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The Provincial Superior

Turin, 10th February 2019

*"Be ready... and keep your lamps burning...
because you do not know on what day your Lord will come".*
Lk 12:35; Mt 24:42

Dearest Sisters,

We are strongly reminded of this recommendation of the Lord Jesus through the sudden death of Sr. Silvana, which took place in the early hours of dawn on Wednesday, 6th February in Turin-Casa Betania.

SISTER SILVANA (RAMUS ANGELA) was born on 5th October 1941 in Orizinuovi, in the Province of Brescia, a land where many vocations flourished, which made our Religious Family "grow", and not only numerically.

She was 25 years old when she made her vocational choice, and on 7th December 1962 began her Postulancy in Turin – Mother House. She then celebrated the various events of her formative journey:

Vestition on 8th September 1963 in Turin-Mother House;
Profession on 8th September 1965 in Turin-Mother House;
Perpetual Profession on 8th September 1973 in Rome-Viale Marconi.

From her large and deeply Christian family, she brought that simplicity and availability which she expressed through her presence in the Communities of Turin-Mother House (1965-1966), Moncalieri (1966-1969), Ferriera (1969-1970), Turin-Via Massena (1970-1973), Ribolla (1973-1974), Acireale (1974-1996), Rome-Via Giusti (1996-1999) and Grosseto (1999-2017).

In June 2017, for health reasons, she became a member of the Community of Rome-Stella Maris and soon after, she was transferred to the Community of "Betania" in Turin, to be closer to her relatives. She inserted herself well and seemed to be healthy: thus her relatives noted, when they went to see her before Christmas. Instead, on 6th February at 3.00 am. she took bad, and the timely intervention of the nurse Sr. Shiney, the Superior Sr. Marieta and the First Aid attendants from the Hospital was of no use, and at 4.08 a.m. she breathed her last peacefully.

At the funeral Mass, celebrated on Friday, 8th February in the chapel of the Mother House, the Sisters of the Mother House, of Casa Betania and from the other neighbouring Communities took part. The three sisters of Sr. Silvana and some nephews and nieces were present.

The Superior, Sr. Marieta, on behalf of our Religious Family, bid her our last farewell:

"Dearest Sister Silvana,

Your sudden death reminded us of this passage of the Word of God: to be ready for the encounter with the Lord who comes suddenly at night. In fact, you participated in all the activities of the Community. You were happy and like every other night, you greeted us saying "Good night!". That very night your "hour" came: the Lord knocked at your door and you opened to Him who had always loved you.

I greet you with much love and I thank you for your presence, hidden but full of your daily offering. Thank you for your simplicity and your strong family spirit. You rejoiced when your sisters,

nieces and nephews came to see you and in the same way you enjoyed the presence of the Sisters who visited our Community and who came to greet us and spend some time with us.

A big thank you, Sr. Silvana, to your sisters, nieces and nephews for their closeness and much appreciated visits, despite the difficulties of distance and health problems. From Heaven continue to love us who love you, and offer your prayer for everyone”.

The testimony of Sr. Marieta, was echoed by that of a Sister who been lived with Sr. Silvana for more than twenty years and recalled this piece of “sacred history” lived together: *“She was a very simple and affectionate Sister. She enjoyed the kindness of the Sisters of the Community and also the appreciation of the parents of the students and of the staff who worked with her.*

If she saw any Sister tired or worried, she used to go to her and offer her some sweets or fruit, whatever she had, and was able to bring solace to those who, according to her, were suffering. She was very sensitive and gracious and if she felt understood and accepted, gave the maximum of herself”.

From this and other testimonies we see that Sr. Silvana put into practice the “golden rule” - the ethics of reciprocity - present in all religions, *“Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Mt 7:12; Lk 6:31)*, the rule of life brought to its fullness by Jesus: to love one another reciprocally, to love one’s enemies, to love one another even to giving one’s life.

This perspective was seen in her “apostolic” commitment which was carried out in various Communities, almost always within the walls of a kitchen as an assistant cook: peeling potatoes, washing pots and pans... Mother Enrichetta, whom we particularly venerate during this month, reminds us that *“washing dishes is as worthy as going to an audience with the Holy Father”*. What counts is to accomplish every action, even the simplest one, in order to be *“pleasing to God”* and for the good of others, bringing to fruition the talents, or the talent which He has given to each one.

What counts is also the commitment to cooperate sincerely, as Sr. Silvana tried to do, with the Sister whom you are called to work with. It is demanding, but a sign of immediate and clear witness; perhaps this is why Jesus sent His disciples two by two to evangelize!

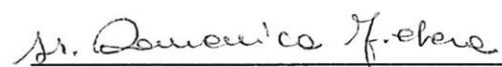
Through the life of Sr. Silvana, the Lord has given a gift to our Family. Even her sudden death can be accepted as a gift, because it unveils a great truth: we do not know “the hour”, but we know that He, the Emmanuel, is with us every day, every day He loves us freely and every day He gives us His Spirit to respond to Him with love, joy and fidelity. “Afterwards” we will not fall into nothingness, but into the arms of our Good Daddy.

This was also the commentary on the parable of the master who returns from the wedding feast (Lk 12:35-40) which Msgr. Giacomo Martinacci, confessor of the Community, offered to the faithful present at Holy Mass, opening their hearts to trust and hope.

After Holy Mass the body of Sr. Silvana was accompanied to the Monumental Cemetery of Turin. Let us keep alive the affection, remembrance and gratitude towards her and our other departed Sisters, receiving their life-witness, and let us offer our suffrages for them, imploring their intercession.

Thus, even in this fraternal manner, the “dream” of Mother Enrichetta will be accomplished, fully in Heaven but already anticipated here on earth: *“Jesus would like His spouses to love one another with true love, and to have but one heart and one soul” (ME, IIA, p.37).*

I greet you all with affection,



Sr. Domenica Fichera, Superiora Provinciale