

FOLLOWING THE PATH MARKED OUT BY **MAESTRA THECLA**



ANNA MARIA PARENZAN, FSP

Sr. Thecla Merlo, whom Fr. Alberione himself called "Prima Maestra" (First Teacher), was a quiet protagonist of an unprecedented adventure in the history of the Church. In docile and creative communion with Fr. Alberione, Founder of the Daughters of St. Paul and of the entire Pauline Family, she played an extraordinary role of mediation. She was the faithful and intelligent collaborator for this Prophet of the 20th century. Her humility and faith and her continual searching for God's will were the secrets of her life. With great gentleness she provided a maternal contribution to the birth of the other Pauline Institutes.

"To lower myself and to draw God to me. For this, it is enough to think of my nothingness. To raise myself high with trust to reach God" (May 1950).

Prima Maestra's spiritual journey, marked by heroic faith, was expressed in a humble and serene adherence to God's will. An adherence filled with trust and filial abandonment, which she expressed thus: "To lower myself and to draw God to me. For this, it is enough to think of my nothingness. To raise myself high with trust to reach God" (May 1950).

"The Lord," the Founder testified in 1964, "did with her what He wanted, because she never resisted Him. She was a contemplative soul. She also knew how to turn to others for help, but first and foremost she turned to God. Everything had to come from God, and everything was for God." Blessed James Alberione urged the Daughters of St. Paul to follow the path laid out by Maestra Thecla: "The Institute is according to God's way of walking, the path established by Prima Maestra... No deviations. Know Prima Maestra, even better, imitate her; ask for her same spirit. She has opened a deep furrow for you: God will always be with you."

Sr. Thecla Merlo's message is very timely: she, who wanted to have "a thousand lives for the Gospel," can become a guide and inspiration for many young people who feel called to give their lives to God so that His Word, communicated even in this complex world of communications, may shine in the lives of the men and women of today.

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