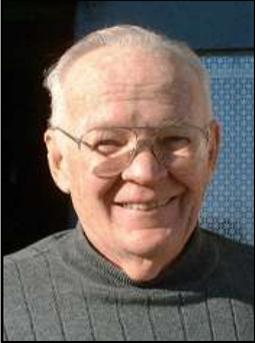


In the Father's House

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



At about 10 AM (local time) on 21 June 2019, our brother Disciple of the Divine Master died after a brief illness at the Austin Woods Nursing Center in Austintown (Ohio, United States)

BROTHER THOMAS GERARD ROCHE
92 years, 64 of Pauline life and 60 of religious profession

Thomas was born in New York City (United States) on 2 May 1927 to his father Daniel and mother Mary Cunningham. His large family, made up of three other brothers and four sisters, all deceased, is the ideal place to accompany the growth of the children in faith. After a childhood and a youth lived in the Big Apple, during the Second World War, Thomas was called to arms by the US army. Sent from 1945 to 1947 in the European quadrant, he personally contributed to the very last phase of the struggle against totalitarian regimes, together with the military of the Old Continent and the liberation forces of the occupied countries. He assisted, therefore, at the first delicate phase of the post-war period that, in addition to seeing Europe rise again with the help of the Marshall Plan, would establish for many decades the strategic and geopolitical structures of the whole world with the peace treaties.

Returning home, he did not stay much, however, because in 1950, at the outbreak of the Korean War (1950-1953), he was called again to arms to participate in the first phase of the conflict, which saw the allied forces, sent by the UN Security Council, deterred the attack that North Korea has waged against South Korea. He would remain only a year in the Far East, because, after being dismissed, he would finally return home for good. In the years immediately following, those that he dedicated to his life preference, the young man found some jobs, one of which he had for some time at the Coca-Cola Company.

The long and terrible war years have evidently not removed from Thomas the fundamentals of that solid faith received in the family. Four years after his dismissal from the American army, in fact, a witness on the field of the atrocities that led humanity to the abyss of atomic war, he decided to dedicate his life to the Lord and entered the Society of Saint Paul, the ecclesial reality that he considered more suited to the skills he had developed in his adult life. On 13 April 1955, at almost 28 years of age, he crossed the threshold of the community of Staten Island (New York).

He entered the novitiate the following year at Canfield (Ohio), ending with his first vows on 8 September 1958, choosing the vocation of the Disciple of the Divine Master and assuming Gerard for profession name. During his formative years, in addition to being Master of Postulants, he

was assigned to the press apostolate, first to the printing machines and then to the offset. In the admission report to the perpetual profession, Fr. Luigi Paolo Crovella described him as a man of good character, suited to life in common, well-liked by all, engaged in the press apostolate and faithful in piety. On 8 September 1963, therefore, in Staten Island, he had the joy of professing perpetually the religious vows in the hands of the Primo Maestro, who was then visiting the United States.

The subsequent Pauline life saw him still engaged in Staten Island until 1965 and in Canfield until 1970, again in the press and in the diffusion. This is followed by 24 long years in Dearborn, a community now closed, where he took care of the warehouse and the bookshop on several occasions. Always, however, as long as his energies have granted it, Brother Gerard has dedicated himself to organizing book exhibitions in places of worship close to his community. The last years of his life, from 2008 until today, characterized by the progressive reduction of his strength, he spent them among the communities of Staten Island and Canfield.

The long and intense correspondence held with Fr. Renato Perino, Superior General from 1980 to 1992, brings out a sincere afflatus of love for the Congregation and for its ecclesial mission of proclaiming the Good News with the media, tinged with some confidences that denote all the hardships that the Pauline apostle must face in order to carry out faithfully the mission entrusted to him by the Divine Master. The American brothers, for their part, testify that “Brother Gerry”, as they fondly called him, has always brought his joyful spirit to the people, widely reciprocated by the people of God.

Afflicted by a stroke in the weekend of 15-16 June, he was admitted to a clinic in Austintown, near Canfield where, after a few days, he gave his soul to God. In this Year of Vocation of the Pauline Family, in imitation of what has been done by this our brother whom we accompany in prayer to the encounter with the Risen One, let us make our own the words of the Apostle to Timothy: «Guard this precious deposit with the help of the holy Spirit who dwells within us» (2Tim 1:14).

Rome, 23 June 2019



Father Stefano Stimamiglio, ssp
Secretary General

The funeral will take place on Tuesday 25 June at 11 AM (local time) at the Canfield community chapel. His mortal remains will be buried in the community cemetery.

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