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The Provincial Superior

Turin, 28th April 2018

*"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good,
His love endures forever.
Let Israel say:
His love endures forever" (Ps. 117:1).*

Dearest Sisters,

This is what the Church chants during the Easter liturgy, almost as if taking up the words of the Psalm from the lips of the Risen Christ. In this atmosphere of Eastertide, on 23rd April, our dearest Sr. Michela left us to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Life that does not end.

Sister Michela (Maria Berardo) was born in Cherasco (Cuneo) on 18th November 1922.

On 8th February 1942, she entered our Congregation in Turin – Mother House and in the years 1942-1950 she celebrated the stages of her formative journey:

on 10th August 1942 – she made her Vestition at Pollone

on 10th August 1944 – she made her First Profession in Turin – Mother House

on 10th August 1950 – she consecrated herself forever to the Lord through the Perpetual Profession in Turin – Mother House.

Sr. Michela, was a simple person, happy with her vocation. Her faith that was nourished in the environment of her natural family gradually grew, leading her to choose to follow Christ in the path of chastity, poverty and obedience, always ready to live in simplicity and to carry out with dedication and love the tasks that were entrusted to her.

After her First Profession, in the course of three years (1944 - 1947), Sr. Michela was sent to Carmagnola where she taught in the Ronco Nursey School; to Viù, Casa Pertusio and to Carmagnola San Bernardo, with the same assignment.

In 1947 she was transferred to San Pietro in Cerro (Piacenza) where she remained for 13 years, during which, in her service to the little ones, she always gave witness to the joy of a life offered to God.

In 1960 she was sent to Cigliano - Nursery and the following year to Turin – Mother House where, for health reasons, she remained until 1963, the year in which she returned to Cigliano. In 1967 she was transferred to Altessano - Nusery, as teacher.

In 1973, after leaving the teaching ministry, she accepted the transfer to Turin - Via Massena where she served as cook. The Sisters who knew Sr. Michela more closely, recall her as a determined, tidy, hardworking, silent person who, in due time, also knew how to amaze others with her witty jokes.

In 1976, she was sent to Pianezza, where for many years she carried out the refectory duty with serenity and diligence.

Regarding this service, Sr. Shiney remembers her thus: *I met Sr. Michela in 2002 in the Community of Pianezza where she was in-charge of the refectory. It was not an easy task to serve at*

table, but she was able to serve everyone in silence, even when a Sister would express disappointment, perhaps with some expression that was not so pleasant. She also went willingly to the nearby Parish to recite the Rosary and distribute Holy Communion. Already at that time she was suffering from problems of hearing and sight; the latter could not be recovered due to advanced glaucoma. Despite these problems, Sr. Michela never complained.

The transfer of the Community of Pianezza to Turin - Mother House in 2010, was a cause of suffering for Sr. Michela but, even if with difficulty, she managed to adapt herself, accepting in faith the detachment that had been asked of all the Elderly Sisters. Thus, in the new environment of the Mother House, Sr. Michela devoted more time to prayer while, during recreation, she knew how to keep good company, cheering the Sisters with jokes and popular songs.

With the passing of time, unfortunately, her sight got increasingly worse, until it made her lose self-sufficiency in her movements. Therefore, to avoid falls, she was forced to use the wheelchair.

During the last months, due to the worsening of her health conditions and serious stomach disorders, Sr. Michela, on the instructions of the doctor, was treated with a drip. Being bedridden and without any strength, she silently moved her lips, marking herself with the sign of the cross as she said she was in the company of Jesus. Thus she spent a long period of time, serenely, without complaining, accepting everything, while her life slowly ebbed away.

On 23rd April morning, at 5.00 a.m., at the dawn of a new day, without any warning, after taking a long breath, Sr. Michela passed away, surrounded by the Sisters in prayer.

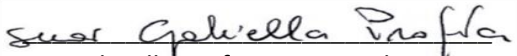
The funeral Mass was celebrated in the Chapel of the Mother House in the presence of the Sisters of the Communities of the Mother House, some Sisters of the neighbouring communities and the relatives of Sr. Michela.

Sr. Marieta, on behalf of the Community, addressed these words of farewell to the dear departed: *Dearest Sister Michela, you are now in joy and in peace without end. Your last words were: "let me go!" At five o'clock on April 23rd, "the hour" had come for you to go, the one you were waiting for and longed for. You were bedridden for more than a month and that was your tabernacle, the place of offering and prayer that took all your time. How much time you spent absorbed in prayer! Thank you Sr. Michela for this gift that constantly flowed from your heart. Thank you for your generous and total "YES" that you lived to the full. So now we are certain that you will pray for all of us from heaven, together with our dear relatives and Sisters who have gone before us. Goodbye! We love you.*

After the funeral, her mortal remains were taken to Marene to be buried in the family cemetery.

Dearest Sisters, during this Eastertide, fixing our gaze on the countenance of the Risen Christ, let us pray, together with Sr. Michela and the Sisters who have preceded us, entrusting to the Lord the needs of our Congregation and the difficult situations of the Province.

I greet you all fraternally,


Sr. Gabriella Profita, Provincial Superior