



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

(Fr. Alberione)

In the morning of 21 August 2011, at 00:45, in the hospital “Regina Apostolorum” of Albano Laziale (Rome), the Divine Master has called to his eternal reward our brother Priest

FR. ELISEO MARIANO SGARBOSSA

81 years, 67 of Pauline life, 61 of religious profession, 54 of priesthood

Fr. Eliseo was born in Galliera Veneta (Padua) on 14 June 1930. He crossed the threshold of the Congregation while still a young man on 4 September 1943, in Alba, with the war going on. He spent the time of novitiate in Albano Laziale (1948-1949), ending it with his first religious profession on 8 September 1949. He continued his formation mainly in Rome, studying theology at the Pontificio Ateneo Sant’Anselmo (until 1959, receiving his licence in dogmatic theology), making in the meantime his perpetual profession on 8 September 1954. He was ordained a priest by Mons. Ettore Cunial on 7 July 1957 in Rome. During this period he worked as assistant of the clerics in Alba (1952-1953) and in Rome (1956-1957) and lent his service in the printing press and in photo retouching. In Rome Fr. Eliseo stayed for the rest of his life, spent in a rich and varied apostolic activity, in love with the Pauline charism and endowed with a Pauline identity in all fields: piety, study, apostolate and poverty.

Regarding the first years, Fr. Eliseo himself remembered with gratitude through a retrospective writing made in 1980 when he was 50 years old, the influence of the religious education he received in his family (eucharistic adoration, marian devotion, liturgy) and above all Fr. Luigi Cocco, the first Pauline coming from Galliera Veneta, who – as he writes – “was instrumental in introducing me to the Congregation.” In the same writing he also recalled how Fr. Timothy Giaccardo has saved him from his first vocational crisis, affirming that “the tears of detachment from one’s family serve to water the little plant of vocation.” Alongside other figures of confreres who have guided him to the discovery of Pauline piety, Fr. Eliseo calls to mind another experience decisive for his life: “A particular gift, whose importance I have given value to later, was that of having been guided to the religious sense of study... I consider it a grace to have understood some principles of scholastic philosophy – in particular of metaphysics – that have been of use to me as light and orientation.” Subsequently, Fr. Eliseo was able to make fruitful in various fields all his profound religious life, sustained by an exemplary piety and by study he always cultivates.

From 1958 to 1965 Fr. Eliseo worked in the redaction of the magazine *Orizzonti* (1959-1965), dedicating himself at the same time to teaching literary subjects in the seminary of Rome. Following this apostolate was his service in the Editorial Office, always in Rome (1965-1976); in the same period he continued teaching (theological liturgy and spiritual theology) in the Pauline novitiate and for the Pious Disciples, meanwhile also lending his

service as formator: first as master of the adult vocations (1964-1967) and then of the temporary disciples (1967-1969).

In 1976 started for Fr. Eliseo the long period in the service of various General Superiors as personal Secretary: Fr. Raffaele Tonni (1976-1980), Fr. Renato Perino (1980-1992), Fr. Silvio Pignotti (1992-1998) and finally Fr. Pietro Campus (1998-2004). It was a service wherein he was able to put at his disposition all his preceding rich experience, his Pauline sensibility and the deep culture that he had never failed to cultivate. In 2000 he was also nominated as a member of the Center of Pauline Spirituality, for which he edited many volumes of the *Opera omnia* of Fr. Alberione. Fr. Eliseo, as a true priest-writer, also loved the apostolate of the pen, testified by his numerous contributions, articles and books written in various circumstances: we remember, among others, *Alberione e Maria: storia di un amore*, *La mano di Dio sopra di me. Meditiamo con don Alberione* (2000), the biographies of the venerables Andrea Borello and Maggiorino Vigolungo, *Il Rosario della Vergine Maria. Un tesoro da riscoprire* (2003), as well as the substantial and informative contributions to the magazines *Madre di Dio* and *Il Cooperatore paolino*. To these activities Fr. Eliseo always placed alongside an enthusiastic and appreciated preaching, in conferences, spiritual retreats, meditations, sermons.

Of frank and sensitive character at the same time, ardent in his love for the apostolate and zealous in every task entrusted to him from time to time, Fr. Eliseo gives us proof how it is possible to be outstanding Paulines, seriously committing ourselves in all the dimensions of the Pauline life.

His health underwent a serious blow in December 2009, following an ictus; his physical and psychical energy diminished perceptively, forcing him to go to the infirmary. In spite of the suffering due to the forced inactivity, he knew how to maintain a basic serenity; he appreciated the visits of his confreres, who he received with few words but with felt gratitude. His days were by now marked by prayer and by the silent offering of suffering. At the start of August 2011 he had to be admitted to the hospital “Regina Apostolorum” of Albano, for a severe hyperthyroidism, until his death that came a little after the fading away of the *birthday* of the Congregation that has marked the start of the triennium in view of the Centenary of foundation.

We entrust our brother who adds 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 benign countenance of the Master, Way, Truth and Life, who has promised to his own: “When I shall have gone and 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 bidding him goodbye and assuring him of our suffrages, we ask him to intercede for the many needs of the Congregation.

Rome, 21 August 2011

Fr. Vincenzo Vitale

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