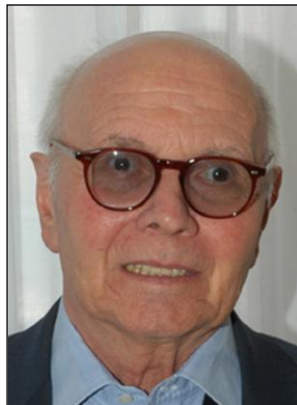


SOCIETY OF ST PAUL  
The Secretary General



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

(Fr. Alberione)

At 21:00 of Friday, 28 August, at the Divine Providence Community of Alba, our brother priest returned to the house of the Father

**FR. ANTONIO TEOFANO GIRLANDA**

***85 years: 69 of Pauline life, 67 of religious profession and 59 of priesthood.***

«I understand that I came here in my place and I will try to correspond more and more to the graces that I continuously receive in this House and become a holy priest and a zealous apostle». These lines, culled from the history of our Congregation, accompany the hand written application of the seventeen year old Antonio, directed to Maestro Timothy Giaccardo, for a religious habit on 30 April 1946. A desire for holiness and zeal that he feels from a very young age finally finds its realization in the "Pious Society of St. Paul," after a short stay at the diocesan seminary of Thiene.

Antonio was born in Montagnana (Padua) on 2 December 1929 and was baptized six days later in the parish of Borgo San Marco. He entered the Congregation in November 1945 in Alba to attend the fifth year of high school. In those tumultuous post-war months he showed immediately a strong attitude towards study. He took a good note of the various teachers who accompanied his formation: Fr. Tito Armani, Fr. Pierino Marazza, Fr. Giovanni Cirillo Tomatis, Fr. Renato Perino. The "wheel" of study supports him in moments of difficulty, through which the Divine Master moulds his soul in those early years in Alba, at the end of which he pronounced his first religious profession (8 September 1947). This attitude, along with a passion for the Word of God, led him to take a licentiate in Sacred Scriptures after his priestly ordination, which took place on 5 January 1956 in Rome by the laying on of hands of Mgr. Luigi Traglia. Fr. Antonio would become one of the most popular writers of the Bible published by the Pauline Publishing (later St Pauls Publishing), alongside Fr. Valentino Gambi during the Roman years and taking care, from 1967, a series of highly successful "latest version of the Bible from the original texts" in 46 volumes and large Bible dictionaries, among which, together with Gianfranco Ravasi, the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* of 1991. There are also many books written to introduce the faithful to read the Bible.

Fr. Antonio, before moving to Cinisello Balsamo as Superior (1994-2000) and editor of St Pauls Publishing (a position he held without interruption from 1994 to 2010), lived for years in Rome, where, in addition to devoting himself to publishing works (from 1976 to 1994 ), he was also a professor of Sacred Scriptures for the Pauline clerics and at the theological Faculty of St. Bonaventure in Rome (on several occasions from 1960 to 1994),

as well as Superior of St Paul community (Rome, 1973-1976). In 2010, because of his worsening health due to a stroke, he was transferred to the infirmary of Alba, canonically established as "Divine Providence" community the following year. A year ago, a bad fall caused a pneumothorax and since then his health has deteriorated. Hospitalized a week ago for a respiratory crisis, he returned to the community where he died due to a lung infection.

A humble person and discreet in remembering the brothers who were closer to him in recent years and who was never prone to complain, Fr. Antonio was much appreciated for his desire not to emerge "in wisdom", despite his being up to date on the developments of biblical studies. They were not lacking in community life funny jokes and moments of genuine fraternity, also with many Pauline clerics to whom, especially in the first years of his apostolic work, he taught Sacred Scriptures and preached retreats. From him the generation of writers whom he accompanied learned the importance of fussy, steady, precise work.

Witnesses of many graces received from our Congregation through our brother, we now entrust him to the divine mercy, that he may enjoy the vision of the blessed in Paradise and there intercede before the Trinity for all the needs of the Society of St. Paul, in particular for the young in formation.

*Rome, 30 August 2015*

*Fr. Stefano Stimamiglio*

*The funeral will be in the Church of St. Paul in Alba, 31 August, at 15.00. The remains will be interred in the city cemetery.*

**The Superiors of Circumscription are to inform their communities for the prescribed suffrages (Cost. 65 e 65.1).**