

## In the Father's House

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



At 16:00 (local time) of 30 August 2017, our brother priest of the Timothy Giaccardo Community of Rome, passed into eternal life

**FATHER GIUSEPPE NICOLA AGIUS**  
**90 years, 54 of Pauline life, 73 of religious profession  
and 67 of priesthood**

After a worsening health condition, Father Agius suddenly left us because of a pulmonary oedema. For three years already, he had moved from the Catania house, where he lived a great part of his life, to the Timothy Giaccardo community of Rome. Here he received the medical care that was needed due to several hernias in the back, which made his movements very restrictive. A man of confident character, intelligent and wise, lovable even when he made intense discussions with his confreres, less disposed to chattering and inclined to go to tough questions, left the earthly life silently, just as he would have liked.

Father Giuseppe represents for our Congregation an ideal bridge with the Near East, a vast area dear to all Christianity and from which the Paulines are still absent. Catholic by birth, since childhood, he has been confronted with the orthodox world and its not so easy relationships with our confession. Giuseppe was born in Corfu, Greece on 7 July 1927. He came from a deeply believing and numerous family (made up of thirteen brothers and sisters, in addition to Father Giorgio and Mother Cristina), so that four sisters and another brother would choose the path of religious life. Giuseppe was the twelfth in the order of birth and was baptized, two weeks after the first scream, in the parish of the Ionian Island dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. At only 7 years, in 1934, he received Confirmation in the local cathedral. Two years before, her mother died, leaving her husband the burdensome task of educating the numerous offspring.

The young Giuseppe lived in an island that has always been the object of expansionism of Italy, and which was actually occupied in April 1941 by the army of Mussolini. But in that tragic moment of history, to attend high school and fascinated by spiritual life, he went to Corfu to attend the Sicilian school of the Capuchins, the only religious institute present in Corfu and where his brother Arsenio had previously entered. He then frequented the five-year high school (1936-1941) and then the three-year college (1941-1944) in the Capuchin community of Caccamo, about fifty kilometres from Palermo, at the end of which he pronounced the first religious profession. A few years later, the solemn one. On 16 July 1950, he was ordained in Palermo and sent to the island of Crete, where he lived for a few years together with his brother.

In 1961, he made contact with Primo Maestro through Father Speciale. Father Agius expressed his suffering for the lifestyle he was experiencing, oriented almost exclusively to inner life and much less to evangelization, increasingly needed in an environment that, during summer, was filled with the faithful. These were years of economic boom. He therefore asked Father Alberione to welcome him in the Society of Saint Paul, permission was granted him, perhaps

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even to attempt through him a “landing” in the Hellenic land, as bridgehead to the places of the first communities founded by the Apostle.

Father Agius thus began the novitiate in Ostia in October 1962 and made the perpetual profession on 8 October of the following year. Given his classical preparation and the propensity to teach, he stayed for three years at Ostia to give Greek lessons to the clerics (1963-1966). With the same assignment we find him from 1966 to 1972 in the community of Rome and then in Alba (1972-1976). In Rome, in June 1972, he obtained a licentiate in oriental ecclesiastical sciences at the Pontifical Oriental Institute. Later, he moved to Catania, where – one among the most appreciated professors – he taught Italian literature in our intermediate schools (1976-1990). Many still recall his peculiar style to stimulate boys to school engagement through educational and entertaining skills at the same time. At the “San Tommaso” Theological Institute in Messina, he also taught Patrology for some time. Over the years, he had also precious ministry in the Sacred Family Parish of Catania and was a spiritual animator of some feminine institutes, including a group of Maltese religious. Everything and always with that unique ability to communicate with people with stories and examples that animated his listeners.

Father Giuseppe, lover of beautiful things, has always had a special love for nature and the countryside, so much so that in Catania he has been caring for the house garden for many years. He called nature “Mother Earth” and as long as he could devote himself to cultivating his flowers, he was unable to withstand putting his hands in direct contact with the naked earth.

Let us now entrust to the mercy of the Divine Master the eternal destiny of this brother of ours, asking him to intercede before him for the many needs of the Congregation all over the world.

Rome, 31 August 2017



Fr. Stefano Stimamiglio, ssp  
Secretary General

*The funeral will take place on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017, at 11:00 (local time) at the Sub Crypt of the Sanctuary of Mary Queen of Apostles of Rome. The body will be buried in the Laurentine Cemetery (Rome).*

The circumscription Superiors should inform their communities about the prescribed suffrages (Cost. 65 and 65.1).