Death Notice No. 25 (To all Unit Administrations):

The Province of Italy, recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **LUIGI FAVERO**, priest of the Santa Maria Community, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on October 25, 2012 in Rome, Italy, at the age of 91 with 71 years of religious profession.

Fr. Luigi Favero was born in Rosà in the Province of Verona on August 5, 1921, into a family of modest means. His father Giovanni was a railroad signalman and his mother, Carolina Biesuz, a housewife. For a while, for the sake of work, they lived in Musestre-Roncade in the Province of Treviso, not far from his birthplace. His mother Carolina became the victim of a typhus epidemic when Luigi was still very young.

Even as a child Luigi showed visible signs of a religious vocation, seen by the pastor of his native village. The Scalabrinian priests, who frequently preached popular missions in the parish, accepted him among their aspirants. After a few months of novitiate he was sent home “because he seems to be afflicted by an incurable thyroid problem.” It was his pastor, nevertheless, who pointed him out to the superior of the Postulate of Pallanza, because “Favero is well and can easily cope with the stresses of study.”

He was accepted, therefore, without any difficulty in August 1940 into the Postulate of Pallanza, and on September 11 he was able to begin his novitiate in the Society of Mary under the direction of Fr. Carlo Fuchs. Recalling his previous religious experiences, he wrote several years later: “what I wanted was their outward forms of apostolate, the missions, the priestly ministry: but I have no regrets, because if today I had the full freedom to choose, I would not hesitate to embrace the Marianist spirit.”

On September 12 of the following year he made his first profession at Pallanza. And, as if to demonstrate his good health, two years later (1943) he excelled outstandingly in the examinations for the classical secondary school diploma, and then enrolled in the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan. Those were the dramatic years of World War II when, due to the struggle among opposing political factions, Luigi tragically lost his father.

In 1947 Luigi Favero was awarded the Laurea in Classical Letters, defending his thesis in the presence of Fr. Agostino Gemelli, OFM, the founder of the University.

“In truth,” he once wrote, “I had noticed, and my superiors had the opportunity to see that I lacked some of the natural gifts needed by an educator… but I have always sought to live fully the Marianist spirit in the Society of Mary, about which I hope to always remain enthusiastic.”

When he had finished his studies in Milan, he went to the Regina Mundi Seminary in Fribourg to study theology (1948). He was ordained there in Fribourg on July 22, 1951, and celebrated his First Mass in his home village on August 5, his thirtieth birthday.
His first pastoral and teaching assignment was in Pallanza as Director of the Scholasticate. In 1954 he was sent to the Postulate of Brusasco (TO) and in 1956 to Santa Maria in Rome. In 1957 he was the spiritual father for the young university students living that year in the Marianum University Center and attending the Roman universities.

In 1959 Fr. Paul Hoffer confided the leadership of the Province of Italy to him, calling him to take on the position of provincial, which he carried out with full fidelity to the Rule. Those were the years of a very great expansion of the Society of Mary in Italy. Reappointed for a second term as provincial, he accepted the burden, but in the second year of his mandate he offered his resignation for reasons of health, and the major superiors accepted his request. He continued his priestly service as a formator in the Postulate of Giove, appreciated and admired by the Servant of God Bishop Vincenzo Lojali of Amelia. When the Postulate of Giove was closed, Fr. Favero continued his service as a spiritual director in the scholasticate, which had been transferred some years before to Rome – Villa Terrasanta (4th Mile). Already well known and appreciated in the Diocese of Amelia-Narni-Terni, his pastoral presence was constantly in demand in the Parish of Giove and he gave it all his priestly passion. During the same years he was an educator and teacher in some of the nearby localities until 1983, when he was called to the Chaminade Seminary at Via Latina 22 to monitor our seminarians in their religious formation and to guide them competently into a knowledge of Christian Rome (the previous year the Regina Mundi Seminary had been closed in Fribourg). In the same year, Cardinal Ratzinger requested of our major superiors (Fr. José María Salaverri) a member for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. The superior general picked out Fr. Luigi Favero as the person competent to handle such a task and the latter worked there for several years, showing his love for the Church.

Upon leaving the Chaminade Seminary, he was called to exercise his priestly ministry with a great spirit of joyful service as vicar in our Parish of the Holy Name of Mary, from where he moved again, in 1985, to the community of Santa Maria in Rome, but that allowed him to continue his pastoral presence in the parish. Santa Maria became his permanent residence from then onwards.

Nevertheless, he did not abandon his favorite study topic, that of profane, but above all, of religious archaeology. In fact, he became known for his “holy curiosity” about the places of the Christian origins in Rome. Because of those studies, Pope John Paul II, by the signature of Cardinal Sodano in 1996, named him Magister Pontificiae Academiae Cultorum Martyrum (Master of the Pontifical Academy of the Cult of the Martyrs). Those were exciting times for rediscovering and animating the Lenten and Easter “Stations” in the Roman basilicas, for getting to know and deepen the story and the veneration of the holy martyrs who had made Christianity so great at its beginnings. His friends would say that “he knew everything, and then some,” about the catacombs in Rome, and he broadcast his knowledge on several Catholic radio stations to spread the knowledge and the true veneration of the Roman Protomartyrs.

In last several years in the infirmary in Rome, his hearing declined, but he never ceased to widen his knowledge, reading and praying to the crowd of saints he knew and loved. Certain infirmities of his advanced age prevented him from the daily celebration of the Eucharist. He often did not like that, feeling “suspensus a divinis.”

After a night of restlessness that indicated what was coming, on the morning of Thursday, October 25, 2012, he went to meet the Father of all mercies, confiding himself to Mary, “the Gate of Heaven.”

R.I.P.