



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



Today, 1 July 2025, at 11.20 am (local time),  
in the community of Betânia - Caxias do Sul, Brazil, our sister

**GRACIOSA, Sr M. FATIMA COSTELLA**

has parted this earthly life.

She was 90 years old and 65 years of religious life.

*Your goodness, Lord, is before my eyes.* With the psalmist, we raise our praises to the Good Shepherd for the life of our Pastorella, Sr Fatima, and for her missionary heart, who with simplicity and joy has witnessed pastoral zeal and, on this day, serenely, returned to the Father's House.

Graciosa was born on 10 September 1934 in Veranópolis, Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) and was baptized on 20 October 1934 in the parish of São Luiz Gonzaga, Veranópolis/RS. She entered the Congregation on 7 December 1956 in Terceira Léguas - Caxias do Sul where she remained until August 1958, the year in which she was sent to Italy to do her Novitiate in the Mother House in Albano Laziale (RM). She entered the novitiate on 7 December 1958 in Albano Laziale and made her First Profession on 8 December 1959, taking the name of Maria Fatima; after her First Profession she remained in Italy and was sent to the community of Pressano di Lavis (TN).

In 1963, S. Fatima departed with a joyful missionary heart for a foundation in Latin America. Sr Fatima was one of the four missionary sisters, together with Sr Leonia Boito, Sr Teresina Fontanili, and Sr Davida Cervo, who on 27 January 1964 opened the first presence of the Congregation in Colombia, specifically in the Cathedral of the City of Cúcuta, dedicated to St. Joseph. In the same year, on 8 December, Sr Fatima took her perpetual vows, together with Sr Davida Cervo, in the chapel of the Daughters of St Paul in Cúcuta. Mother Celina received her vows, and Sr Leonia Boito and Sr Eugenia Miana acted as witnesses.

In 1978, she was transferred to Araure, Venezuela, where our presence in that nation was beginning. In 1983, she was transferred to Aparición de Ospino, also in Venezuela, where she continued her missionary presence and dedicated herself mainly to family ministry. After about 23 years of mission between Colombia and Venezuela, due to her father's illness, Sr Fatima returned to Caxias do Sul (Brazil).

Sr Fatima is described as a simple, generous, available, creative, and joyful sister. She bore witness to the missionary spirit; she was a person of prayer and self-giving in community. She lived the mission with great love for the people of God and was attentive to cultivating vocations for the Church.

Upon her return to Brazil, Sr Fatima described with simplicity and gratitude the welcome she received in Caxias do Sul and continued her ministry, mainly in the formation of pastoral workers, in the following communities: 1987 Getúlio Vargas (RS); 1988 Vera Cruz do Oeste (PR); 1990 Getúlio Vargas (RS). In the first half of 1993, she prepared herself for the foundation in Paysandú – Uruguay, where she would go and remain for about twelve years. In 2006 she returned to Brazil, to Caxias do Sul and continued her ministry in the following communities: 2006 Consolação (RS); 2008 Santana do Livramento (RS); 2010 returned to Paysandú – Uruguay; 2012 Canela (RS); 2016 Campo Belo do Sul (SC) where she remained until 2021.

Since 2022, Sr Fatima was welcomed with love in the community of Betania, where she received all the necessary care for what was now her very fragile health, living in prayer and offering the fact that she could no longer be in an apostolic community. We thank the sisters who, during this time, have cared for Sr Fatima with dedication and generosity, providing her with all the necessary care.

*The sisters thus testify: Sr Fatima, a life given for love, for the cause of the Kingdom and for vocations... a vocation realized in communion with Jesus, Good Shepherd under the gaze and protection of Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd. Sr Fatima (Graciosa) had a strong missionary dimension, having lived for many years on a mission in Colombia. A person of faith, she loved the Congregation very much and filled her time well. She was generous, available, and creative; she cultivated her skills in various manual jobs. She was communicative and inspired affection. Sr Fatima, thank you for your example of faithfulness to the call of Jesus Good Shepherd to follow him and serve his people. You have left us an example of a missionary and joyful and generous service; I have always admired your simple, welcoming, and joyful way. A sister of prayer, always with a smile, who enchanted everyone. She loved being with the sisters and the people. Whenever she could, she was available to help. Her love for religious life and for her vocation were contagious. Her simple way, her attention, delicacy, and spirit of prayer were impressive. Her gestures of welcome, of reaching out, were surprising. She was conscious and prepared for death ...*

We thank the Good Shepherd for the gift of life and the vocation of missionary Pastorella of Sr Fatima, and while we entrust her to the Father's mercy, we ask her to intercede for the future missionary opening in Indonesia so that it may be in accordance with the heart of the Good Shepherd.

*Sr Aminta Sarmiento Puentes*  
Superior General

Rome, 1 July 2025  
St Aaron