



THE PEOPLE IN HER HEART

Returning to Rome from her trips abroad, Maestra Thecla spoke enthusiastically about the customs, climate and natural beauty of the countries she visited, but at the same time she always underscored the sufferings and moral miseries of the people. "If only those multitudes of people could know the Lord!" she exclaimed.

Aware that indigenous Daughters of St. Paul could approach their own people more effectively, she encouraged the sisters to work hard for vocations. "Let us always be generous," she urged them. "In this way the Lord will send us vocations because there is so much good to be done in the world."

Her presence, her illuminating words and above all her profoundly missionary heart had the power to infuse the sisters with the joy and courage they needed to make sacrifices in view of a heavenly reward.

She took a special interest in *Così*, a weekly magazine for young women published by the Daughters of St. Paul to combat the spread of pornographic reading. She told the periodical's editorial staff: "Make sure this magazine is beautiful! It should be so appealing to young women that they will abandon the empty magazines they are reading. *Così* should provide them with the formation they need to become good wives and mothers. Society today needs people who are Christians through and through." And she sought to help the small editorial team in every way possible, even going so far as to put at its disposition a variety of gifts that could be used as prizes for various contests sponsored by the magazine, or as awards for its most faithful subscribers. She was always delighted to receive a copy of each new issue when it rolled off the press.

As far as apostolic activities were concerned, her word was final. When the sisters would consult her about financial problems linked to

various projects, she would say: "If the initiative does good, then go ahead. As for the [economic aspect], don't get agitated. If we have faith, divine Providence will help us. Our first goal in the apostolate is not profit but to do good to people."

Prima Maestra was always ready to use the most up-to-date instruments for the apostolate, even if these were costly. Sr. Rosaria Visco recounts:

M. Thecla's zeal for the cinema apostolate led her to support the production of a series of short catechetical films. A total of 52 of these were made and then dubbed in various languages. The whole initiative was far from easy but she never lost heart and she strongly urged everyone to persevere. Knowing that Primo Maestro was an ardent advocate of this project, she often said: "If Primo Maestro wants it, then that is a sign that it is the will of God. After all, we are apostles of communication so we must use these means to proclaim Christ to the people!"

We should not forget that although the catechetical films were produced by the Society of St. Paul, M. Thecla did not make distinctions because both Institutes were striving for the same goal.

Sr. Assunta Bassi confirms:

When problems came up in the apostolate, I would often discuss them with M. Thecla and I can say that she was never doubtful or concerned about things that could have been a source of anxiety on the human plane. When considering an initiative or a suggestion, she would always ask me: "Will it do good? Is it what Primo Maestro wants? Is he in agreement with this?" If I could say *yes* to these questions, then she had no doubts at all and would declare: "Then do it! We must do good with the press! We must disseminate the books that do the most good. We must make Jesus Christ known!" These were statements she often repeated.