



*"Faith in the resurrection
opens up fraternal communion
beyond the threshold of death ...".
(RoL 24)*



Today, 18 October 2024 at 5.00 pm
in the community of Verona, our sister

Maria, Sr Maria Costanza Dellai

has parted this earthly life.

She was 96 years old and 66 years of religious life.

I have chosen you to go and bear fruit that will last. With these words from the Gospel acclamation on the feast of St Luke, Evangelist, we thank the Good Shepherd for the gift of the life of Sr Costanza who has left us the testimony of a Pastorella faithful to her vocation and mission, simple and humble and with the constant desire to "please" the Good Shepherd.

Maria was born on 26 March 1928 in Longa di Schiavon (VI) and was baptized on 29 March 1928, also in Longa, in San Giovanni Battista parish. She entered the Congregation in Albano Laziale – Mother House, on 12 September 1955 and the novitiate on 2 September 1957. She made her first profession in Albano Laziale – Mother House on 3 September 1958, taking the name of Maria Costanza. After her first profession, she was sent to the community of Bonavigo (VR) where she remained for the entire period of her temporary vows. She later returned to Albano Laziale – Mother House where she made her perpetual vows on 3 September 1963.

Sr Costanza was a prayerful sister, simple, joyful, generous, and of great pastoral dedication. She had a very beautiful good sense of humor that allowed her to play down situations, a gift that helped her in her time of trial of illness.

One of the sisters has shared her recent experience of *meeting Sr Costanza alone, in a wheelchair, in front of the Tabernacle in the chapel. She describes her as a sister who remained faithful to the meaning of the name she took at the time of her dedication to the Lord: Costanza, that is, a woman capable of steadfastness and perseverance. The synthesis of her entire long life could be summarized in her desire to seek the Lord, to stand before Him, to serve her sisters and brothers, accepting her own and others' limitations, until her last breath.*

After her perpetual profession, she was sent to the community of Premadio Valdidentro (SO), where she was also superior of the community. In 1974, she returned to Albano Laziale – Mother House, where she did some studies, and in 1976, she was sent to Farra di Feltre (BL) where she remained for about thirty-eight years and was superior of the community for a few years. From 2014, she was part of the Provincial Community of Italy Central North, based in Verona. After the unification of the two Italian provinces, in June 2021, Sr Costanza remained in Verona, being part of the community of the elderly sisters and lending her help in various services with joy and generosity.

In 2023, she suffered a stroke, from which she partially recovered. However, on this day, she unexpectedly had a kidney failure and consequent cardiocirculatory arrest. We thank the sisters and the staff who, during this time, have cared for her with great patience, love, and solicitude. Thank you to Sr Costanza who participated until the end, in the prayer and fraternal life with great zeal, despite the precariousness of her health.

The sisters testify that Sr Costanza had a sociable and determined character. She loved life, she knew how to enjoy the little things, and was very precise and attentive in everything she did; she wanted to be useful even in her old age and illness. She had a sense of humor and a special talent for telling anecdotes and jokes, thus contributing to the joy of the community. Meeting her was a pleasure; from her immobility, she offered a smile and was interested in the sisters and what was happening in the community; despite her difficulty in expressing herself, she made herself understood very well.

The Lord gave her a lively memory and great lucidity until the end. She made herself be loved and the sisters of the community loved her very much, staying close to her, supporting her in her infirmity, and making her participate as much as possible in the significant moments of community life. We will miss her smile, her loving company, and her clear voice in proclaiming (for as long as she could) the Word of God. And we are grateful to the Shepherd who took her with him from the place she desired, from the community and not in a hospital.

Dearest Sr Costanza, while we entrust you to the Father's Mercy, we thank you for your testimony as a faithful and joyful Pastorella, and we ask you to intercede the gift of Peace and the gift of the Spirit for the Synod Fathers and Mothers gathered in Rome in these days.

Sr Aminta Sarmiento Puentes
Superior General

*Barcelona (Venezuela), 18 October 2024
Feast of St Luke, Evangelist*