



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

(Fr. Alberione)

At 5 p.m. today (local time), 8 June 2011, in the infirmary of the Community San Paolo of Rome, the Divine Master has called to his eternal reward our brother Priest

FR. ANTONIO GIUSEPPE SPECIALE

89 years, 77 of Pauline life, 64 of religious profession, 60 of priesthood

Fr. Antonio was born in Calabria, in Castrovillari (Cosenza) on 5 January 1922. He entered the Congregation, very young, on 28 October 1933. His first steps in the Society of Saint Paul were marked by difficult events in order to correspond to his priestly vocation that he felt strongly, as he narrates in a short written autobiography relative to the years 1933-1945. In fact, he wanted to be a priest, but was guided to the vocation of Disciple of the Divine Master and with this option he started the novitiate on 22 April 1940. However, he met strong opposition on the part of his family, to the point that his father came to take him a short time after, to his great sorrow. Fr. Antonio remembers the advice that he succeeded in getting from Primo Maestro before he left: “I’m praying for you and I make a recommendation for you in the Holy Mass. With the help of God and of men you will be able to be with us again.” His time outside the Congregation was however well spent to complete his high school studies, besides cultivating an intense spiritual life. He maintains a correspondence with Fr. Alberione who encourages him and exhorts him to go ahead with confidence.

In 1942 he is called to military service in Rome, as employee in the Ministry of War. In 1944 he succeeds in getting his high school diploma, that allows him to reprise the road of priestly vocation that he desired so much and in which he is confirmed by clear signs. Having received military dispensation in 1945, in June he leaves with his brother to enroll in the University of Naples, but having in his heart the desire to flee at the first occasion. He goes to live in Aversa and here the Primo Maestro comes to take him. He reaches Rome on 28 July 1945. Thus he can enter the novitiate on 15 August 1945 in Albano, finishing it with his first religious profession on 8 September 1946. The years of theological studies in Rome follow, while his journey continues with his perpetual profession on 8 September 1949 and his presbyteral ordination on 8 July 1950, made happy by the joyful participation of his family, whose opposition little by little had softened. Fr. Antonio, who lent help to Fr. Michelino Gagna (the Bursar General), remembers how already in those years the Primo Maestro “often called me to do some errand or to type some article or letter. Thus I continued later on.”

And it is precisely as “secretary” that Fr. Speciale will spend, starting 1950, around twenty years beside Primo Maestro, until the latter’s death: as a faithful and zealous collaborator, he keeps daily a *Diary* of the life of Fr. Alberione, wherein he writes minutely, hour by hour, the activities of the Founder: a precious work and irreplaceable due to the checking of dates, words and facts necessary for historical documentation. Without forgetting that he himself was a “living record” of memories connected to the history of the

Congregation. Many are the anecdotes that circulate about the zeal Fr. Speciale had in conserving all that concerned the Primo Maestro, to whom he felt bound by a filial attachment.

Even after the death of Fr. Alberione, Fr. Antonio will remain attached to the General House, occupied with various mansions in ministry and apostolate. In 2007, due to the slow but inexorable decline of his health, it is necessary to transfer him to the infirmary of Rome (via Alessandro Severo), where he concludes his days on earth. He was serene and always followed the events of the Congregation and of the confreres even in these last years. Recently he had been struck by a tumor, already incurable due to numerous metastases.

We entrust this brother, who goes to add himself to the “multitude of witnesses” (Heb 12,1) of the Pauline Family in heaven, to the mercy of God the Father and to the kind face of the Master, the Way, the Truth and the Life who has promised to his own: “When I shall have gone and shall have prepared a place for you, I shall come again and take you with me, so that where I am you also may be” (Jn 14,4). And in saying goodbye to him while assuring him our suffrage, we ask him to intercede for all the needs of the Congregation.

Rome, 8 June 2011

Fr. Vincenzo Vitale

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