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The Provincial Superior

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*“And all of us with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Cor 3: 18).”*

Dearest Sisters,

For the world, the time that lies ahead is called *future*, while for a man of God, the time that is unfolding is called *hereafter* and it is the Plenitude that is coming to meet him. Each day is intensified filling him with the future, until the day in which he will be completely filled. This is what our dearest Sr. Vannamaria is already experiencing, now that she is in the bosom of the Father. Thanks to all this, her life which was a slow decline, became a slow but steady ascent toward the Light, the Life and the Truth.

**Sr. Vannamaria** (Andreini Annunziatina) was born in Scansano (Grosseto) on 28 February 1924.

On 28 January 1946 she entered our Congregation in the Mother House in Turin, where she celebrated the important events of her formative journey:

on 10 August 1946 she made her Vestition

on 10 August 1948 she made her First Vows

on 10 August 1955 she consecrated herself definitely to the Lord through the Perpetual Profession.

Sr. Vannamaria was originally from Maremma in Tuscany, a land that is characterized by a mixture of hope, sadness and audacity. Her family consisted of simple people, persons who are “great” in everyday life, who knew how to see things just as they are. Formed in this school of life, Sr. Vannamaria was always a person of few but essential words and unwilling to talk about herself. At times she appeared surly, but she was just shy and not inclined to long speeches. She lived most of her religious life teaching.

Sr. Vannamaria carried out her apostolate in two Communities: Turin - Via Massena and Grosseto, alternating times of good health and years in which she was weaker and delicate in health. This experience has always marked her life.

In 1948, the newly professed Sr. Vannamaria, was sent to Turin - Via Massena as an elementary school teacher, but a few years later, in 1954, she had to stop teaching for health reasons. In 1955 she resumed her work in the school in Turin - Via Massena itself, but at the end of the year she was obliged stop once again for reasons of health. Sr. Vannamaria was an intuitive and intelligent person, able to accept reality and to adapt herself to different situations without particular difficulty. She was well esteemed in the school, so much so that the parents used to ask that their children be enrolled in the class of Teacher Andreini. Gentle and kind in her dealings, sensitive and attentive, she never stopped being a teacher, despite her weak health.

After a long period of about 10 years, in 1968, Sr. Vannamaria resumed teaching in Grosseto, where she was sent, remaining in this Community until 1997, the year in which she became part of the Community of Rome - Stella Maris.

Sister Vannamaria was fully aware of herself, she knew herself so well and accepted herself as she was, more concerned with pleasing the Lord than with pleasing others. With respect to the Community, she was serene, she knew how to love her Sisters conveying her affection with simplicity, veiled by a certain personal restraint. Until the last days of her life, she wanted to remain faithful to her resolution almost like a “fourth vow” composed by herself: *“I want to live every breath of my life in the presence of God”*.

She had accepted illness as part of her existence and as the time of trial of her vocation. She wanted to live for Jesus and she did it by continuously rendering thanks and by offering herself generously to the Lord, day after day. Her daily commitment was to value every moment of time and to make continuous acts of offering, of faith and of love. She used to repeat to herself and to those who approached her: *“Nothing is impossible to God!”*.

With the passing of days in the Community of Stella Maris, nothing forewarned of her imminent end. Even on 4 January, the morning was spent as usual; only after lunch did Sr. Vannamaria show signs of discomfort and difficulty in breathing. She was immediately attended to by the Sisters who were taking care of her. Seeing that the situation was getting worse, it was decided to take her to the Emergency Department of St. Eugenio Hospital in Rome, with the hope of finding remedy and giving her relief. Here, despite the prompt intervention, Sr. Vannamaria passed away imperceptibly at 2:40 p.m. due to *acute cardio-respiratory failure and acute irreversible pulmonary edema*. Her death was serene and tranquil, the synthesis of a life founded moment by moment on prayer and abandonment to God.

On 7 January, in the Chapel of her Community, the Chaplain celebrated the funeral Liturgy. During the funeral Mass he emphasized that Sr. Vannamaria had been loved by God as a very dear daughter, whom he had associated to His suffering during her long pilgrimage in this world. Now her soul is in God’s hands.

At the celebration, the Sisters of the Communities of Rome were present. After the Holy Mass, her mortal remains were transported to the Cemetery of Prima Porta where she now rests beside our other Sisters.

Dearest Sisters, the reality of death, which we are all experiencing with the passing away of our Sisters, is a reason of great hope for us, because we are certain that from heaven they will continue to watch over each one of us and over our Congregation. We feel poorer when this wealth of Sisters leave us, but the heart experiences immense gratitude for the gift received.

Let us pray for her and Sr. Vannamaria will surely intercede for us. May the Lord welcome her in His abode of peace and reward her abundantly for her fidelity and perseverance.

With our prayers, let us accompany our dearest Mother who is visiting the Delegation of Mexico: may the Emmanuel and the Virgin of Guadalupe be her companions on her journey.

I greet you all with love,

  
Sr. Gabriella Profita, Provincial Superior