

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)



Last 20th of April at the St. Eugenio Hospital in Rome (Italy), the Disciple of the Divine Master

BROTHER FRANCESCO PIETRO ROSSI

99 years, 85 of Pauline life and 82 of religious profession

reached the Father's home. Brother Francesco was the Dean of the Congregation. He would have turned a century old on 5 October if the progressive physical decline, due to old age, had not slowly consummated him, forcing him to hospitalization only a few days ago.

He was born in Istrana, a small town in the province of Treviso (not far from Venice), on 5 October 1920 from Papa Giovanni and Mama Carolina Rosin. In the family there are, in addition to him, 10 other brothers and sisters. The family of origin is very religious and hardworking. The First World War, which in those places, near the famous "River Piave line", experienced extremely violent fighting, ended a couple of years ago. Francis, therefore, sees the birthplace and grows in a time of peace, characterized by a great but very dignified poverty. He is a contemporary of the illustrious figures of his time, who have significantly characterized Italy and the whole world in the last century: Saint John Paul II, the director Federico Fellini, the actor Alberto Sordi, the writers Isaac Asimov and Gianni Rodari, the journalists Giorgio Mouth and Enzo Biagi.

Baptized immediately after birth, on 25 March 1928, he was confirmed in the cathedral of Treviso by the Bishop of the Venetian City, Mons. Andrea Giacinto Longhin, then proclaimed blessed by Pope St. John Paul II on 20 October 2002. He entered the House, in Alba, on 27 July 1934. The parish priest of the Marian shrine of Conschio, the village where the family has moved in for the meantime, praises his character and disposition, thus presenting him to Father Alberione on the occasion of his entry: «Very diligent in learning the Christian doctrine, a lover of study and also a tireless worker, without laziness». All qualities that will "fit" very well into the 4 wheels of the Pauline cart and which he will continue to cultivate throughout his long life. In the early years, he worked in the lead foundry used for typography characters. He entered the novitiate, also in Alba, on 19 March 1937. Among his fellow Disciples of the Divine Master are the future Venerable Brother Andrea Borello, Brother Mario Celestino Rizzo, Brother Giuseppe Maria Tito Della Bartola and Brother Alfonso Maria Bernardo Panaro. With them, he made his first religious vows on 8 April 1938, taking the name of Pietro. On 20 March 1944, in full world conflict and with the same companions of the novitiate, he perpetually professed his consecration to God.

Brother Francesco lived in the Mother House until 1948, enthusiastically taking care of the work in the paper mill, committed to producing every day the quantity of raw material necessary for printing. In 1948, he was transferred to the house in Genoa, opened only 3 years earlier to host the

premises of the agency of the *Romana Editrice Film* (REF), the forerunner of *San Paolo Film*. It promotes far and wide in the parishes and cinemas of the Ligurian Archdiocese the feature films found in the catalogue. Now started in this promising apostolic sector, he moved first to the agency in Milan (1951-1953) and then to that of Rome (1953-1962) to serve the people of God in the same apostolate of diffusion. In 1962, he returned to Alba, busy working behind the scene in the immense warehouse of the Mother House. Here he served the Lord until 1971, when he was transferred to the *San Paolo* community of Rome, called to serve in the printing house: between the plain, the pedal and paperback machine, he completed his apostolic curriculum up to the definitive closure of the structure, which took place in 2002.

Always very punctual in community life, respectful to all, cheerful in character, lover of the Congregation, Brother Francesco carried out the apostolate with love and enthusiasm. For this reason he was, in the testimony of several Disciple confreres, a true model of the Pauline apostle, capable of towing everyone with his silent and industrious witness. Even when in the last years of the printing press, now close to the 80th anniversary, he served as a “jack of all trades”, available to any service.

Nor did he neglect the Pauline *studiositas*: he often went to listen to conferences and, from 1981 to 1984, he also attended a course of liturgy for the laity at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute of St. Anselm in Rome. Formation that he has always associated with the service of charity, both when, for about the beginning of the 1980s, he was for a long time the extraordinary minister of the Eucharist at the Orthopedic Traumatology Centre (CTO) in Rome. For almost thirty years, he accompanied Father Gabriele Amorth, since the beginnings of his being an exorcist of the Diocese of Rome (1985), a demanding ministry in favour of souls disturbed by the devil.

A last aspect that is striking about Brother Francesco: he had taken on the task of remembering the deceased Paulines in the daily community Mass, whose names he took from the Pauline Agenda, taking care to remember, after studying it, some details of their life to offer it briefly to the confreres. A gift of memory that is a model for us today in living the spiritual communion between us, despite the many efforts that the Pauline apostolate entails, as an anticipation of the eternal bliss promised us in the Resurrection of Jesus, which we have just celebrated.

Rome, 22 April 2020



Father Stefano Stimamiglio, ssp
Secretary General

The burial and blessing of Brother Francis' body took place today, Wednesday 22 April, at 10 am (local time) at the Laurentino cemetery in Rome.

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