



MOVING FORWARD WITH THECLA

REMEMBERING PRIMA MAESTRA THECLA

VOICES FROM CANADA/QUEBEC

LUCILLE PARADIS

I arrived in Rome in March 1955 for my novitiate year. When I met Prima Maestra Thecla for the first time, I was surprised, but deeply encouraged to see her so simple, so warm, so approachable, so genuine. I had imagined a superior general quite differently.

I worked at San Paolo Film. The office was in the then generalate, so I was fortunate to see Maestra Thecla frequently passing through the corridor, always at a brisk pace. Sometimes she found a way to attract our attention with a greeting, but without distracting us from our work. I felt we mattered to her, even though we were only young novices.

When we confided some worry or difficulty to her,

Maestra Thecla drew us into the truth of ourselves and helped us to avoid false pretensions

she would encourage us with “Oh, don’t worry!” That “Oh, don’t worry!” is unforgettable.

One rainy day, I was on my way to the Sanctuary of the Queen of Apostles for Mass when I felt a hand take my arm: it was Prima Maestra, pulling me under her umbrella. I felt all her kindness and the warmth of her gesture.

Maestra Thecla drew us into the truth of ourselves and helped us to avoid false pretensions. We felt her attentiveness even when we met her for only a few minutes.

I have a vivid memory of her **genuine goodness** and her quiet yet irreplaceable presence.



CARMEN ROUSSEAU

During my stay in Rome, I saw how much Prima Maestra cared about us. As soon as she could, she came to visit us, even though only for a few minutes. I still see her beautiful and welcoming smile.



She was a true mother, full of kindness and humanity

As soon as we arrived, she sent us some sweets, saying “Because these sisters are used to eating sweet things and will miss them here.” She was a true mother, full of kindness and humanity. A memory: one day, just a few months after our arrival in Italy, I heard her suggest to a sister who was getting ready to go out with the car: “Take the two Canadians with you, and don’t take the same route back. This way they can get to know Italy a little better.” This thoughtfulness from Maestra Thecla made us feel immediately at home.



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GISÈLE LAFONTAINE

I met Prima Maestra during her visit to Montreal when I was an aspirant. She was a person of great simplicity. She exuded kindness and wisdom and possessed a good sense of humor.

Knowing that she supported our Founder in the development of the congregation deeply impressed me and encouraged me to continue my journey with the Daughters of St. Paul.

All her writings reveal the depth of her faith, her love for the congregation, and her concern for her “Daughters” that they be faithful to their vocation.



Knowing that she supported our Founder in the development of the congregation deeply impressed me

Among her many meaningful expressions, I feel particularly inspired by that oft-repeated desire: “I wish I had a thousand lives for the Gospel.”

Maestra Thecla continues to be present in my life like an accompanying mother. It is to her that I turn my prayers when I need light to discern the Lord’s will. I am certain that her concern for each of the Daughters of St. Paul continues even today

With the help of the globe, we moved on to identifying the presence of the Daughters of St. Paul in different countries around the world

LOUISE FRECHETTE

I joined the congregation a few months before the great news arrived: the Superior General would be coming to visit us in a few days. I will



never forget the joy, indeed the happiness, on the face of Sr. Antonietta Vivian, the superior of the community.

When Maestra Thecla arrived, I was struck by her gaze, by her large dark eyes. We spent an unforgettable evening with her! In simplicity and with a bit of humor she played some of her “magical” games with us, even without a common language!

Then almost imperceptibly, with the help of the globe, we moved on to identifying the presence of the Daughters of St. Paul in different countries around the world. A photo, instilled in my memory, has immortalized that moment.



Fot. Maestra Tecla in Canada

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ALICE ALLARD

It was 1992. About ten months after an initial surgery for colon cancer a colonoscopy revealed a recurrence. Surgery was absolutely necessary, without delay. Deeply shaken, I asked for—and was granted—eight days of leave.

I am absolutely certain that Maestra Tecla obtained for me an immense grace.

During those eight days and nights, I passed and repassed a photo of Maestra Tecla over my abdomen, praying: “Prima Maestra, take care of me, take care of me. You know... take care of me!”

In the operating room, the surgeons were astonished: they could find no trace of what they had been clearly identified.

Even today, I am absolutely certain that Maestra Tecla obtained for me an immense grace. Since then, a refrain has been part of my daily prayer: “Thank you, Prima Maestra—again and again, thank you.”

HUGUETTE RENÉ

I met Prima Maestra a few times. I had just entered the community when I saw her for the first time. I think back with emotion to the sign



of the cross she traced on my forehead.

But it was during my last “very serious” illness, according to the doctors, that I felt Maestra Thecla very close, truly at my side. The sisters of the delegation invoked Maestra Thecla for me, and I clearly felt that she was present and comforting me.

Prima Maestra watches over us.

I am certain that my recovery from this illness with minimal consequences, is a grace received through her intercession. Prima Maestra watches over us; she has “Influence” with the Lord. I am immensely grateful to her.

JEANNE LEMIRE

I haven’t had the fortune of meeting Maestra Thecla, but I can say I got to know her through my reading.

Before entering the community, the face of a sister with large, dark eyes on the cover of a magazine drew and fascinated me. It was Maestra Thecla.

The face of a sister with large, dark eyes on the cover of a magazine drew and fascinated me.

Reading about her life, I was struck by the many difficult moments she went through and the great challenges she faced. “At times it was so dark that I couldn’t understand anything,” she wrote.

This encouraged me whenever I found myself facing complicated situations. If I was able to move forward and overcome challenges that seemed insurmountable, it is also thanks to her. I am certain that she helped me in all the delicate situations I faced in the exercise of our apostolate.

Her prayerful life continues to inspire my own.

