



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



Today, 21 April 2026, at 6.50 pm (local time)  
in the community of Negrar di Valpolicella (VR) Italy, our sister

**MARIA LUCIA, Sr M. TERESINA FONTANILI**

has parted this earthly life.

She was 86 years old and 67 years of religious life.

*“Come to him, a living stone [...], let yourselves be built into a spiritual house”* (1Pt 2:4). As these words from today's short reading for Vespers resonated in our hearts, the Good Shepherd called to Himself Sister Teresina, a missionary Pastorella, who was docile and faithful to the Father's will in building the Kingdom through active charity.

Sister Teresina was born on 20 July 1939, in Paullo Reggiano (RE), and was baptized on 23 July 1939, in the parish church of San Bartolomeo Apostolo. She entered the Congregation on 7 September 1953, in Albano Laziale - Motherhouse, and entered the Novitiate on 2 September 1957. She made her first profession on 3 September 1958, in Albano Laziale, and was sent on mission to the community of Cadeo (PC), where she remained for the duration of her temporary vows.

Sister Teresina is described as a person of great faith and prayer, welcoming, joyful, helpful, generous, docile, simple, and with a heart open to understanding and accepting God's will. She was deeply grateful to the Primo Maestro, and in every need she entrusted herself to the "Child Jesus," whom she familiarly called—in Spanish—*Chiqui*, and whom she carried with her wherever she went.

She returned to Albano Laziale-Mother House in 1963, professed her perpetual vows on 3 September 1963, and remained there to prepare, with a joyful missionary heart, for the opening of our presence in Colombia. Sister Teresina, along with Sister Leonia Boito, Sister Fatima Costella, and Sister Davida Cervo, pioneered the Congregation's presence in Colombia on 27 January 1964, specifically in Cúcuta, in the city's Cathedral dedicated to Saint Joseph. She remained there for about ten years, carrying out a diversified pastoral ministry, including caring for benefactors in the difficult early times, and bearing witness and showing pastoral zeal in the formation of new generations from Venezuela and Colombia.

In 1974, she returned to Italy and studied at the Albano Laziale Mother-house, which she continued in Medolla (MO) in 1976, where she dedicated herself to teaching. She then stayed in Reggio Emilia until 1982. At the end of this period, she returned to the Albano Laziale Mother-house for a sabbatical, after which she resumed her mission in Colombia.

Sr Teresina returned to Cúcuta in 1983 and carried out her pastoral ministry in various fields, also serving with great maternal spirit as superior of the community, transmitting the values of our religious life as Pastorelle and as the Pauline Family. In Cúcuta, the people called her "*Mother Teresa of Cúcuta*," both for her dedication to charitable work at the San Vincenzo clinic, and for her ability to evangelize the wealthy, from whom she could ask for help for the poor. After eleven years in Cúcuta, in 1994 she was sent to the formative-apostolic community of Bogotá, Colombia; in 1996 to Medellín, Colombia; and in 1999 she made herself available for the opening of our presence in Mexico, where she remained until 2003, the year in which she returned permanently to Italy.

Upon her return to Italy, in 2004 she made herself available to offer her nursing skills to the older sisters in Negrar. In 2011, she was sent to the "Tambosi" Community of Trento, and in 2019 she joined the "Casa Alberione" community in Verona, where she remained until 2022, when her health conditions necessitated her transfer to the Negrar community to receive the necessary care and live out her illness peacefully. We thank all the sisters and external staff who looked after Sister Teresina with care and generosity and reciprocated her tenderness and smile.

*The sisters and lay people testify: A Religious sister of great human and spiritual warmth, humble and simple, always ready to serve the poor, she loved everyone without distinction and cared for each and every one. Everything she did was done with joy, enthusiasm, and generous dedication; she never held back, even at the cost of sacrifice. She knew only how to love, encourage, and spread joy and kindness. She loved Jesus the Good Shepherd, and that is why only mercy flowed from her; she placed great trust in Providence.*

*Wherever she went, Sister Teresina left traces of love, especially among the poor; her sensitivity to human suffering in its various forms was admirable, and she always responded with concrete actions and charitable works for so many people in need. She was a sister with a big heart who welcomed everyone, even those rejected by society.*

*She always put her nursing skills at the service of her sisters and those most in need. She had a remarkable capacity for wonder at the little things, she cooked beautifully, and she was happy to be among people. Sister Teresina was one of the great pillars of the foundation in Colombia, where she left traces of love, dedication, and great generosity; a great love for the Good Shepherd that she passed on to the first sisters. She thrilled every time you spoke of her beloved Latin America and the sisters with whom she shared the mission; just a single word of Spanish brought her great joy... this too was an expression of her great missionary heart.*

*When she came to "Casa Alberione" at the end of her apostolic work, her attention was for everyone! Always available and smiling, a serene Sister who made her life a gift to God and her brothers and sisters. Her sense of belonging to the Congregation was tangible! When she was no longer able to respond with her voice, her eyes and body manifested the joy of meeting people. Thank you, Teresina, for being among us! Only God knows what it cost Sister Teresina and Sister Davida to get me out of where I was. They were two apostles God placed in my life; may He welcome them into His Glory.*

*Dearest Teresina, as we give thanks for the gift of your life, offered in its fullness, and entrust you to the Father's mercy, we ask you to intercede for each Pastorella the gift of a meek heart and a burning pastoral zeal for the love of the Good Shepherd, similar to the one you allowed Him to shape within you.*

Sr Aminta Sarmiento Puentes  
Superior General

Bundoora (Australia), 21 April 2026  
St Anselm, bishop and doctor of the Church