

SOCIETY OF SAINT 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)

In the late afternoon of 16 September 2016 at the *Policlinico Gemelli* in Rome our brother Priest has reached eternal life

### **FATHER GABRIELE PIETRO AMORTH**

***91 years, 69 of Pauline life, 68 of religious profession and 62 of priesthood***

Fr. Amorth was universally known as the exorcist of the diocese of Rome, the disciple of the Passionist Fr. Candido Amantini who, during his time, was the exorcist at the *Scala Santa*. Many books of his were published and translated abroad on the subject of the devil and spiritual ills, some were written also with St Pauls Editions. Countless interviews were granted by him until a few weeks ago to newspapers and televisions. Among the titles he has published include, among others, *Dialogues about the Afterlife* on the weekly *Pauline Credere* and *Accounts of an Exorcist* on *Radio Maria*. He also collaborated with *Famiglia Cristiana*. But his life and his mission, as a faithful disciple of Fr. Alberione, of which he was and what he felt, go far beyond this praiseworthy mission and take on a decidedly Pauline colour.

Born in Modena on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1925 by Mario and Josephine, the fifth of six sons, Fr. Gabriele entered the Congregation in Alba on 25 August 1947. Five years before that, at the height of the war, he had a private interview in Rome with *Primo Maestro*, who literally dazzled him. Desirous to consecrate himself to the Lord since a child, in the summer of 1942 he was, in fact, accompanied by his parish priest in Modena to Rome for a first contact with the religious institutes. He had first knocked on the door of the Passionists, but for a mistake he was not received. He went, therefore, to the Roman headquarters of the Society of St. Paul, then in Grottaperfetta Street and was personally welcomed by *Primo Maestro*, who immediately recognized the Pauline vocation in him, inviting him to complete his classical studies and then to return. Gabriele, then 17 years, on that occasion “merited” for him and his family the inclusion in the famous “protection vow” made by *Primo Maestro* to the Queen of Apostles, which marked, once fulfilled (no one died, in fact, among the members of our religious Family during World War II), the striking of the hour for the construction of the imposing sanctuary, which today symbolizes our global Marian centre.

Turning right back to Modena, after the Armistice (8 September 1943), he took part in the partisan struggle in Emilia, which led him to risk his life several times. This phase of his life, perhaps less known to the general public, has appeared in the news of his being honoured last 8 September, when, albeit by proxy (a grandson), the Prefect of Rome Paola Basilone (also present was the current Minister of Italian Defence, Roberta Pinotti) awarded him the *Medal of Liberation*, in recognition of his civilian merits during the Nazi occupation.

After the war he served in the *Catholic Action* and graduated in Jurisprudence. In between the institutional referendum (June 1946) and the first political republican elections (April 1948) he also tried the political life. He entered, in fact, in the ranks of the Christian Democrats where he came to know Giulio Andreotti and the Servant of God Alcide De Gasperi, the first President

of the Council of the Italian Republic. In 1947 Andreotti invited him, recognizing his potentials, to be part of the group of young intellectuals involved in politics, who would take by hand Italy in accompanying it out of the ruins of war. Gabriele, who was by then 22, preferred instead to remain faithful to the promise he made to *Primo Maestro* and, having made his entrance into the House, immediately began his novitiate. He lived the joy of his first religious consecration on 8 September 1948 in Alba, which he confirmed in perpetuity exactly three years later. The formators, in their reports, did not fail to underline his great “attachment to the house”, his “many involvements in the apostolate” and his “deep inner life”. On 24 January 1954 he was ordained a priest in Rome by the laying on of hands of Msgr. Ilario Roatta.

In Alba Fr. Amorth took charge of adult vocations (1954-1956) and was a professor at our high school (1956-1958). His gifts as spiritual animator, evidently, went beyond the walls of the convent of Alba and reached the great City of Milan: a letter dated 31 December 1957 signed by Fr. Agostino Gemelli, founder of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, and addressed to Fr. Alberione, asked his presence in the Lombard Capital as ecclesiastical assistant for daytime students. The thing, however, did materialize as intended. Fr. Gabriele, a well-rounded man, also took charge of communication during those years, as shown by the fact that in 1958 he was asked, on the request of the Archbishop of Bologna, Msgr. Giacomo Lercaro, to be consultant of the Bolognese daily *L'avvenire d'Italia*, which 10 years later will be merged together with *L'Italia* of Milan in the current daily newspaper of the Italian Bishops' Conference *Avvenire*.

From 1959 to 1976, initially helped by Sister Felicina Luci FSP, he was called by Fr. Alberione to take care of the *Istituto Maria Santissima Annunziata*, at the time of its vibrant foundational era. It was a very fruitful time for the Annunciationist sisters who, with the lively enthusiasm of the beginnings, grew in number throughout Italy, before spreading itself abroad. In 1976 the then Superior General, Fr. Raffaele Tonni, appointed him Delegate of the Italian Province, a position he held for nearly two years and which was not without hardships. After a short period of guiding the Pauline Cooperators (1978-1980) he then assumed, an expert Mariologist that he was, the direction of the monthly *Madre di Dio*. In love with the Madonna and with an erudite pen, he directed the monthly paper admirably for eight years. It is significant that the last book he wrote is dedicated precisely to the Mother of God (*My Rosary*, St Pauls Editions). Neither did he fail, of his conviction at that time, to always publicly express on the genuineness of the Marian apparitions in Medjugorje that started in June of 1981, an idea that he held until the end. Finally, in 1985, the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, Ugo Poletti appointed him exorcist of the diocese of Rome, a position he held for many long years, exercising with faithful dedication this delicate ministry, uniting himself to countless prayer meetings all over the world.

Fr. Gabriele was always a charming man, affable, friendly, despite the seriousness that characterized him. Aided by an innate sympathy, he used an almost sardonic tone toward those who visited him and was able to neutralize any situation. A cardio-circulatory arrest caused by previous lung problems has caused his death. Now that he is reunited in heaven with our Founder, we can not but entrust the life and mission of the Italian Province, Mother-Circumscription of our Congregation, in these days when she experiences the Verification Visit of the General Government.

*Rome, 17 September 2016*

*Fr. Stefano Stimamiglio*

*The funeral will be held on Monday, 19 September, at 15:00 (local time) at the Parish-Shrine of Santa Maria Regina degli Apostoli in Rome. His remains will rest in the Laurentino cemetery in Rome.*

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