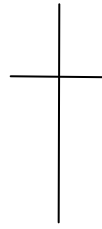


Suore di Gesù Buon Pastore "Pastorelle"
Casa Generalizia
Via Leonardo Umile 13 – 00144 Roma



Today, 27 August 2010 at 7.30 am Italian time,
in the community of Albano - Mary, Mother of the Divine Shepherd

the Good Shepherd called to the eternal banquet His bride

SR MARIA STELLA LIPPARONI

81 years old and 57 years of religious life

For the second time this month of August, our Congregation echoes the cry: "*Behold the Bridegroom! Come out to meet him*" (Mt 25:6). A cry heard this morning by our sister Maristella who promptly responds to Jesus Good Shepherd "*Here I am!*", falling asleep in Him while the sisters are celebrating the Eucharistic Sacrifice in the chapel of the Mother House in Albano Laziale.

The Alleluia verse of today's liturgy: "*Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man*" (Luke 21:36), is well suited at the moment when Sr. Maria Stella enters the wedding chamber of her Lord to be part of the community of the Pastorelle in Heaven.

Maria, her baptismal name, is born at Doglio di Monte Castello Vibio (Perugia) on 21 September 1928 and was baptized on 7 October of the same year in the then Diocese of Todi, the actual Diocese of Orvieto.

Second among six children, she matures her vocation in a Christian family where she learns to love the Church, a well done duty and the attention to the most needy. She joins the Congregation on April 25, 1949 in San Pietro alle Acque (PG) and on 12 June 1953 at Cassina de Pecchi (MI), she makes the first profession together with the first group of sisters who professed their vows among the Pastorelle, shortly after the diocesan approval of the Congregation.

In a letter to the Primo Maestro, Blessed James Alberione on June 14, 1953, after making the first profession, she writes: "*I know the obligation I have imposed on myself, but I trust in the Divine Shepherd of not only practicing the holy vows but to arrive at attaining the virtue. And now, I could not help but thank you for your fatherly care. I conclude assuring you that now I am happier because I know I have received a great grace.*" On August 2, 1958 in the Mother House of Albano, Sr. Maria Stella celebrates her final vows with the same awareness.

An energetic person, strong-willed, determined, lover of her vocation, she is always available to do the Lord's will wherever obedience demands of her. The correctness and sharpness with which she knows each thing are characteristics that shine in her. She is also characterized by a sense of humor, a sign of intelligence and inner freedom. Creative and capable to enjoy the deeper realities of life, she knows how to express, in a poetic way, that which dwells in her heart. We remember her when she enlivens congregational celebrations with her rhymes. Sr. Maria Stella lives the pastoral vocation donating herself so passionately for God and his people in various communities where she operates, first in the north and then in south Italy.

From 1949 to 1951 in the island of Elba, first at Capoliveri and then at Rio Elba; in 1952: at Guiglia (MO); from 1953 to 1955 at Cassina dè Pecchi (MI) with a break of one year at Albano where she studies receiving a Diploma on Education; in 1956 lives a brief period at Medolla (MO) and then opens the community of Conche di Codevigo (PD) where she remained until 1962 as superior.

From 1962 to 1983 we see her engaged in the evangelical service of authority and apostolate in the communities of Castanea (ME), S. Nicola da Crissa (VV) and Bussi sul Tirino (PE). After a sabbatical year at Albano, from 1984 to 2000 works in S. Angelo di Celle (PG) always giving her life to the small ones as a teacher in kindergarten, to the youth in catechesis and in social service and especially in Caritas.

Now seventy, from 2000 to 2008, she was transferred to Taranto, in the district of Tamburi, a difficult and problematic suburb, home to many families of workers of Italsider, where she inserts herself with availability offering her work mainly in family ministry and bringing Holy Communion to the sick. In a dialogue about this transfer, Sr. Maria Stella said to the Provincial superior: *“I have to thank you for that transfer, at that moment I trusted and entrusted myself to the Good Shepherd and I received much, much more than I have thought.”*

In June 2006, the first signs of illness which reveals in all its gravity – myelodysplasia appear. Sr. Maria Stella begins her ordeal that led her to Albano in December 2007, after being admitted at the *Regina Apostolorum* Hospital in a serious condition.

For two years she stays at the community of Albano - Mary Mother of the Divine Shepherd, where the sisters cared for her with great love and dedication until the end. Subjected to blood tests and weekly blood transfusions and lately, every day, she is assisted in the community directly by the medical team of the *Hospice* of Rocca di Papa.

And it is in this community, during the Novena dedicated to Mary the Mother of the Divine Shepherd, where Sr. Maria Stella prepares a poem for the sisters who will celebrate their 50th anniversary of religious profession on September 3. We quote a verse in advance: *“The burning flame and the reserve oil in your heart are still conserved, grateful and constant in fidelity, and that flame will shine forever.”*

Faithful to the commitments assumed, Sr. Maria Stella participates in community prayer and activities until the eve of her return to the Father and quietly took her leave from this world to enter the Glory of the Holy Trinity. And now we think of her while she sings her poetry directly to the One whom she has always loved and sought, even in suffering.

Thank you, Sr. Maria Stella for the testimony and also for the words you leave us encouraging us in our journey: *“We need to pray more for each other and we should be confident that the apostolate of suffering is the most effective for the care of souls”*¹

Sr. Marta Finotelli
superior general

Roma, 27 August 2010
*3rd day Novena to Mary, Mother of the Divine Shepherd
And Feast of St. Monica*

¹ Words written on her worksheet submitted in 2008, in occasion of the canonical visit of the General Government to the ICS Province.