



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



Today, 26 November 2024 at 10.30 a.m. (local time)  
at the Austin Hospital, Heidelberg, Melbourne-Australia, our sister

**ANTONIETTA, Sr MARIA LETIZIA SELLE**

has parted this earthly life.

She was 96 years old and 71 years of religious life.

On the day we celebrate the birth of our Founder into Heaven, the Father called to himself our missionary sister Sr M Letizia. *The Lord is faithful forever*, these words of the psalmist that we sing in today's liturgy summarize the life of faith and the generous gift of self of our missionary sister in Australia.

Antonietta was born on 6 April 1928 in Tiser (Gosaldo - BL) and was baptized in the parish of Tiser on 7 April 1928. She entered the Congregation on 11 February 1950 in San Pietro alle Acque (PG) and after receiving the religious habit on 15 August 1950, she was sent to Transacqua. In the same year, she returned to Genzano (RM) to continue her formation and in 1952 she was sent to the apostolate in Rossano Stazione (CS). Together with a group of Pastorelle of the "first hour" she made her first profession on 12 June 1953 in Massa Martana (PG) taking the name of Sr Maria Letizia. On 27 October 1957, she made her perpetual profession in Albano Laziale – Mother House.

After her perpetual profession, Sr Maria Letizia left for her "missionary adventure" in Australia, joining the community of Carlton-Melbourne, made up of the first three pioneers Pastorelle to arrive in Australia. Sr Letizia's anxieties and fears were typical of sisters sent on mission, but she put herself in God's hands and left. In the memoirs of those years, Sr Letizia recalls: *"It was a shock as I had never seen such a big ship, I was very tense and felt someone behind me touching me saying: this is my will, not yours. I suddenly felt calm as though a terrible weight had been lifted from my shoulders. There were no more tears, it was almost as if the sun had passed over me... as though a ray of sunshine had come from behind a cloud."* After a few months in Maorubra (Sydney) in 1958, she returned to Carlton-Melbourne.

In her formative years, Sr Letizia had a profound bond with our Founder and joyfully testified to an anecdote: *Don Alberione* was about to go and visit a community of Sisters near Perugia. He was travelling with his driver and an older person, to Sister Letizia's great joy and surprise, she was offered to accompany them. She jealously guarded her close bond with the Founder and in the following years in Australia, she often told the younger Sisters about her

experiences in Rome, where *Don Alberione* was a constant inspiration for the entire Pauline Family.

She lived her pastoral ministry above all in the context of Family Ministry and the delicate and fruitful accompaniment of Italian immigrants and immigrants of many other nationalities. She also served as councillor and bursar of the Delegation. We see her involved in 1963 in the Thornbury community; 1981 in the Thomastown community; 1983 in the Thornbury community and 1991 in the Thomastown community where she remained until 2020. Since 2020 she has been part of the Bundoora community where she received all the necessary care for her health which became increasingly precarious. In recent years, unable to move, she was like an offering pleasing to the Father, and following the life of the sisters in the mission as best she could. We thank the sisters who in these years have offered generous loving care to Sr Letizia so that she could live her illness serenely and with the competent assistance of external staff.

Sr Letizia is described as "*a golden sister*" who did not back down in the face of any difficulty or challenge in the mission. A person of prayer and action at the same time, determined and open to relationships founded in faith and the gratuitousness of love. Having embraced the mission, she never looked back, but with typical Pauline spirit, she gave everything of herself in the pastoral ministry with the spirit of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Some sisters testify about her:

*Her love for the Congregation, for the sisters of the community, for the Pauline Family, for the Primo Maestro of whom she often spoke, were her pillars.*

*Her fidelity to personal and community prayer was impeccable. It was in first place! She had interiorized the exhortation of the Primo Maestro to always pray, to put prayer first and above everything!*

*She stood out for her spirit of docile collaboration in everything that was asked of her. She was a humble and wise person. She loved and cared for the sisters in the community.*

*Being close to Sr Letizia, and together with the sisters of the community and the help of external personnel, taking care of her and assisting her in all her needs, was a continuous celebration of the Paschal Mystery; an experience of fraternal communion.*

Dearest Sr Letizia, as we entrust you to the Father's Mercy, we thank you for your testimony as a faithful Pastorella with a missionary heart. On the Feast Day of our Founder, whom you have always loved, we ask you to intercede for holy vocations for our wonderful Pauline Family.

*Sr Aminta Sarmiento Puentes*  
Superior General

Cúcuta (Colombia), 26 November 2024  
*Feast of Blessed James Alberione*