

SOCIETÀ SAN PAOLO
il segretario generale



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

(Fr. Alberione)

At 5 o'clock (local time) of 20 July 2009, in the hospital of Betania di Puebla (Mexico), our brother priest has returned to the Father.

FR. EMILIO MARIO STEFANONI BERRA
75 years, 60 of Pauline life, 47 of priesthood

Fr. Emilio already found himself in a delicate state of health because of diabetes, an operation at the heart, pneumonia and renal difficulties when on Sunday 12 July, following a fall, he has fractured a hip and the doctors have had to implant a prosthesis on him. During his hospital stay he has always shown serenity and willingness to accept the will of God and before being operated he has said with a smile, with a sentiment of acceptance: “God has chosen me beforehand to suffer so much”.

Emilio was born at Francisco Javier Mina (Puebla, Mexico) on 12 July 1934, of Emilio and Maria Berra; he was the fourth of five sisters and 3 brothers. He entered the community of Mexico City on 23 April 1949 and here he finished his novitiate and made his first profession on 1 September 1958. He transferred to the Theological College in Rome, attended theological studies, made his perpetual profession on 8 September 1961 and was ordained priest on 1 July 1962, through the imposition of the hands of Mons. Ettore Cunial.

He reentered Mexico City and joined the book apostolate, but he did not stay there long because on 27 August 1963 Fr. Luigi Zanoni sent him a letter in which he informed him of the desire of the Primo Maestro that he (Emilio) transferred to Colombia in Bogota: “He thinks that you are the most prepared for this first enterprise of the Mexican House. Until now Mexico has received personnel. Now it starts to come to the help of other houses. It is a sign of maturity, of full vitality, of great honor. And you are the expression of all of this for your house”. The tone of the letter, like the correspondence of the following years, clearly lets it transpire that the obedience being asked was not a simple one, but Fr. Emilio, one week after, cordially answers: “We shall go willingly”. In Colombia he remained as head of the printing press until he could return to Mexico in April of 1973.

The first five years was spent in the bookstore of Guadalajara. In 1978 he was named Superior ad interim of Los Angeles (California) and in 1979 he reentered Mexico City to dedicate himself to editorial work at Edilux, where he remained for 13 years. In 1992 he returned to Guadalajara to take charge of Librería San Pablo. In 1997 he was asked to join the Administration of the apostolate, with responsibility over the warehouse of Guadalajara. During the Provincial Chapter of 1999 he was elected Provincial Councilor. Actually he was also Administrator of Alba Editorial and of Librería San Pablo.

Fr. Emilio remains in the memory of all for the tireless apostolic energy that he nourished through a deep and felt love for the Eucharist. His unmistakable trait was his goodness of heart and sense of humor that have won for him the sympathy of the members of the Province and the Pauline Family of Mexico.

May the divine Master grant to his faithful servant the reward promised those who have left all for him and have embraced the cross of suffering. To his intercession we entrust all those who work in the administrative sectors of the Congregation and the Pauline Family in Mexico.

Rome, 20 July 2009

Bro. Lorenzo Vezzani

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