



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

(Fr. Alberione)

Yesterday evening, Tuesday 5 January 2010, in the community of Milan, our brother Priest has returned to the Father.

FR. LEONARDO FRANCESCO ZEGA
81 years, 68 of Pauline life, 55 of priesthood

He died due to heart attack. Found suffering in his room, the race to the hospital proved to be of no use. Thus, in an unexpected way, Fr. Zega has left us: “on the breach,” we can say; still active, notwithstanding his years and ailments; all caught up by love for the apostolate, by that typically Pauline anxiousness to reach all men everywhere, from his priestly being, to communicate the Gospel in that exhilarating but also delicate and restless Areopagus of communication.

Born in S. Angelo in Pontano (Macerata, Italy) on 19 April 1928, he entered as a thirteen-year old in the Roman seminary of the Society of Saint Paul on 9 October 1941, after having attended elementary school and the first two years of high school in his native town. Immediately from the start he showed a marked inclination for the priestly religious life; and not delaying to emerge were his frank and determined sometimes easygoing character, his lively intelligence, many-sided entrepreneurship, ease in writing and talking: qualities that he put to fruition in his apostolate in the field of Pauline journalism. He entered the novitiate in Alba (Cuneo) in September of 1944 and made his first religious profession on 8 September 1945, taking the name of Francesco in that circumstance.

He spent the years of temporary profession between Alba and Rome, attending high school and theology, in the meantime committed in the typographical apostolate (composing and paging department) and in assisting the aspirants for three years, of which one year in Cinisello Balsamo (1948-1949). He made his perpetual profession on 8 September 1950 in Rome and was ordained priest on 24 January 1954 by Mons. Ilario Roatta.

The first field of his priestly ministry was in the redaction of the magazine *Orizzonti*, edited by the house of Rome, for which he had already collaborated during the years of theology. Then he passed to the Central Office of Edizioni Paoline and in 1958 he was sent to Cinisello Balsamo (Milan) with the double assignment of formator of the aspirants and in-charge of the local office of editions. He even did more, because he also taught literature.

In 1961 the door to the Philippines opens for him: he will stay there until 1967 with redactional tasks and coordinating the Pauline activities. The House of Makati, where he was destined, was just starting and the needs were immense. But “using the politics of small steps, with some dream at the side” – as he writes in a letter dated October 1962 – he began to print and disseminate, enrich the catalog with new series and step up the magazine *Home Life*.

He was recalled to Italy in 1967 to work at the side of Fr. Giuseppe Zilli in the redaction of *Famiglia Cristiana* and to reorganize the sector. Successively he will become vice-director of the weekly and director upon the death of Fr. Zilli (1980). From this moment on until 1998, the life of Fr. Zega is constantly entwined with the history of *Famiglia Cristiana*, and his priestly ministry with the “parish made of paper.” The Director’s page “Colloqui col Padre” (Talks with Father), signed *d. l.*, is his weekly pulpit, in which he answers to the themes proposed by the readers, connected inevitably to new and difficult, live and fluctuating actual problems that often rebound on the pages of the dailies (with extrapolated quotes and often manipulated ideologically) and giving rise to discussions, provoking reprimands and sufferings.

After 1998 Fr. Zega continued, variously and for some years, his activity in journalism, writing for *La Stampa* of Turin, for the weekly *Oggi* and collaborating in radio programs. And he did it with Pauline priestly heart. In 2004 he was named director of *Club 3. Vivere in armonia*, a task that he held up to this day. In the editorial of the last issue (January 2010) with title: “We all are responsible” he has written: “We look at the future with apprehension after the first decade of 2000 ends with too many hopes gone frustrated. But tomorrow will also be what we want today and build with our hands.”

Our beloved Fr. Leonardo has certainly built; built with his hands and his commitment, with his intelligence and his heart, the today and tomorrow of our Congregation. We are grateful to him for it. Now, hidden in the epiphany of God, may he intercede for the needs of the Congregation, above all for those activities where he has spent his energies, competence, enthusiasm and dedication. On our part, we accompany him with our fraternal prayers of suffrage.

Rome, 6 January 2010

Fr. Giuliano Saredi

His funeral will be held on Thursday, 7 January, at 4 p.m. in the parish of S. Pietro in Sala, Piazza Wagner, Milan. His remains will then be transported to Alba where on Friday 8 January at 10:30, in the Temple of Saint Paul, will take place the funeral rites presided by the bishop Mons. Sebastiano Dho. Burial will follow in the Chapel of the Pauline Family in the city cemetery.

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