communities more of a ‘home’.

With affectionate greetings,



Sr. Domenica Fichera, Superiora Provinciale