

SOCIETÀ SAN PAOLO
casa generalizia



“As we have been united in the profession of faith, so let us keep ourselves united in suffrage and intercession”.

(Fr. Alberione)

At 4.55 (local time) today, Sunday 8 February 2009, our brother Disciple of the Divine Master has returned to the Father.

BRO. SILVIO VIRGINIO DANTE

81 years, 68 of Pauline life, 63 of religious profession

He has peacefully expired in the infirmary of the community of Alba following cardiocirculatory complications and renal failure, on top of his body very much weakened by multiple sclerosis that had affected him since 1977.

Born in Piovega (Padua, Italy) on 13 June 1927, Silvio had entered the Society of Saint Paul in Alba on 20 August 1940, at age thirteen, welcomed by the now blessed Fr. Timothy Giaccardo. “A good youth, exemplary and pious” – thus his parish priest presented him – he came from a numerous farming family (7 brothers and 4 sisters), rich in faith and Pauline vocations: a sister, Sr. Beatrice (deceased on May 2004), would have followed him among the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master; a brother, Fr. Innocenzo (present Delegate of the Institute “Holy Family” in Italy, would have followed him later in the Society of Saint Paul.

In the Motherhouse he finished the entire formation curriculum and lived the significant stages: the novitiate in the year 1944-1945, the profession of religious vows on 2 May 1945 and definitive consecration to the Lord on 2 May 1950. In this period and in the eight years following his perpetual profession he carried out his apostolic activity prevalently in the binding sector and in propaganda.

Already in the years of formation some characteristics that will inform the life of Bro. Silvio were clear: generous love for the Congregation and dedication to the apostolate; his open and enthusiastic character; his practicality and resistance to adversity; “an excellent worker, faithful in his duties and ready for anything”.

In August 1958 the missionary period in the Congo started for him. The Pauline presence had touched Africa just a few months back; for Africa the Primo Maestro had not hesitated to “destine there select personnel, numerous enough and capable”. Bro. Silvio, together with other Pauline priests and disciples, was part of this project. He arrived in Kinshasa (then Léopoldville) and of that land he found himself immediately living the painful events for independence from Belgium and the successive socio-political assessments.

They were twenty difficult years, toilsome and joyous at the same time, sustained by faith and by the Pauline ideal, spent in the daily technical apostolate and in other various commitments, according to the needs of the moment. And this, first at Kinshasa (1958-1965), then at Lubumbashi (1965-1976) and again at Kinshasa (1976-1979), while in that great and promising Country, thanks to that group of excellent Paulines, the typographical-editorial apostolic initiative grew and became strong, responding to the primary needs of the Church and in support of the missionary works.

In 1979 Bro. Silvio reentered Italy. The first signs of sclerosal plaque were becoming more consistent. And for him who had roamed the wide horizons of the Congolese mission, another kind of apostolate began, in its own way also open to the world, although narrow in space: service as telephone operator in the General House. That small locale was his “command center” for twenty-five years. His presence was assiduous and precious, diligent and fraternally welcoming, notwithstanding his illness and the infirmities that due to the advance of age prevented ever more his freedom of movement. But he is always punctual and unyielding: a life marked by risings before dawn, by practices of piety, by service as porter; a word and attention for everybody, as many Paulines, Italian or of other countries can well testify, who crossed in those years the threshold of the house at Via della Fanella.

In July 2005 his transfer to Alba took place. It was there that his Pauline life had been born, and there it ended at dawn of this earthly day, to walk toward the Light that knows no sunset.

May Bro. Silvio now intercede for us before the Divine Master for the needs of our Congregation, and in particular for the Congo Region that he has loved so much and for which he has spent his best energies.

Rome, 8 February 2009

Fr. Giuliano Saredi

His funeral will take place on Tuesday 10 February, at 10.30 a.m. in the Temple of Saint Paul in Alba. – His remains will be buried in the Chapel of the Pauline Family in the city cemetery.

Let the Superiors inform their communities for the prescribed suffrages (Const. 65 and 65.1)