

In the Father's House

*«As we have been united
in the profession of the faith,
so let us keep ourselves united
in suffrage and intercession».*
(Fr Alberione)



At 8:00 PM (local time) on Thursday, 8 June 2023, he died in the Rome infirmary

FATHER GIOVANNI BATTISTA GIACOMO PEREGO **91 years, 77 of Pauline life, 70 of profession, 62 of priesthood**

Giovanni Battista was forged, from a young age, to be an expression of the “fatherhood” that comes from God. Born on 31 August 1931 in Bariano (BG), at the age of 17 he found himself deprived, in less than a month, of the father, of the mother and of the little brother that she was carrying in her womb. From one moment to the next, he found himself responsible for a family of nine children, of which he was the eldest. When the family was hit by these serious deaths, he had already been in the Congregation for four years: he therefore found himself faced with a difficult choice: to continue the Pauline journey or to return to the family to provide for his eight siblings (5 brothers and 3 sisters) whose age ranged from 17 to 2 years. The open discussion with Father Alberione and the trust in him led him to opt for the first solution, providing for his siblings “from a distance”. The ordeal was great, but instead of dispersing, the family rallied around him, who became the point of reference for everyone, thanks also to the kindness and attention that both Primo Maestro and Maestra Tecla Merlo ensured for the whole family. As soon as there were the conditions to do so, two of the brothers were welcomed into the Society of St Paul itself (one of them is brother Martino).

Giovanni entered the house in Alba on 2 October 1945, made his First Profession on 8 September 1952 and his Perpetual Profession 5 years later. It was the beginning of a path of fatherhood that confronted him with life's challenges and the need to implore so much wisdom to make the best choices.

We find the fruits of all this in the “fatherhood” with which he lived the various tasks entrusted to him by the Superiors, after his priestly ordination, which took place in Rome on 3 July 1960. Among these we mention that of Director of “La Domenica” (1960-66), as Formator of the young, in Rome and Alba (in the years 1960-66; 1968-69; 1977-82); as Vocation Animator, in Modena (1975-77); as Superior of various communities (Vicenza 1966-68; Alba 1969-75; Rome 1994-97; 1998-2002); as Rector and Parish Priest of the Queen of Apostles Parish-Sanctuary from 1983 to 1994; as Delegate of Jesus Priest Institute and Vice-Delegate of the Holy Family Institute (1997-98) and, finally, as Provincial Superior, in one of the most delicate periods in the history of the Italian Province, from 1998 to 2006. To the Provincial Councils were presented full-bodied “agendas of the day” and abundant documentation. Even on the more strictly apostolic aspects, towards which many believed him to be less knowledgeable and incisive, as Provincial Superior he was able to create a collaborative and unbroken atmosphere.

In all these tasks attention to the Pauline Family has never been lacking in the ministry of preaching, accompaniment, confessions: many hours spent listening,

accompanying, helping to discern. He truly loved the Pauline Family and was convinced of all the potential still hidden in it and boasted of being among the founders of the DAVP (Directive of Pauline Vocation Animation). He was always very grateful to the Lord for the pastoral experience lived at the Sanctuary, to which he also dedicated careful study, immersing himself with passion in the historical documents and texts of the Founder. Several times he also made himself available to guide groups and individuals to discover its history and its artistic and charismatic riches. It was precisely this passion that integrated him, from 2006 onwards, into the work group of the Center for Spirituality, which entrusted him with the work of commenting and revising the booklet *The Prayers of the Pauline Family*.

Fr Giovanni's human trait was marked by listening and delicacy. A basic righteousness made him a "trusted brother" to many. His figure was refined and reserved at the same time, but always sweet and welcoming, patient and sympathetic.

In 2015, the memory lapses began to appear which would slowly force him to join the brothers of the Roman infirmary. However, his conditions remained discreet until 2020, when Covid-19 forced him into prolonged hospitalization, from which he returned totally disoriented. On this itinerary, which lasted eight years, Brother Martino always accompanied him with great care and affection, whose name, during his illness, he repeated endlessly, as if to confirm the reassuring power of his precious presence.

Fr Giovanni was a man full of humanity, a priest who knew how to be a father, teacher and guide. A man without vainglory, without arrogance, without haughtiness: humble, serious, friend of all. He was well liked by everyone. He was an excellent Pauline, he carried out many services in the Congregation especially in the field of formation, the service of authority and in parish pastoral care. An exemplary religious, with a profound spirituality, a total dedication, a fidelity strongly rooted in his love for the Founder, for the Pauline charism, for the Congregation, for the Pauline Family, for the Church.

Fr Giovanni left us an example of great dedication to God and to persons, of full trust in the power of the Eucharist and the Holy Rosary. Perhaps it is no coincidence that he returned to embrace his loved ones and the many people he accompanied "on his last journey" on the day of *Corpus Domini*, combining the offer of bread and wine with that of his body now consumed by age and by disease.

Rome, 9 June 2023

Fr Vito Spagnolo, ssp

The funeral will be celebrated on Saturday, 10 June at 3:30 PM in the Parish-Sanctuary Queen of the Apostles. The body will be transferred to Bariano (BG), where the funeral will be celebrated at 10:00 AM on Monday, 12 June. Burial will follow in the cemetery of his birthplace.

The Superiors of Circumscription are to inform their communities of the prescribed suffrages (Const. 65 and 65.1).