

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 approximately 7 AM on 6 April 2020, Holy Week Monday, our brother died at the *San Filippo Neri* Hospital in Rome

FATHER FRANCESCO LINO CAPONI

94 years, 83 of Pauline life, 76 of profession and 69 of priesthood

Father Francesco had been admitted to the CTO hospital in Rome on 25 March following a fracture of the groin due to a fall. Already suffering from suboptimal lung conditions and tested positive for the coronavirus swab, he was subsequently hospitalized at the *San Filippo Neri* Hospital, where a few days later he surrendered his soul to God.

Son of Alberico and Casilde De Luca, Father Caponi was born on 2 May 1925 in Jenne, a town in the Province of Rome a few kilometres from Subiaco, a place where Saint Benedict gave rise to 13 monasteries at the beginning of the sixth century, the epicentre of the gigantic movement that took its name from him and spread throughout Europe. Second of 7 brothers and sisters, he owes his vocation – so the chronicles collected in his place of origin on the occasion of the celebrations for his 50th priestly anniversary – tell a vow made by his father on the occasion of a domestic accident, when the little Francesco, still in swaddling clothes, fell to the ground. Panicking caused by the results of that distraction, Papa Alberico immediately offered the newborn to God, «*promising to consecrate him to the priestly life if he were saved*».

Things actually went like this. On 2 October 1936, at the age of 11, he entered the House of Rome, attracted by that press apostolate, at that time still quite at the beginning, which represented an absolute novelty for religious life, capable of translating the time into modern terms the *ora et labora* of Father Benedict. The formation continued with the first religious profession, pronounced in Alba on 8 September 1943, precisely on the historic day of the Armistice (the surrender of Italy to the Allied powers), which marked the beginning of a painful and bloody civil war in Italy. Father Francesco, who on that occasion took Lino as his profession name, exactly 4 years later, always in Alba, confirmed his religious vows perpetually. On 8 July 1950, the priestly ordination followed at the church of XII Holy Apostles of Rome by the imposition of the hands of Mons. Luigi Traglia.

Very gifted in humanities, Father Caponi, after obtaining his license in theology in 1951, was destined first to the house of Lumiar, a district of Lisbon (Portugal), and then, from 1956, to the community of Camarate, which would later be moved to the current and neighbouring *Apelação*. In Portugal, “Padre Francisco”, as his students called him, some of whom are still active Paulines, dedicated himself for several years to teaching Latin,

Greek, French, Latin and Greek literature as well as Thomistic philosophy at our high school with the wisdom that made them a real “father” for them. He also dedicated a lot of work to pastoral ministry in some parishes in Lusitanian territory, and many faithful still remember him for his original wisdom and for the novelty of the Gospel he knew how to transmit. He also devoted himself to publishing activity, also considering his interest in the world of publishing, becoming at one point also Director of the Portuguese Pauline Editions.

He was among the first to translate the texts of Yves Congar, one of the main exponents of the *Nouvelle Théologie* and expert of the Second Vatican Council, into Portuguese, a language he had learned very well by now. Congar himself, from the stories of Father Caponi himself, had written him a letter thanking him particularly for the translation into Portuguese of one of his books. In the last years of his stay in Lusitania, he was also editor of the magazine *Familia Cristã*.

Returning to Rome in the mid-1970s, he continued to teach literature lessons to Pauline students and was the Master of adult vocations. He was also Director, from 1974 and for some part of the 1980s, of the monthly *Vita pastorale*, commissioned by Blessed James Alberione for the ongoing formation of the clergy. In the following years, he was always a member of the Saint Paul Community in Rome, dedicating himself actively to the ministry of reconciliation in some parishes and spiritually assisting various groups of the Renewal of the Spirit present in the Capital.

Father Francesco, a man of great faith and deep convictions, a reserved and at times a bit surly person, was a great lover of culture and has never stopped reading books, not even in the last years, when his physical forces began to fail. Now that he enjoys the eternal reward, we invoke his intercession in this time of great trial for all humanity.

Rome, 6 April 2020



Father Stefano Stimamiglio, ssp
Secretary General

The burial of Father Francesco's body will take place on Tuesday, 7 April 2020, at 4 PM (local time) in the cemetery of Jenne (Rome, Italy).

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