

## SISTER MARIE-CHRISTIAN

### MARTHE EVRARD

- Date of birth: October 18th, 1935, in Seninghem (Pas de Calais - France)
- Postulancy: December 8th, 1958 (Sœurs Augustines du Précieux Sang, Arras).
- Novitiate: July 14th, 1959, in Arras
- First Vows: August 28th, 1961, in Arras
- Perpetual Vows: August 28th, 1965, in Arras
- Date of death: January 21st, 2019, at the EHPAD St. Nicolas in St. Nicolas les Arras

Marthe Evrard was born in France, in Seninghem, a village of five hundred inhabitants, in the Pas de Calais, in October 1935. A few days later, she was baptized in the church of this village from where five religious vocations would blossom.

Nine children were born to the Evrard family: five boys and four girls, two of whom answered Christ's call in two different Congregations. Before her sister Françoise, one aunt and one cousin were already Little Sisters of the Assumption. Among her mother's cousins were two priests of the Foreign Missions, and another priest cousin, whose legs had been amputated so that the miners used to come to fetch him for him to celebrate Mass, in which they did not participate, and then take him back home.

Since Seninghem was close to St. Omer, Marthe got to know the Augustinian Sisters who ran the hospital there, and especially through Sr. Marie Eugenie who would visit her parents there, and who were generous sponsors of the free schools.

At the age of 23, Marthe entered the Augustinian Sisters of the Precious Blood in Arras. Her bursts of laughter at the novitiate have remained famous! She loved to laugh.

On July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1959, she received, with Sr. Jeanine Bertrand, the white habit of the Augustinians. From then on, she was known as Sr. Marie-Christian, a name she retained. Sr. Jeanine received a birthday card every year around this time!

Her second year of novitiate took place at St. Omer Hospital, before her first vows on the feast of St Augustine, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1961. She then went to Carvin, a mining country, where the Congregation also had a Community providing home care and giving catechism classes.

Following her perpetual profession on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1965, she returned to St. Omer, but due to a health problem, she had to spend a long time in the sanatorium in Hauteville the following year. This was a turning point in her life.

She stayed at the Mother House in Arras, then returned to Carvin and Moreuil, before following the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year in 1976. She would remember this year of renewal with much gratitude.

In 1977, she was one of the "foundresses", together with Sr. Jeanne Candeille, Sr. Marie Annick (deceased) and Sr. Véronique Wynands, of a new insertion at Airaines, in a large village in the Somme department. The Community occupied one of the houses, similar to the others on the same street, Sisters did not wear the religious habit but were dressed like the ordinary person. They did not present themselves as religious but waited for others to ask them questions before revealing their identity, all this at the request of the bishop of the place and because it was a de-Christianized region.

Sr. Marie-Christian was then "housemistress" which did not prevent her from doing catechesis in the parish. Sr Veronique Wynands said

of her: "She was very relational. She loved to be in touch with others and with children and was pleasant to live with."

In 1979, she became Prioress of the Community until 1983 when she left in for Moreuil. For several years, the Community, situated on the town square, provided the workers of the various factories (especially in the textile industry) with a clean and warm place, especially in winter, wherein they could eat lunch. In addition, the Sisters made Chips...and contacts were created with these young workers. Sr. Marie-Christian will have a certain influence there. She joined the Catholic Worker's Association in collaboration with the priests.

She worked for four years as a catechist in Amettes, a small village where Saint Benoît Labre was born, before returning to Airaines, but only for a few months.

It was in Haute Savoie, facing the Mont Blanc, that she became responsible for the small Community of Combloux, which did not yet provide lodging except for the Augustinian Sisters, in particular those who facilitated "the camps" in the parish in preparation for the 15<sup>th</sup> of August. Those were joyful and active mornings under the tent set up in the courtyard of the presbytery. Some teenagers joined the three Sisters animating the activities. As the chalet "Les Gentianes" was temporarily closed due to construction work, Sr. Marie-Christian went to Abbeville in the department of the Somme.

Two Communities were housed in the same building: Sr. Marie-Christian was "Prioress" of the Sainte Monique Community which welcomed the older Sisters. They had their own lodgings on one floor. Other Sisters worked in the Notre Dame de France clinic and maternity hospital. Following medical regroupings in the city, the premises were to become a retirement home, before becoming an association undergoing total reconstruction.

Sr. Marie-Christian came to the Community of St. Catherine les Arras in September 1995 until its closure in September 2010. She spent her time in catechesis and parish activities before leaving to join the Community of Amettes, after having gone through a long hospitalization in the retirement home of Saint Nicolas les Arras. Gradually, it was a new beginning for her: the positioning of her room allowed her to observe the comings and goings of the house. She liked to receive visitors and was very pleasant towards them, listening to news of the Congregation from one or the other...until the Lord called her to completely hand over her life.

## SISTER BLANCA EUGENIA OF NAZARETH

### MARTINA SOLEDAD ARNÁIZ

“My eyes are always turned to the Lord”

- Date of birth: May 13th, 1922, in Spain
- Postulancy: March 27th, 1939, in Gijon-El Bibio <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Novitiate: March 27th, 1941, in San Sebastian-Mira Cruz
- First Vows: April 11th, 1942, in San Sebastian-Mira Cruz
- Perpetual Vows: April 22nd, 1946, in Malaga- Pedregalejo
- Date of death: January 21st, 2019, in Riofrío (Spain)

Martina Soledad Arnáiz was born into a very religious family in Amorebieta (Vizcaya). They were four siblings: two girls and two boys, one of whom joined the Jesuits and after several years he was appointed bishop in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic). Due to family circumstances, when she was still very young, she had to move and live in Gijón. She stayed there with one of her aunts. It was in this city that she met the Assumption where she entered as a postulant in 1939.

At the end of her initial formation, she was appointed to Mira Cruz until 1945 when she joined the Community of Malaga. But her warm heart and her desire to proclaim Jesus Christ led her to ask to be sent on a mission. Her request was accepted and in 1947 she was sent to Miami. In 1953 she was sent to Philadelphia, where she spent six years before returning to Miami. But in 1964, the house in Cuenca, Ecuador was founded and needed a Sister who could speak English. She was called to this new Community where she stayed for eight years. Her last assignment on the American continent was in El Salvador.

Blanca found relating with others easy perhaps due to having been away from Spain for so long, in Central America, Ecuador and the United States, which gave her outgoing character many

opportunities to create bonds of friendship and openness with others that lasted throughout her years in Spain.

Blanca was an active and dynamic woman, always ready to serve in the different situations in which she found herself; in the schools where she was happy to teach, to relate with the girls without sparing any effort. She loved the field of education.

On her return from Central America, she was appointed to the Bibio-Gijón school where she remained for many years, dedicating herself to teaching. There, she was much appreciated and loved, devoting herself, in the way she always did, in the English language and Religion classes she gave, and in the outings with the "Montagnardes". Once retired, she continued to collaborate in services of all kinds that she felt benefited the school. In recent years she enjoyed meeting with her former pupils who now had their own children at the school.

In Spain she was sent to several Communities: Malaga, Madrid Cuestablanca and Olivos, León, Lugo, Salamanca. She was the bursar in most of them, a service not always easy, but she was loved for her cordiality, her kindness, and her knowledge. She was a woman of positive outlook, with a great capacity to see the good in others and a desire to always do good.

Blanca was, above all, a good religious, and an even better Sister. She never tired of the Community meetings, where she always had something to say or to contribute. Prayer and the Divine Office were her greatest interest and for this reason she was always faithful and punctual at all the celebrations.

Blanca arrived in Riofrío when she was very ill and had difficulty adapting to this inactivity to which she was not accustomed. She was suffering, but knew it was the way to participate in the passion of Christ, the Christ she had chosen to follow and on Whom she had her eyes fixed, as long as she could do it with all her soul. She

reached that state of life in which she accepted passivity and the offering of herself through her illness.

Her word was: "My eyes are always on the Lord". This was her motto until the end of her life, and we have no doubt that the One on Whom she always had her eyes fixed on, will have welcomed and rewarded her in the last years of her life, showing her with tenderness all the good she had done. The Community of Riofrío is thankful to God for being able to enjoy Blanca's presence and life during these years, years of silence and mystery, but above all years of grace.

# SISTER MARIE BRUNO

## MARIE BIZET

- Date of birth: March 22nd, 1927, in Etampes (France)
- Postulancy: February 2nd, 1947 (Augustines de l'Hôtel Dieu, Paris) <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Novitiate: August 4th, 1947, in Paris
- First Vows: June 27th, 1951, in Paris
- Perpetual Vows: October 21st, 1954, in Paris
- Date of death: February 3rd, 2019 (Maison Ste Monique, Paris)

Originally from the beautiful old town of Etampes, in the Essonne Department, Simone was born into a family that already had three girls. She has a twin sister, but the characters are quite different.

All her life, she has remained very attached to this place where her sisters and nieces and many friends live. She had a happy childhood, with many relationships, especially with the 'Lejeune family' with whom she closely kept in touch, both with Professor Jérôme Lejeune, a geneticist, and with Philippe the painter, whose work, "the Prodigal Son", adorned her room.

It was undoubtedly through the Saint Joseph Retirement Home that she came to know the Augustines de l'Hôtel de Paris Congregation. Indeed, the Sisters assured its management and its various services in a wooded area on the outskirts of the city.

She entered the postulancy in Paris, rue des Plantes, on February 2nd, 1947, one month before her twentieth birthday, and received the habit on the 4th of August the following year. After completing her initial formation, she soon went on to study for the nursing degree in 1950, which she would complete twenty years later at the Ecole des Cadres, after obtaining a certificate in accountancy and management.



She was at the Boucicaut Hospital in Paris when she made her first vows, probably at the Mother House, rue des Plantes. She then worked in the surgery and cardiology department.

After her perpetual profession on October 21st, 1954, she oversaw night watches at the Notre Dame de Bon Secours Hospital, then at the maternity ward, located on rue des Plantes.

For six years, Sr. Marie Bruno then spent all her energy working with the elderly at the Hospice Debrousse. It was still the time of the large halls which created tremendous overcrowding, and the Sisters needed a certain authority. Sr. Marie Bruno, of a "tempered" character, did not lack in this! She then spent two years at the Hotel Dieu in Orléans and meets toddlers in the pediatrics' department.

In 1969, she returned to Paris, rue des Plantes, this time to the maternity ward where she spent many years and assumed different posts there. Between 1975 and 1982 she became general supervisor, then head of the hospital. It was at this time that the question of "assisted procreation" began to be asked for.

Following the union of the Congregations of Arras and Paris, Sr. Marie Bruno joined the Welcome Community in Arras in 1982 where she helped in the accounting department and saw to the replacement of nurses, both in the care center and at home.

She greatly appreciated the presence of Sr. Marie Madeleine Hanot, Superior of the Community and Canon Pentel, Ecclesiastical Superior with whom she conversed a lot. A great reader, she was an open and cultured person.

She returned to Paris in 2006 for the St. Geneviève Community and then, at her request, she joined the Residence Notre Dame de Bon Secours in December 2014.

It was then that other aspects of her personality were revealed: she had the ability to put many people at her service, both her Sisters and other residents, but she also knew how to make friends. She had

the skill of telling the truth while knowing how to express what would please the person she was talking to. She received many visitors and had opportunities to renew old relationships.

Like many, she experienced physical sufferings with a health that had often given her many worries but also moral suffering. Becoming more and more dependent, she did not envisage entering the EHPAD Sainte Monique. She was however hospitalized after a cerebral stroke, which took her from us a few days later.

Her funeral was celebrated in the Community chapel in the presence of the other Communities, many members of her family and friends.

"Every man is a sacred story; man is in the image of God".

## SISTER MARIA NOBUE OF THE INCARNATION

NOBUE OKADA

“I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

- Date of birth: October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1934, in Kawanishi (Japan)
- Postulancy: November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1964, in Minoo<sup>[11]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- Novitiate: December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1965, in Minoo
- First Vows: December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1966, in Minoo
- Perpetual Vows: September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1972, in Minoo
- Date of death: March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Minoo

Sr. Maria Nobue was born in 1934 at Kawanishi, now a city in the Hyōgo Prefecture, not far from Minoo. She was baptized in 1961 by a Franciscan priest in the Chapel of the Assumption in Minoo and confirmed in 1964 in the parish of Toyonaka. It was in that same year that she became a postulant of the Religious of the Assumption.

She made her novitiate in Minoo where she also made her First Profession in 1966 while she was also doing her theological studies at the Diocesan University of Eichi.

Between 1971 and 1975, she taught the Japanese language (Kokugo) and Calligraphy (Shodō) in the Assumption School in Minoo where she made her Final Profession in 1972. The WORD inscribed in her ring is “I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

In 1975 she was sent to Takamatsu where she served at the kindergarten, teaching both Religion and Japanese calligraphy.

Sr. Nobue had many special gifts, among them was the art of Japanese flower arrangement (Ikebana) where she expressed her love for God especially when she was in charge of the Chapel. She was also given to performing the Tea Ceremony, a Japanese traditional, cultural activity, and to playing the Koto, the national instrument of Japan. She also cooked very well. She always put her gifts at the service of others, especially the Sisters.

Between 1980 and 1987, she taught the Japanese language and Japanese calligraphy at Assumption Minoo.

In 1987 she was sent to Marugame and in 1992 she had the privilege of going to Auteuil for the Third Year.

In 1993 she returned to Assumption Minoo, this time to teach at the Kindergarten and the Primary School.

A task Sr. Nobue truly enjoyed and performed with much love and care, was being sacristine.

In August 2016, after celebrating her Golden Jubilee, Sr. Nobue became weak and eventually had to be hospitalized and later confined to her bed.

Sr. Nobue still witnessed the birth of our new Province. And as a new Province of Asia Pacific, our Provincial, Sr. Lerma Victoria was still able to visit Sr. Nobue who was still conscious and whose joy was perceptible.

Sr. Nobue received the Sacrament of the Sick on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 and the next day very peacefully passed on to be with the Father. Sr. Nobue will always be remembered as the first Sister of the new Province of Asia Pacific to join the Assumption of eternity.

The Sisters of Japan will always remember Sr. Nobue as a Sister who was always smiling, always gentle, and always very attentive to others, always wanting to give joy to others without drawing

attention to herself. The Province of Asia Pacific, especially in Japan, gives thanks for the life of our dear Sister Nobue.

## SISTER ROSAURA OF THE HEART OF MARY

ROSAURA BALBINA DE CASTRO CASTRO

“My life is hidden with Christ in God.”

- Date of birth: September 19th, 1928, in León (Spain)
- Postulancy: November 4th, 1952, in León <sup>[1952]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Novitiate: January 17th, 1954, in San Sebastian
- First Vows: February 25th, 1956, in San Sebastian
- Perpetual Vows: April 3rd, 1961, in Paris-Lübeck
- Date of death: March 6th, 2019, in Collado Mediano (Spain)

Rosaura arrived in Collado Mediano with our group of first Sisters when the Community was reopened. She came from Tegueste and was very ill, but God helped us, and we found a doctor who took a great interest in her state of health. The doctors diagnosed her with leukemia and gave her a new treatment that suited her. She started to get better and regain her strength. She immediately went back to work, in a good and beautiful service to the Community, rewarding for her and priceless for us. She lived like this for 10 years, with medical check-ups, but feeling strong enough to do her job but she relapsed, and we had to transfer her to the infirmary. This caused her a lot of pain, but she was a docile and realistic woman, so she quickly adapted to a different way of life.

Rosaura was the eldest of seven siblings, three of whom were religious: Sister M<sup>a</sup> del Santo Ángel, Sister Visitación and herself. Her first 15 years of religious life were spent in France in Auteuil, Lübeck, Lourdes and Cannes. She had good memories of this period and had told us many times about how hard it was to begin with, due to the language, but when she got used to it, she had to return to Spain.

Here she continued to give herself in the many services entrusted to her, with the pleasure and simplicity that characterized her. She never thought of herself, but rather of what would please the Sisters. Those who lived with her could see that all the details were important to her which was why she took such care of what was entrusted to her and loved to do small services, with the conviction that everything done with love is important for God.

When God asked her to stop the activity she was doing with such pleasure and love, we saw how, without complaint or regret at giving up what she was doing so well, she gave herself to prayer and adoration, to the Lord to Whom she had dedicated her life. She was a great "walker". She walked a lot, and it was probably what was the hardest thing for her not to be able to do anymore. The night before she passed away, she said to the nurse "tomorrow we will ask the Superior to let me walk again". I need it very much and it does me good. God took her with Him so that she could walk without fatigue in wider horizons.

Her word was: "My life is hidden with Christ in God". This is what she lived, and this was undoubtedly the motto of her life, a motto that she did not often speak about, but which she lived every day, as we, all of us who lived with her, can testify. She was happy in her job, happy to make others happy. She had discovered what we would all like to discover: that everything done out of love, even very small and simple things, is great in the eyes of God.

This is the great lesson she passed on to us, a lesson we want to learn and live knowing that it is the best legacy she has handed down to us. She was a good religious who knew how to put into practice in her life many of the commandments of Jesus in the Gospel.

Rosaura went with her Lord as she lived, discreetly and silently, as if she was waiting for Him. We were surprised by this unexpected departure, but seeing the peace and serenity on her face, we

discovered that the most important thing is to believe in the fact that God always leads us to take this definitive step.

Rosaura, we will always remember you for who you were and for everything you left to us.

The Collado Mediano Community



## SISTER ANNE MARIE OF THE TRINITY

### DÉSIRÉE DESCARPENTRIES

- Date of birth: April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1921, in Rumegies (59)
- Postulancy: November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1942 (Sœurs Franciscaines de Notre Dame des Anges, Tourcoing)
- Novitiate: September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1943
- First Vows: September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1945
- Perpetual Vows: September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1948
- Date of death: March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Arras (Hospital)

We slated her for her future centenary, but it was at the dawn of her 98th birthday that she left this land for the House of the Father, welcomed, no doubt, by the evangelist Saint John whom she read and reread so much throughout her life, as witnessed by Sr. Suzanne Mottu who lived with her for 25 years in Tourcoing.

Indeed, the years were beginning to weigh on Sr. Anne Marie, but the recent death of her sister-in-law Geneviève was for her an impossible ordeal to overcome.

Originally from the North, born in Rumegies and the first child of the family, she had been given a first name suggesting that she was "Désirée". Her father was the head of a large flour mill in Orchies. Already the employees were travelling by truck through the rich wheat fields of the department. Her mother, a fine cook, "passed on" some good recipes to her daughter, which she in turn regaled her Sisters with her cooking skills. Already, a car allowed the family on Sunday afternoons to discover the beautiful properties of the industrialists or politicians of the region. She kept a marvelous memory of these family walks which were also the occasion for her father to instruct his children in politics.

Sister Anne Marie willingly spoke at length about her two brothers, Gérard and Jean, about their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, sharing with us the joy of births by showing us the photos.

At the age of 22, she joined the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of the Angels and lived through the stages of religious formation in the rue de Wazemmes in Lille. Following her first vows, in 1946 she became a teacher in an institution of the Congregation in Croix, a town near Lille. She then added the function of bursar. It was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1948 that she made her final commitment.

Twice, she taught briefly in another place, at the school that trained housekeepers in Bucquoy, a large town not far from Arras.

As the boarding school in Croix had become a medical and pedagogical center for children in great psychological difficulty, she returned there for a short time before becoming for many years the bursar of the Notre Dame des Anges Institution in Tourcoing. The Community left the institution's walls for a small house in a working-class neighborhood. She was its Prioress.

Many memories of these years remain with her, in particular her collaboration with Mrs. Annie Lourdel, the directress, the teachers and the members of the staff. Highly relational, contact was quickly established with her who knew how to make herself available despite her workload. Her "tempered" character and firmness inspired respect but not distance.

As Sr. Bernadette Delobel, who lived with her for a long time, writes: "A woman of prayer, supported by the Word of God, it was with faith and courage that Sr. Anne Marie experienced great turning points in her religious life": the merger of her Congregation with the Augustinian Sisters of the Precious Blood of Arras, then the Union that made her an Augustinian of Notre Dame de Paris and

in 2016 the fusion with the Religious of the Assumption. All this was not without detachment and sacrifice, even if it was for more life and to follow Christ more closely.

In 1986 she became the Prioress of the Community for two years, working at the Notre Dame Educational Centre in Lyon.

During the 12 years in Paris where she was assigned, she was the General Bursar of the Congregation. She continued the major works she had begun: the renovation of the chapel, refurbishment of the kitchen in the third floor, the installation of shutters, the paintings all of which gave the house a new look. Sr. Anne Marie also cared about people and many members of the staff are grateful to her.

Open-minded, Sr. Anne Marie had remained "young and dynamic" for a long time, so much so, that when she was replaced as bursar at the Chapter of 2000, she returned to Tourcoing, still as Prioress, before discovering the Monts du Forez in 2006. There she discovered the richness of a welcoming and spiritual animation mission in a rural setting, a very pleasant place but the closure of the Community was necessary and soon she had to leave both Montbrison and "Le Mont".

In 2012, she went to the Welcome Community in Arras, "taking care of the matters of Le Mont" as she used to say, despite her age. But in August 2016, the illness broke out. Initially for the sake of the Social Security finances, Sr. Anne Marie refused to consider surgery. The insistence of Sr. Jeanine Bertrand and other Sisters to whom she confided and above all the support of her family was essential for her to accept. This health issue was a major milestone in her aging process. A fall, due to her rushing to answer the telephone would add to it.

Attentive to others, she remained a prayerful person, living this verse of Psalm 62 to the full: "God, you are my God, I seek you from the dawn. My soul thirsts for You".

# SISTER MARIA MAGDALENA OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

LORENZANA MARIN

“In your wounds, hide me”

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- Date of birth: Mai 29th, 1933, in Salvador
- Postulancy: January 9th, 1955, in Santa Ana (El Salvador)
- Novitiate: January 23rd, 1956, in Santa Ana
- First Vows: February 1st, 1958, in Santa Ana
- Perpetual Vows: February 1st, 1964, in Santa Ana
- Date of death: April 3rd, 2019, in Santa Ana

Our Sister María Magdalena was born in the municipality of San Julián, Sonsonate, El Salvador. Her parents were Nicolás Lorenzana and Micaela Marín. Her father died before she was born, and she lost her mother when she was 12 years old. She received the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation on August 19, 1933. Her grandmother took her in and took care of her education. She had only aunts and cousins for family.

Magdalena said that when she was young, she had the opportunity to get to know two Religious Congregations, but neither of them attracted her until the Lord brought her to the Assumption, where she remained until the end of her life.

Throughout her long life, Magdalena was sent to the Communities of: San Salvador, Santa Ana, Lourdes, Morazán, La Palmera and Santa Familia. In this last Community, she worked as a teacher. She had an incredible memory and used to call the girls by their names. She was very close to the families and cared about their needs and tried to help them. We were told by someone who knew her when she was working at N.D. de Lourdes school that Magdalena would always wait for her to ask whether she had taken her breakfast. This was a way to share something with her.

Magdalena's life was simple, but "she did not lack suffering since her childhood", according to Mother Belén Lozano, who was her Provincial. When we spoke in Community about Magdalena's life, we saw her as a Sister who maintained a great silence. She was very attentive, aware of everything, down to the smallest detail. When a Sister was absent, she was concerned about her, thus expressing her interest in each one.

Her gaze was profound. She had a strong character, was direct in expressing what she liked or disliked. She said the essential. She was patient and not at all demanding and was content with very little. She was very grateful but needed attention. She loved Community life and going for walks. Even when she was ill, she was always there at mealtimes, always looking out for what a Sister might be missing.

She had a beautiful voice and loved to sing, especially at the Divine Office and at the Eucharist, because she loved the liturgy, to which she attached great importance. She spent a lot of time in the chapel and joined in the community prayer. She was faithful to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament even when she was ill. Her silent presence edified us, as did her capacity to suffer by accepting her illness, allowing herself to be cared for and loved. She wasn't indifferent to the greetings and attention towards those who showed her affection.

In her last years she had meningitis from which she miraculously recovered. Two years later, she was diagnosed with stomach cancer, which caused her health to deteriorate. We can say that in the end, her word of life was fulfilled completely because the Lord "hid her in His wounds". We ask for your prayers, although we know that she was welcomed with love by the God who gave His life for her.

Her Sisters of the Holy Family Community

# SISTER ANNA EMMANUEL OF NAZARETH

ANASTASIA MATHIAS TEMBA

“Yes, Lord, I give you thanks”

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- Date of birth: July 8th, 1948, in Kirua Vunjo (Tanzania)
- Postulancy: September 8th, 1969, in Auteuil
- Novitiate: April 26th, 1970, in Auteuil
- First Vows: May 1st, 1971, in Auteuil
- Perpetual Vows: December 8th, 1979, in Singa Chini (Tanzania)
- Date of death: May 3rd, 2019, in Iguguno (Tanzania)

Sr. Anna Emmanuel Temba (Anastasia Mathias Temba) was born on 8th July 1948 at Kirua Vunjo, Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania. Sr. Anna Emmanuel was the second child of Mathias Temba and Perpetua Shayo.

She had her primary education at Mandaka Middle School, and did her Teachers Training in Mandaka Teachers Training College. The Religious of the Assumption had made the first foundation in Mandaka in 1957. She continued with her secondary school education at Bigwa and later studied at the University of Dar es Salaam.

While in Mandaka, she felt called to the religious life and therefore joined the Religious of the Assumption. She made her initial formation in Auteuil, France, postulancy on the 8th of September 1969, the novitiate on the 26th of April 1970 and made her First Vows on May 1st, 1971. She made her final (perpetual) vows in Singa Chini, Moshi –Tanzania on the 8th of December 1979. Her mystery: “Nazareth” and her Word, “Yes, Father I thank you.”

Sr. Anna Emmanuel was a teacher for many years. She taught in the following schools; Maili Sita Primary School from 1974-1976, Kibosho Secondary School whose administration was under the

Assumption Sisters before the schools were nationalized by the government in 1970, Majengo Secondary School which was run by the Christian Brothers, in 1988-1991 and in 1992-1996, Kambaa Girls Secondary School in Kenya which was run by the Assumption Sisters and Sangiti Secondary School, a Diocesan school where the Assumption Sisters were the administrators some of whom were faculty members.

Sr. Anna Emmanuel was one of the founders of the St. Marie Eugenie Girls Secondary School in Moshi, Tanzania in 2011. This is where she last taught.

Sr. Anna Emmanuel will be remembered for her great love for her students. She always wanted her students to excel not only in academic matters but also socially and spiritually. She was also involved in environmental issues in school as she believed that good environment was a fertile ground for studying. Many times, she stressed discipline and unity to students as a means for achieving their dreams in life. Sr. Anna Emmanuel taught English and French.

From 1996-1997 she was involved in the formation at Singa Chini and Iguguno.

Sr. Anna Emmanuel had also been a Superior in the following Communities; Kawangware (Junior Mistress) 1997-1999, St. Marie Eugenie Community (Chekereni) 2014, Kawangware Community 2015.

Sr. Anna Emmanuel got medical attention for her chest problems from time to time in various hospitals in Moshi and in Nairobi. While on short vacation in Iguguno Community, Tanzania, her condition changed suddenly, and she joined her Creator on the evening of May 3rd, 2019. May she be joyful with the One Whom she loved and served in the Church as a Religious of the Assumption.

## SISTER MARÍA FERMINA OF THE HOLY FAMILY

FERMINA SAN SEBASTIÁN ALMANDOZ

### “Our Father who art in heaven”

- Date of birth: March 5th, 1925, in Renteria (Guipúzcoa – Spain)
- Postulancy: September 7th, 1944, in San Sebastián
- Novitiate: October 21st, 1945, in San Sebastián
- First Vows: January 30th, 1947, in San Sebastián
- Perpetual Vows: January 30th, 1950, in Val Notre-Dame
- Date of death: May 10th, 2019, in Riofrío (Spain)

Fermina San Sebastián was born on March 5, 1925, in Rentería (Guipúzcoa) into a very Christian family. The Lord gave the family the grace of two vocations to the Assumption. Both were very missionary: Mauricia in Denmark and Fermina who spent many years in Belgium. She kept an excellent memory of each Sister, of the Communities and of everything she experienced during those years outside Spain. Back home, she spent 18 years in the Community of Mira Cruz, years in which she enjoyed family reunions with her brothers and nephews.

In 1993, she was sent to Collado Mediano, then, in 2004, to the Community of Los Molinos and finally, to Riofrío in 2009.

Fermina was a very sensitive woman regarding the spiritual life, simple in her relationships and with a prodigious memory. She had a special love for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which she often asked for, and receiving it gave her the peace she so desired.

She was always full of finesse when she spoke about her spiritual life. She longed for the closeness and affection of the Sisters, for which she was always grateful. One of her very special



characteristics was gratitude: she always had the word "thank you" on her lips. She was always giving grace for everything.

Fermina was a very helpful person who was always ready to do the simple and difficult jobs in the house. At a very young age her health was severely affected, but she managed to bear it with strength and self-forgetfulness. She loved the Church and the priests with veneration and respect. She was interested in all matters concerning the Church, the diocese and the parish and always prayed for them. Every day, at the time of intercession, she added one for the conversion of sinners and the spiritual health of her family, which was close to her heart.

We thank God for her long and fruitful life. She lived these last years with an ardent desire to go to the Father's House and I believe that it was a great joy for her to receive the Sacrament of the Sick, which she always desired so much, and, ten minutes later, to be received in the arms of the Father she loved so much.

We give thanks to God for these years lived with Fermina in this Community of Riofrío. It was a grace to be able to enjoy her presence and her great spiritual sensitivity, which was contagious.

Fermina, remember our Community and our Province, now that you are in the arms of this dear and desired Father.

The Community of Riofrío

# SISTER MARIA ANTONINA OF THE HEART OF JESUS

MARIA WILMÈS

“Lord, teach me to do your will”

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- Date of birth: November 5th, 1930, in Crombach (St Vith – Belgium)
- Postulancy: August 14th, 1950, in Val Notre Dame
- Novitiate: August 13th, 1951, in Forges (France)
- First Vows: September 12th, 1952, in Forges
- Perpetual Vows: September 20th, 1955, in Val Notre Dame
- Date of death: July 1st, 2019, in Brussels (Belgium)

Sister Mary Antonina of the Heart of Jesus makes us discover after her passing all the place that she - so unassuming and discrete – had in our hearts.

Sister Antonina, “Maria” at home, was born into a very united family, with strong Christian traditions, on the eastern border of Belgium, in the redeemed Cantons (territory returned to Belgium following the 1914 war) where German is spoken. There she witnessed the Battle of the Ardennes when, at Christmas 1944, in a final assault, the German army returned to territories that had been liberated in September. She saw her house burn down. She was 14 years old and had been marked by it.

She came to the Val with her cousins and friends. They worked in the kitchen while learning French. They were a happy bunch and Sister Lutgarde tells us that on the train back from holiday they had a good time and only Maria (Sr. Antonina) was rational!

She did her novitiate at Forges and was sent to Saint Gervais. A native of the countryside, she loved nature and kept an enchanting memory of the place.

Then she went to Auteuil. Sister Therese Maylis tells us: "I met her in Le Val, during our stays in the 80s. There was the presence of the "Lion of Judah" (a charismatic group who occupied the monastery for a time) and the prospect of leaving the Val in 1984, moving and settling in Welkenraedt. I remember our Sister who was discreet, hard-working, faithful, and always available despite her fatigue. I remember our conversations, our little walks etc..., and the joy of our reunions. Before that, I should have talked about her years in Auteuil. We were in the same Community, of which I was Superior. She was in charge of the dining room of the "Ladies", in the large room downstairs, which later became the Petra room. She was accurate, responsible in her work which was always well done, respectful, self-forgetful, sometimes surprised by the difficulties in the Community, ready to help and understand, very attentive to all. Sister Marie Antonina was a member of the Auteuil group designated to participate in the Beatification in 1975, and it was for her as for all of us a great joy. Thereafter, when we would meet again, it was good to look back over the memories. She also spoke to me about her family, her history in the reclaimed countries, her love of the Assumption. I wanted to say how much I appreciated and loved her, certain that she would have heard from God: "Come, good and faithful servant... As for her love for the Sacred Heart, the Heart of Jesus, it truly illuminated and led her life."

Back in Val Notre Dame, where there were numerous boarders, it was no small matter to manage the housekeeping and to bring up, without a lift, cubic meters of provisions also destined for the school in Antheit. She had a discreet apostolate with the staff, carpenters, electricians..., whom she would cross paths with in the cellar.

She then became part of the founding team of Welkenraedt. There she was in charge of a large vegetable garden. A homebody, Antonina didn't voluntarily want to go out, but the neighbors joined her in the cultivation and were very fond of her.

When she returned to Boitsfort, she went to Ciney and when it was time to leave Ciney, the Community waited patiently for the transfer to Boitsfort for some and to the nearby Sainte Anne Home (Residence) for the more vulnerable ones. The latter were to form a small Community animated by Sister Monique Elisabeth... but sadly she passed away and went to heaven!

The Community of Sainte Anne (an extension of the one in Boitsfort) is composed of Beatrice Marie, soon to be forced to use the wheelchair, Thérèse of Marie Immaculée, who no longer knows where she is and reproaches Monique Elisabeth for having left without saying goodbye to her, but still welcomes us with a bright smile, Meryem Anna, still valiant, and Antonina herself, who tries to create the link by trotting from one room to the other. In the new conditions of this life in the residence, she remains devoted to the Office and to prayer, unshakeable in her faithfulness.

On her arrival at Saint Anne's, Antonina was delighted with everything: "the staff is so kind, we are so well surrounded; my room overlooks the garden...". The death of her sister Agnes, not long before, had left her serene, but to learn that she had been cremated was a real sorrow; and Antonina began to decline, turning more and more towards the other Abode. She was always so anxious not to disturb, she died peacefully in her sleep.

During the private funeral, celebrated in the chapel of Saint Anne's home, the people sang: "Like Him, set the table and put on the apron...", as an apron together with her breviary and crucifix was placed on the coffin, and the family spontaneously sang a hymn in German, joining a long prayer in the same language that Antonina had recited without fail when she received the Sacrament of the Sick shortly before.

Good does not make any noise. Sister Marie Antonina, silent and discreet, has brought us a lot of good. We realized this more after

her departure. Let us thank the Lord together, entrusting her to His merciful Heart.

The Community of Boitsfort

## SISTER MARÍA LUISA OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

MARÍA LUISA CERVERA GOVANTES

### “He annihilated Himself”

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- Date of birth: October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1930, in Madrid
- Postulancy: July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1951, in Barcelona
- Novitiate: March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1952, in San Sebastián
- First Vows: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1953, in San Sebastián
- Perpetual Vows: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1956, in Gijón Bibio.
- Date of death: July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Collado Mediano (Spain)

Ma<sup>a</sup> Luisa arrived in Collado when the Community of Los Molinos was about to close. She had to go to the infirmary because her health was very delicate, but as always, she accepted it with simplicity and wanted to be as docile as she could at that moment of her life, by giving as little work as possible and accepting the will of the Lord. She was an easygoing, joyful, and an extremely grateful patient. If one had to define Ma. Luisa in one word, it would be "goodness" and in one sentence: "you are all very kind ". She never criticized anyone; all the Sisters were very good and maybe that's why she was a happy and grateful woman until the end of her life.

Ma. Luisa was the fourth in a family of 14 brothers and sisters, which made her ready for anything: helping, building relationships, defending herself and knowing where her place was. She was not like her sister, Sr. Ma. de Asís in her way of doing things, so ingenious, sociable and a great missionary whom she greatly admired, although she herself had had a missionary experience in Guatemala, an unforgettable experience and which marked her life. Every time she spoke of it, she was moved and said that it had allowed her to develop all her possibilities and capabilities.

Whenever she spoke of her time in the missions, she would do it with such conviction that she really made us believe what she was telling us, although it was sometimes difficult for us to believe what she said because her illness had weakened her. But there was something about her that made her believable, and even though it seemed almost impossible to see her riding a horse through the mountain villages to look after the indigenous people, we knew that what she was telling us was true, only because of this dedication which was still full of life in her.

In the end, when she was in a wheelchair, she never wanted to miss the afternoon Community meeting. But if someone knocked on the door or phoned, she was the first one to get up. We all had to tell her: "Ma. Luisa, don't worry, another Sister is going to do it".

When she felt better, she would offer to help the Sisters in the infirmary. We would then ask her to take care of them and, if they needed anything, to call the nurse. This seemed to her an important task, and she remained happy and peaceful.

We will always remember her blessings at meals, both at noon and at dinner, as they were very beautiful and always different, taking up the needs of the Community and the world. Sometimes we would tell her: "Repeat the prayer or the song so that we can write it down, it is so beautiful. She would answer: "Impossible, I am making it up as I'm speaking".

She had a great sensibility to live and to grasp what was happening around her. Neither the goodness, nor the suffering, nor the joy of the Sisters would escape her. Living with her was like a denunciation of criticism, light judgements, or bad thoughts about others. She overcame everything by means of kindness and prayer. She was a great religious and a woman to be envied for the happiness she exuded.

She left us good memories and an example of where to find what is really important. She knew how to live her word, "He annihilated himself", in all simplicity and humility.

Thank you, Ma. Luisa, for all that we have learned from you without your wanting to teach anyone, because for us the great lesson was your life, your illness, and your passage to the Father's House. With all our affection

The Community of Collado Mediano



## SISTER JEANNE D'ARC OF THE EUCHARIST

ELISABETH CHANTALOU

“Domine, tu scis quia amo te”

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- Date of birth: September 29th, 1914, in Orléans
- Postulancy: October 15th, 1934, in Orléans (Sœurs de Saint Aignan)
- Novitiate: June 3rd, 1935, in Orléans
- First Vows: September 8th, 1936, in Orléans
- Perpetual Vows: September 8th, 1942, in Orléans
- Date of death: August 6th, 2019, in Rome

Sister Jeanne, a pupil of the Sœurs Gardiennes de l’Eucharistie, attracted by Eucharistic adoration, consecrated her life to the Lord by responding to His call with generous fidelity.

Eucharistic adoration had always attracted her. We remember her, now a hundred years old, in a dignified attitude before the Blessed Sacrament, hands clasped together, head slightly bowed, gazing out in silent dialogue with her Lord. She kept the alarm clock on her desk so as not to forget the hours of the Office and her turn at adoration, and she was always precise and punctual for prayer.

At the time of the fusion, she was in the Como Community. Sister Ancilla remembers her: "She lived the passage to the Assumption without regrets or complaints, with a positive outlook. She, somewhat shy and reserved, gave of herself silently. Straightforward, of few words, seemed to keep 'her intimacy' for Someone. "We all immediately felt in her a Sister, one of us.

She was available and responded to the call of the Superiors who sent her first to Cagliari and then to Rome, where she worked as a

nurse among the Sisters and the students. Competent, attentive and understanding, she dedicated herself to her service with generosity.

She then spent a long period in Padua, giving herself simply to the various services, in the Community and in the hostel with the university students, in the infirmary, the reception desk, and the dining room.

When already elderly, she willingly went to form part of the Community of Pietrasanta since its foundation. She inserted herself simply in this environment of young people, open to new things, was known due to her French accent, well appreciated, because people felt loved and welcomed. She had a bit of difficulty in saying her real age and at the time of the birthday tended to take off a few years. She suffered from osteoarthritis in her knees but climbed the stairs several times a day, to go down to the chapel and back up without complaining, with lightness.

The last long period of her life was spent in the Quadraro infirmary. She jokingly said: "I was Parisian, now I am Roman, and the next destination will be the Verano cemetery!". Sr. Jehanne had a sense of humor. She did small favors and often repeated: "When Sr. Jehanne will be gone, who will peel the apples?" She was witty and provoked our smiles with her jokes. She was completely inculturated in Italy, participating in the life of what had become her Province.

Deafness and diminished eyesight had made her more solitary, limiting her participation in Community life and at times making her cranky, provoking unpleasant reactions in her when she was taken by surprise.

Recently she had become very gentle, always docile and ready to respond with gratitude to the gestures of fraternity and affection from the Sisters. She became weaker and weaker but always serene.

She left us on August 6th, the day of the Transfiguration, the date when the two religious families merged in 1968 and which marked her entry into the Assumption. For us, this coincidence was significant and softened the detachment.

Her niece Christiane, who, together with her cousins, came to celebrate with us the last birthdays of Sr. Jehanne, wrote to us on the day of her death: "But aunt was "born in heaven" on the day of the Transfiguration. I like this beautiful Polish expression very much. She discovered her God whom she loved so much during her long life and especially during her adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. We can imagine the Sisters of her Community as well as her parents and siblings celebrating their reunion. I can't help but think of that beautiful text where people on the beach are sad to see the sailboat leave while others rejoice when they see the sailboat arrive .... I prayed for her, entrusting her to the Divine Mercy that she discovered in the arms of the Virgin Mary, our heavenly Mother. Thanks to all of you and to Father Sergio for having surrounded her with your presence and your prayers in her last moments on earth, at the moment of the great passage..."

Sr. Jehanne was a gift to us. With gratitude we join in Christiane's prayer.

The Community of Quadraro

## SOEUR GINA OF JESUS

### GINA DEL ROCÍO LANDAVEREA ALMENDÁRIZ

#### “My Lord and my God.”

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- Date of birth: November 6th, 1956, in Salinas (Guayaquil, Ecuador)
- Postulancy: July 15th, 1992, in Salvador
- Novitiate: June 14th, 1994, in Guatemala
- First Vows: August 28th, 1996, in Guatemala
- Perpetual Vows: March 24th, 2001, in Guayaquil
- Date of death: August 13th, 2019, in Guayaquil

She was always very cautious in speaking and in referring to her family. Her family ties had a circular feature: parents and brother. Once her parents passed away, her cousins were Gina's closest relatives. We know the values of honesty, responsibility, simplicity and truth lived by her parents. She always gave the reason for her surnames which were of European origin. Her grandparents had met on Ecuadorian soil. Two surnames were difficult to pronounce and unknown in our area. There were always anecdotes to share in this regard, whenever a stranger had to pronounce these surnames: Landaverea Almendáriz.

She studied at the Rita Lecumberri Normal School; an institution recognized for the good quality of Normal School teachers offered to the Guayaquil society. Gina, since she graduated in 1975, entered the Colegio de la Asunción as a primary school teacher. All the alumni remember her for being a very qualified and very strict teacher.

She was in the Assumption as a teacher until January 1992. What was most important during that time was her teaching to which she

devoted all her energy. She was encouraged by the group of friends who were also being formed as teachers in the same school. During her free time and the vacation months, Gina enjoyed traveling and seeing the world with her friends.

She retained this dimension of being a woman who profited of everything, who enjoyed everything, who liked to sing, dance, eat and travel until the end of her days. Of a free and independent spirit, she was, by nature very joyful and energetic in her decisions, a born and experienced pedagogue. She was not very religious either in her way of living nor in her way of doing things.

It was at the celebration of the 25 years of a Sister that she felt the call of God, and without saying anything to anyone, upon being included to participate in the Education Congress in January 1992, which was held in Guatemala, that she decided to stay and get to know the Congregation more closely. Her father had just died, and this was decisive for her.

Her independent nature ran into another way of orienting and directing her life. A long period of indecision, of searching, of constant struggles due to how hard it was for her to adopt a new lifestyle totally different from what she was used to marked this stage in El Salvador, a different country that had just come to the end of a civil war and with conditions that disoriented her. It was there that she made her postulancy.

What she was clear about, and the rest of us confirmed, was the strength of her decision to be and belong to the Lord. She paid the price and expressed in practice this decision of "God Alone." Humanly speaking, all of her being resisted but she put herself before the Lord and she surrendered. This was the certainty that carried her forward. So, after some time she went to the novitiate in Guatemala. She was with people younger than her and who had other experiences, other interests and perceptions. This cost her a lot. However, the love of the Lord made her overcome everything

and she entered into the dynamics of following the Lord with all its consequences.

When it was time to choose the place to do the ‘stage’ experience, we sent her to the poorest and least attractive place for her: San Luis (Guatemala). We knew that everything that was manual was difficult for her, like working in the fields, getting in touch with simple people. From the first moment she entered the dynamics of the Community and she accepted what was asked of her without resisting. She always alluded to this ‘stage’ as a challenge and constant learning process for her.

At the end of the ‘stage’ in June 1996, she was 40 years old. She expressed her desire to consecrate herself definitively to the Lord taking the mystery ‘of Jesus’ and expressed this desire in this way: “The figure of Jesus constantly motivates me to a full and radical conversion and His word transforms my whole being and feeling. Out of love for him, I ask for the mystery ‘of Jesus’, which reveals Him in the mystery of the Cross and of Easter, as the God of love, forgiveness and mercy. I want and I wish to make the vows in response to His will for me”.

We saw the need for her to start her theology studies and we sent her to the Catholic Institute in Santiago de Chile. There she obtained the best grades having as co-students the Assumptionist brothers who remember how responsible she was in her work and in her studies and how they relied on her. Her passage through the Santiago Community marked her and it was a grace filled experience.

She returned to Ecuador, with the word of God at the back of her mind: "return to your house and tell everything the Lord has done to you." She literally writes “the power of this word made me recognize the action of God in my life, an action framed by tenderness and compassion that has led me to encounter my own being and my littleness, but it is precisely in those limitations where

I recognize His hand and His action transforming attitudes, criteria and feelings in me. Today I intensely live the return to Ecuador, as a gift from God. The time spent abroad has opened me to a universal view of the Kingdom and of the Congregation. I have opened myself to what is ours and it has reinforced my being and my identity. Today, the return home engages me to serve my land in a different way, with an evangelical vision and clothed in the newness of God” (June 20, 1999).

It was in 2001 when she pronounced her perpetual vows, taking as word what would define her throughout her life: "My Lord and my God." This word helped her enter into and accept what was difficult for her in every circumstance. Until the last night that she was in the house, when we gave her the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the Community witnessed what she said to the priest: “Father, all my life I have been a “tomasina”. This word and this gesture of Thomas in the Gospel defined Gina's faith and her way of following Christ. “It has defined my life. This God loves me and invites me to follow Him and to be with HIM”. “I feel that I have taken slow but sure steps, and today I express to you, with certainty and security, my desire to belong freely and entirely to the Lord Jesus in the Assumption”.

She spent 19 years in Ecuador as a Sister and as a teacher. She started and set in motion the educational work in Quito, the nursery and the school that later we could not maintain. She did the same as Directress of Fe y Alegría in Guayaquil where her closeness to the parents was her strength. At the same time, she was forming a group of teachers partly paid for by the state. She was an excellent formator of teachers.

In the school, her former students could not understand that the one who was Miss Gina to them was now Mother Gina and who was, as usual, helping the teaching staff and looking after the general administration of the school. Her experience and knowledge gave

her an authority that was reinforced by the tone and the need of the moment.

The outstanding consequential act that marked the year 2016 was that delegated to her and to two lay teachers: the rebuilding of the most unprotected area affected by an earthquake, an area where no one had gone to because of the distance and the state of destruction. Our dream to celebrate the bicentennial in 2017 of the birth of Marie Eugenie and Therese Emmanuel and the 60 years of our presence in Ecuador was: "60 years, 60 houses." It was a very ambitious project, but it was carried out with the help of the Congregation, of friends, of each of the members who participated therein. Gina led and executed this project to build 60 decent homes to replace those that had been destroyed by the earthquake.

With the help of the Community, she put all her energy and creativity into this challenge. She suffered from seeing what her people had gone through. The first stage took the whole year to accomplish. The second stage had been programmed but could no longer be carried out since she had to participate in another activity that she was passionate about and that she planned with much enthusiasm: the participation in the Transformative Education Congress in the Philippines. She was to participate with two more teachers. While there, she felt that she was not well physically. It was when she arrived in Guayaquil that she felt a lot of discomfort which, after many and long tests, turned out to be a plasma cell cancer, a very acute leukemia.

From May 29 to October 6, 2018, she was in and out of the hospital. We did everything possible to get her body to react and maintain the platelets that would give her a fairly regular lifestyle. We were hopeful. There were moments of ups and downs, until, when apparently everything was working well and the indicators showed that she had overcome after 15 months of a constant and tenacious struggle for life, she left us in a week. The Lord made the decision



and invited her to enter His glory accompanied by Our Lady of the Assumption.

Gina's illness was a time when everything was put to the test. The whole Community was by her side day and night. During that time other aspects that had not been present in her life were unleashed, such as the phobia of closed places, the inability not to manifest her emotions, and other medical realities. This made the situation of the illness more vulnerable. Throughout the months she was in the hospital she had to be in a room without windows with everything closed. This required, in addition to the urgency and delicate nature of the disease, the presence of a Sister 24 hours a day.

Everyone, she and us included, was put to the test. Accepting the disease was not a matter of the head, it was a matter of consent. And the Lord took her progressively until the eve of the Assumption, when she became a participant in the Life that has no end. We did not understand much, but we only understood that it was the way in which the Lord made himself present: progressively, almost painlessly, after the nights she had spent with so much pain. She said goodbye to her brother, asked for the Sacraments, and let him drive her to the hospital to do some tests. She was already very seriously ill, and we were no longer able to bring her home alive.

She deteriorated in about 12 days and when we realized it the Lord took her away. Meanwhile, the school was preparing the feast of the Assumption. Everything was colorful, joyous, and festive, and in that context, we celebrated Gina's Easter.

That everything happened so quickly and on that specific date, was a consolation and, in a way, a gift, a joy and a source of peace. That was the best gift the Lord gave us: to take her away after such a long and painful illness, on that date and in that way. We understood that it was God's auspicious time for Gina. Our farewell to her was a real

celebration on the feast of the Assumption. The Provincial of the Assumptionists accompanied us. The feeling of joy that she left us, as we said good-bye to her, was very beautiful and deep.

I do not want to end this without expressly referring to three very important aspects:

- The dedication of the Sisters, their generosity in being there and sparing no effort for Gina. To withstand was the watchword. She needed to be very strong to face the disease and all that it entailed. Gina from heaven will know how to transform it into life.
- With the Sisters, we acknowledge the way the doctors helped us, specifically three professionals who, without any self-interest, put all their resolve on her behalf, fought for her life and invested energy and time with great generosity. It has done us a lot of good getting to know those doctors and we are very grateful to them. They have been real angels for us and have helped us make such a hard and expensive disease more bearable in a country where health requires many financial resources, because the poor do not have access to them.
- The process which started in the hospital, between the sick and their families, between the doctors and the Sisters. Room 33 where she was, became a theological place of faith, prayer, compassion and solidarity. The Sisters made this experience possible. Every afternoon, as many as were allowed, the sick and family members, gathered in the corridor to pray Vespers together. Hymns were sung and psalms were said. Gina encouraged their prayer from her room while the Sister who accompanied her was outside with the people. It was a very beautiful experience that strengthened all of us. Little by little we learned that all those who were victims of the same illness as Gina, went

either ahead or after Gina. We didn't want to tell her when we knew someone had gone ahead, but it was very comforting to know that she was alright and alive.

- Gina accepted to be on social security where medicines were not included in the program rather than have private insurance not possible for the ordinary people. This challenged all the Sisters. How do we deal with a situation like this? Do we want to experience the fate of and be one with our people? Gina accepted the decision of the Province and made it her own until the last moment and with the consequences that this entailed.

She had said when asking for perpetual vows that she wanted to “live this vow as a way of incarnation with Jesus, poor, humble and destitute. The figure of the poor Jesus motivates me to live this vow in solidarity with others and especially with those who have less”.

I don't know how to interpret all the moments that the Lord has allowed me to experience and accompany Gina from the first moment of her faith experience and her following of Christ. I received her in El Salvador as a postulant, then, as a Provincial, I received her for temporary and perpetual vows. Then I have shared with her these five years in the Community, in the work for the Kingdom in the School and I have witnessed her illness, the purifying process that God allowed her to go through. I just thank the Lord for having witnessed Gina's decision to follow Him.

Ascension González Calle

Superior of the Community of Guayaquil

## SISTER MARÍA BRITIA OF MARY IMMACULATE

AURORA MARGARITA RUIZ ROCHA

“Tibi sacrificabo Hostiam laudis.”

- Date of birth: June 10th, 1923, in Nicaragua
- Postulancy: May 27th, 1944, in Managua (Nicaragua)
- Novitiate: June 1st, 1946, in Santa Ana (Salvador)
- First Vows: July 2nd, 1947, in Santa Ana
- Perpetual Vows: July 16th, 1950, in Managua
- Date of death: August 14th, 2019, in Santa Ana

In Matagalpa, a beautiful mountainous region of Nicaragua, a place of rivers, forests, and waterfalls, with a great wealth of flora and fauna, our dear Sister Aurora Margarita Ruiz Rocha was born. These beautiful surroundings of her childhood, impressed upon her a deep love for nature and her appreciation for everything that spoke of the beauty of God.

Her parents were Norberto Ruiz Padilla and Celina Rocha Rodriguez. Four children were born from this marriage. Her father remarried so she had four siblings from the first marriage and twelve from the second. She was united to all of them by strong bonds of affection, with a very close relationship and of great interest in the lives of each one.

For her early education, her father sent her to the city of León. There, she was cared for by her grandmother and two aunts who nurtured her with care and towards whom she had deep affection and gratitude. During that time, she started to learn embroidery, a gift that she cultivated throughout her life, thanks to the wonderful artistic ability inherited from her father who was a goldsmith.

At the age of 21, Aurora Margarita entered our Community in Managua, Nicaragua as a postulant. After two years she went to the Novitiate of Santa Ana, in El Salvador, where she made her temporary vows. She returned to Managua for perpetual vows and there she remained for more than 10 years at the side of Mother Francisca de Paula, an extraordinary formator who greatly appreciated her and lay the foundations that would make of her an authentic Religious of the Assumption.

Sister María Britia, in a way, made a pilgrimage through the different Communities of our Province, from Ecuador, going several times to Santa Ana, Guatemala, La Palmera, Tac Tic and a two-year hiatus in the Community of Auteuil. This opportunity came when, after the Beatification of Mother Marie Eugenie, the Sisters were asked what aspect of our life needed updating. Her enthusiastic response was immediate: “to experience living for a time in the Mother House, close to Mother Marie Eugenie, to deepen her spirit, get to know the Congregation better, dedicate herself to her own personal integration through Faith, forgiveness, living of the Sacraments, in a process of continuous growth.”

She was assigned to the Community of Auteuil, enjoying this time fully, “feeling called to be one of the worshipers in spirit and in truth that the Father seeks; living the absolute of God in contemplative adoration and silence; studying the Rule of Life, especially the Chapter on Humility and what Marie Eugenie says in No. 23, so that the Lord may continue to give me the opportunity to become holy.” Sr. Maria Britia always considered this grace as a gift from the Lord and Mother Marie Eugenie.

Upon returning to the Province, she went to Guatemala and successively to Santa Ana, San Salvador, Lourdes, Santa Ana again and, finally, to the Community of Santa Familia, to which she arrived on December 23, 2000.

About her spiritual life, we can say that our Sister was a contemplative soul, a lover of the Lord and of the Immaculate Virgin, happy to spend a long time at Adoration because of her great love for the Eucharist. Woman of Faith and of a great capacity for suffering, faithful disciple of Mother Marie Eugenie, she had a deep love for the Church and the Congregation. She felt happy to be able to live internationality and inter-“generationality”. She was simple, sensitive, tender, deep, full of peace and a communicator of peace. Her great sense of unity led her to give herself with a missionary spirit at the service of the Congregation.

She enjoyed reading the Chapters of Mother Marie Eugenie, the spirituality of the Assumption, as well as all the documents sent by the Province and the Congregation with which she fed her spiritual life and meditated on them assiduously. Faithful propagator of her devotion to Mother Marie Eugenie, she collaborated throughout her life making a large number of medals with relics, prints and souvenirs, especially at the time of her Beatification and Canonization.

Our Sister Britia was very loved and appreciated everywhere, not only in our Communities, but by all those who came into contact with her. She was welcoming, hospitable, talkative yet always ready to listen and be interested in others. With a gentle character, with a deep sense of Community and of great human quality, she was simple, helpful, hard-working, always ready to do things “with the greatest possible perfection”. She knew how to weave, sew, embroider in all specialties, make all kinds of crafts with original or recycled material, with extraordinary creativity. She made many liturgical ornaments and beautiful tablecloths for the altars of our chapels, that is, everything related to the service of the Lord, she did it with love.

She had the gift of teaching and wanted others to learn and do so well by making the most of their resources. In recent years she was

doing occupational therapy with the Sisters, putting the final touch on what each one did. Her humility and her respect for them was admirable.

Her health was fragile, but her trust in God was greater. As a cancer survivor from her youth, she bore her sufferings and ailments with patience. She loved life and enjoyed it. Very joyful, she took advantage of every occasion to express her sense of being one body and one family, especially in the celebration of the Immaculate Conception (December 8), singing with great devotion and joy the praises proper to the Novena.

With deep roots in Nicaragua, but with a universal heart and missionary spirit and solidarity, she made beautiful and multiple crafts for many years to obtain funds and send them to Rwanda. She showed great interest in the national reality of her beloved Nicaragua, and the life of the Church, listening to the radio that, like the newspaper, kept her informed of social, political, economic and ecclesial events. She expressed her interest in what was happening in the world and brought it to prayer.

The Community of Santa Familia was where she spent her last years and where she was very much loved. Feeling that her strength was diminishing and that she was tiring easily, she began to organize her memorabilia, shared her treasures: threads, magazines, paintings and was preparing for the encounter with the Lord, leaving in us a feeling of peace, despite the pain that her imminent departure caused us.

Some testimonies express the mark left by our Sister:

“I knew and admired Mother Britia a lot. A simple and very tender woman, affectionate, warm, delicate, and joyful. I met her when I arrived at the Assumption at a very young age... I was impressed by her smile, her finesse, her sweetness, and her dedication. I remember seeing her very reverent before Jesus in the Blessed

Sacrament while at Adoration, which impacts any child. I also remember her measuring my school uniform ... I remember her as generous, helpful and very affectionate. I thank God for her life, dedication and testimony and I join in thanksgiving for her departure for heaven. Women like her leave a strong impression on children.” (Maggie Matheu, former student of the Colegio de Guatemala.)

“For our family, she was a true sister. She was our beloved sister who transmitted to us her joy, her smile, her beautiful advice, her optimism, her tenderness. We are very sad to know that we will no longer see her, but God called her and she, very obedient, answered the call. Our two sisters, Sonia and Diamantina, shared happy moments with her when they visited her”. (Mireya, her Sister)  
“Sister Britia really liked the Nicaraguan songs to Mary, so effusive and popular! Through them, she expressed her experience of God.” (Father Roberto- Chaplain)

On the day of her funeral, Odessa, our Provincial gave a beautiful eulogy on our dear Sister Britia: “She was already touching Heaven and with her life she told us what it means to be in the presence of God. What peace! What fullness! What greatness! A Nicaraguan Sister, who, since she entered the Congregation, all the other Sisters began to perceive in her a spiritual delicacy, great simplicity and depth, her human quality to relate with everyone, dedicated, with great love for the Lord and Mary. She was a truly upright, coherent Religious of the Assumption.”

She was a woman who knew how to be open. She was open to the changes that were taking place in the Congregation and she manifested her great love and prayer for the Congregation and the Province. She always prayed for vocations.

She was a universal woman, among the first to arrive in Ecuador where she was very much loved, appreciated and remembered for her great ability to relate with everyone and very humble. She kept



many former students in her heart. She left on the eve of the Assumption. She loved Mary and told us: Mother is waiting for me...

We give thanks for a life of holiness, friendship and fully centered on the Lord. Today she HAS GIVEN EVERYTHING IN PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING (her word was "Tibi sacrificabo Hostiam laudis") singing the marvels of the Lord.

She was very concrete in her love: she knew how to be a Sister, she knew how to be a friend, she knew how to love her family and put us in contact with them."

We thank God for His having gifted us with our Sister Britia and with her, we rejoice in the wonders that the Lord has done in her life and that bring us closer to the love of the Father.

The Community of Santa Familia

# SISTER MARIE SAINT AUGUSTIN OF THE REDEMPTION

MICHELLE CHARCOT

## “Pater”

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- Date of birth: August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1921, in Colombes (France).
- Postulancy: September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1949, in Paris-Lübeck
- Novitiate: June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1950, in Paris-Lübeck
- First Vows: September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1951, in Forges (France)
- Perpetual Vows: November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1954, in Paris-Lübeck
- Date of death: August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Montpellier (France)

According to her dearest wish and in accordance with what was promised to her in December 2013 at the time of her difficult departure from Lourdes to Montpellier (or of pulling her out from Lourdes to Montpellier.), Sister Marie Saint Augustin was buried on Tuesday, August 21, 2019, interred in the vault of the Congregation in Lourdes, close to Mother Marie-Denyse, Sister Hélène-Marie, and so many other of our older Sisters, under pouring rain. Some faithful friends had joined the Community of Lourdes for this last farewell. Gérard Altuzara, recalling their last telephone conversation, testified: "She had spoken of her going to the Father. I think that if I understood something of your magnificent motto of joyful detachment, I owe it in large part to this rare conjunction that she maintained between her attachment to this world and the detachment with which she envisaged leaving it one day."

We can say that Sister Marie lucidly contemplated her death. She often wondered who, of the three elder Sisters of our Community who followed closely behind her, would be the first to leave... She took the lead, a few days before her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday. A very big fall

one night, almost a year ago, had started the final journey. At one point we had even informed Lourdes about this but then she regained her strength, and it were peaceful few weeks. She was very present, willing, able to send you on your way in rather 'green' language, faithful to her play of words, and at the same time as softened, showing gratitude for any service and grateful to the nursing staff with a good smile. She knew where she was going "Now it's time to wait, and till when? She felt her strength weakening and said her time was coming. As Sister Catherine-Myriam asked her if she was afraid, she exclaimed that she couldn't be since she was going to see God, although she was a bit worried about not being able to manage it.

God was her FATHER. It was the word on her ring. She was rather modest about her private life and seemed to many people to be rather distant and cold. She was an impressive lady who didn't confide much, none of us were ever allowed to address her informally.... During fraternal reunions, assemblies and other gatherings, she never embraced and didn't want us to do it. However, underneath her hard character was a golden heart. She carried a painful secret. During our meetings in Montpellier, called small groups, fraternal gatherings in smaller numbers, she sometimes opened herself up to the wounds of her childhood spent alone in the shadow of her mother. Her parents had separated, leaving her mother in a difficult financial situation. Mother Marie-Denise had provided Mrs. Charcot with the position of receptionist In Lubeck. On rare visits to her father's home in Neuilly, she felt ignored, not finding her place, as if she wasn't important, next to her two older brothers. "There was only room for boys!" Her mother had agreed of her wish on her visiting them as rarely as possible. This suffering was still very much alive in her heart.

Her father, the brother of the famous Commandant Charcot, had remarried and had three other children. The one that Sr. Marie called "little Pierre" was 8 years younger than her, and she regularly

showed her attachment to him, not failing to wish him a happy birthday or to send him a box of marrons glacés every year at Christmas. They called each other regularly.

Many believe that this family experience is responsible for her sensitivity towards children and people in need. This was particularly evident at Forges in relation to the very young little interns, who were housed there by single mothers to bring them up, or in relation to the working-class families of the neighboring towns she visited by bicycle and with whom she made friends. Up to recently in Montpellier, she was visited every year by former employees of one of our boarding schools, "poor women" as she put it, who could afford a few days holiday. Marie Saint Augustin asked us to help her to surround them as she no longer had the strength to face the situation alone.

She has worked a lot for children, in Lubeck, Bordeaux, Cannes and Forges. She prepared generations of "little ones" for their First Communion. She was a real educator; rather solitary (or individualistic) ... her imagination did not make teamwork easy. She wasn't afraid to innovate; she went to skiing trips with her flock when there wasn't, as yet enough snow and she wasn't afraid to put on skis ... in her habit!!!! From those memorable years she kept very faithful friendships among the different teaching staff and alumnae. As far as she could, she animated the group of alumnae of the South of France with Marie Thérèse Laporte. The meetings were held in Toulouse and brought together the faithful from all over the Southwest of France. Those who had studied there or those who lived there. Marie Saint Augustin had her group of friends. So, when she went to Bordeaux or Cannes in recent years, she was more likely to visit her friends than the Communities. She had her room at Mademoiselle Gaussin's house in Bordeaux and the Sisters might be surprised to find her at Mass on a weekday in a chapel in the city when we didn't even know she was around. Her originality was legendary...

It wasn't just the skiing piste she ventured on. She drove the Community's 2C-V ...leading passengers, not always very reassured, whom she picked up at Cannes train station to go to Avenue du Commandant Bret where they went for a break. Those who crossed France on holiday or who arrived from abroad in a Parisian airport to reach Orléans still shiver at the thought of what was a bit like the slalom...

You can't talk about our Sister's personality without mentioning her passion for music. A moving photo from the last few weeks shows a caregiver who has the idea of putting her phone to her ear to let her hear classical music... Her face lit up. She had studied at the Paris Conservatory in her youth and impressed people by her ease in transcribing any music score. She played the flute. A Sister, who was responsible for the singing practice in Lourdes about twenty years ago, described how intimidated she was to give the lesson in the presence of Sr. Marie St. Augustin. The deafness of the latter prevented her from exercising this responsibility. This growing handicap isolated her little by little and prevented her from taking part in conversations. But she was there, shouting in your ears: "I can't hear anything!" and yet sometimes she was able to pick up what was convenient for her...

Practically silent at table, she continued to come every day for lunch. Until her fall, you should have seen her welcoming Sr. Marie Saint Bernard, older by just a few months, taking her by the hand and leading her to her place, preparing for her a half slice of bread. In this way she showed the same tenderness and compassion that we had known her for in Lourdes, when, for years, she took Sister André, blind and infirm, for a 'walk' every morning in her wheelchair around the garden after Mass. She visited her and read to her daily. They were friends.

It was also in Lourdes that she left a lasting memory of one of her skills which led to her being nicknamed "Sister Jam". She made jam

with everything. We saw her picking hundreds, even thousands of dandelion flowers in the meadow to make jelly out of them!! During her last months in Lourdes, she was discovered one day doing a balancing act, up on a stool, perched on a trolley to be able to stir more easily her precious stewpot, risking breaking her bones. The cupboards of the house were still full of pots after her absence despite the mass distribution.

When we visited her in her room, we were marked by seeing the photo of Mother Dominique in a prominent place. With Mother Marie Denyse, she meant a lot to Sr. Marie. She was almost a "fan", as one of us said. Her vocation in fact grew in Lubeck, where she was first a "young teacher" at the Petit College and where Mother Marie Denyse accompanied her spiritually.

On the morning of August 14<sup>th</sup>, Sr. Marie was taken as usual in her wheelchair to the 11:45 a.m. Mass, and shortly afterwards asked to be taken back to her room to lie down. She had once told Sr. Christine-Marie that she wanted to die alone. At the end of the meal, Sr. Catherine-Myriam tells us that the Lord came to take her to sing the 1<sup>st</sup> Vespers of the Assumption in heaven.

Sister Hélène Bureau, our Provincial, who had arrived for a few days break, accompanied Sr. Catherine-Myriam in all the necessary procedures. First experience!!! But above all, it was a beautiful Community experience to prepare the Celebration of A-Dieu together and to surround her once again for a final vigil. She was resting, lying slightly on her side. This final evening leaves us with a deep sense of peace. The wounded little girl has just taken refuge in the Father's arms. How great is the Mystery of Faith!

The Community of Montpellier

## SISTER MARIA GORETTI

### MARIE-THÉRÈSE GRENIER

- Date of birth: April 16th, 1942, in Saily sur la Lys (Pas de Calais, France)
- Postulancy: October 2nd, 1963 (Sœurs Augustines du Précieux Sang, Arras)
- Novitiate: April 6th, 1964, in Arras
- First Vows: August 28th, 1966, in Arras
- Perpetual Vows: July 21st, 1974, in her birthplace
- Date of death: August 17th, 2019, in Arras

Marie Thérèse was born into a Christian family on April 16<sup>th</sup>, just like Saint Benedict Joseph Labre, who played a major role in her life, as did Pope Benedict XVI, of whom she was very proud of. She was the second child and the only girl in a family of three boys.

Marie Thérèse was born in a rural area, in a village in the Pas de Calais, Saily sur la Lys. Her father was for a long time the mayor of the village, another source of pride for her, who had been very concerned about others all her life. A farm with crops and livestock was the setting for her childhood. Even though the work in the fields, in which everyone participated, was hard, family life was warm and deep bonds were formed. Her brothers will always show her a great deal of affection. As one of them said at the funeral: "Marie Thérèse, it was in 1962, before you turned twenty, that you told our parents of your intention to dedicate your life to God. Our parents did not refuse, so papa asked you to reflect and to deepen your choice until you reach your majority. The decision was made, the choice was confirmed: at the age of 21, you entered the Augustinians of the Precious Blood, 13 rue Pasteur, in Arras.

October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1963 was a day of great joy for her aunt, Sr. Marie Madeleine, a long-time member of the Congregation. She would often ask the Novice Mistress, Sr. Jeanine Bertrand: "How is Marie Thérèse?"

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1964, when she took the habit, Marie Thérèse received the religious name of Sr. Odile Marie. She took her first vows two years later, on the feast of Saint Augustine, on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1966, in Arras.

Bernard, her brother still says: "I remember those parlor talks where we were happy to see you and sad to leave you. You were happy, fulfilled in your Community. I know, we all know, that during all these years of religious life, you had this desire to serve, to give everything you had in your heart: your generosity, your spontaneity. You had to be busy... to serve. After the first years of religious formation, Sr. Odile Marie joined the Community of Solesmes in the North. Due to a lack of candidates, the minor seminary became St. Michel College and welcomed its first girls. She was in charge of the boarding school for the girls. She also attended Red Cross courses and became a first aid instructor, which led to her working with the local fire brigade to form first aiders. She has many good memories and anecdotes from these years. Anxious by nature, she loved to laugh and to make others laugh, never stingy with stories in Patois.

Once she had her driving license, she says: "Quickly I inadvertently hit a wall, which put a stop to my driving career. I didn't dare drive again."

Then came the years in Paris, in the Community of rue Saint Maur, in the 11<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, which we called "the Juniorate", coupled with studies of catechism.

In 1973, she was sent to the Community in Tourcoing and became a primary school teacher at the Institution Notre Dame Immaculée.



In the Community, other Sisters taught in the secondary school, at "Notre Dame des Anges", an institution of the Congregation. It was in the church of her baptism, in Saily sur la Lys, in the presence of many witnesses, that Sr. Marie Thérèse took her perpetual vows on July 21, 1974. It was an event for the village and the surrounding area!

In Tourcoing, in 1980, while crossing the street in front of the house, Sr. Marie Thérèse was hit by a car. The impact was violent: an open fracture of the leg and head trauma. She was left with after-effects but did not complain about them. She then spent some time in Arras and, unable to return to teaching due to voice problems, she was sent to the Abbeville retirement home in the Somme department to welcome visitors and carry out administrative tasks. At the same time, she experienced the joy of announcing Christ to children in the catechism classes. She made many friends among the catechists, many of whom have remained in contact with her. Some of them were present at her funeral despite the distance.

Once again, health problems (they would recur throughout her life) made her join the Community of Combloux in Haute Savoie for a year. A complete change of scenery! It was a great opportunity to take time to admire nature in front of the Mont Blanc. In September 1997, Marie Thérèse returned to her beloved Pas de Calais, to Amettes, the little village where Saint Benedict Joseph Labre was born. She was entrusted with various missions, sometimes simultaneously: pastoral animator, accompanying individual pilgrims or groups who came to pray in the house where Saint Benoît was born or in the church, treasurer of the Saint Benoît Association... but also serving breakfast to the residents and coordinator of the Saint Benoît Labre retirement home. After a formation course at the University of Lille, she was involved in palliative care in the EPHAD. The geographical proximity of her family made her brothers say: "You never abandoned your family, you did a lot for mama and papa, whom you entrusted to God every

day in your prayers, and it was even with you, in Amettes, that mama left to join papa in March 2005. Your brothers, sisters-in-law, nephews and nieces and their children, nobody was forgotten. Intuitively, you understood what each one of them carried in their heart. Even more curious, we did not need to see each other to know we were in communion. A spirit united us. It was the family spirit.”

Marie-Thérèse lived in Amettes for 21 years, that is, until the Community closed in September 2018, more than a hundred years after its establishment. She could be asked for all kinds of services, which was a great help to the Community.

As Father Gabriel Berthe, one of the five priests present at her funeral, said: "Marie-Therese knew and was known by many families in the area. Living in the spirit of Jesus, she brought this love of Christ to others, especially to those who were suffering. She radiated joy and humor. Like a child full of naivety, she knew how to marvel at what she discovered beautiful in the lives of others. When she returned to Arras a year ago, she had already made a whole network of friends, particularly through her involvement in the cathedral's reception team.

A few months after her return to 13 rue Pasteur, the disease manifested itself, and the diagnosis was late in coming. "Welcomed in the palliative care department of the Bonnettes clinic, she knew what was waiting for her. When she said the prayer of Father de Foucauld with me, she simply opened her hands and repeated the last words "for You are my Father" several times. On the day of the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, Marie-Thérèse undoubtedly thought that the hour of her passage had arrived. At the end of the prayer with the Sisters who had come to visit her, she opened her arms as if to welcome someone, the Virgin Mary, but it was not yet time. She probably did not want to disturb the family celebration or the activities of the Sisters who had to go on retreat. “She was an authentic witness of communion in Jesus Christ," the Abbe Berthe said. In her words of

welcome at the funeral mass, Sr. Jeanine Bertrand, Superior of the Community, addressing Marie Thérèse, said: "Woman of prayer and faith, you welcomed everything as coming from God, especially the fusion which was a source of renewal for you. St. Marie Eugenie has become for you a mother and guide in your religious life.

Sr. Rekha, Superior General, to whom Sister Marie Thérèse had written in July to inform her of her state of health and the offering of her life, Sr. Elisabeth, Provincial Superior of the Province of France Notre Dame, and two of her Councilors, as well as other Sisters and many relatives, friends and people who had in one way or another crossed her path, were present at her funeral on August 22<sup>nd</sup> in the chapel of 13 Rue Pasteur.

Thank you, Marie-Thérèse, for all that you have been for us, for all that we have shared with you.

## SISTER MARÍA ANTONIA OF THE SACRED HEART

MARÍA ANTONIA GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ

“In you, Lord, I trusted. Never abandon me.”

- Date of birth: May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1936, in León (Spain)
- Postulancy: May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1957, in León,
- Novitiate: June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1958, in Mira Cruz (San Sebastián)
- First Vows: July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1960, in Valladolid
- Perpetual Vows: July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1965, in León
- Date of death: September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Collado Mediano (Spain)

María Antonia came to Collado de Riofrío to help in the house and especially in the infirmary because we needed a Sister with experience with the elderly. With her presence we received a great gift because she was a Sister ready for anything, doing everything with pleasure and joy. Now all of us, Sisters, as well as the staff who also experienced her availability, her service, and her willingness to help, everyone here, feel her absence and remember her every day.

But Maria Antonia has not only been in the Community for the elderly Sisters. She entered religious life at a very young age and was able to render many services in the Congregation. Twice she was a missionary in West Africa, years of which she has kept a very special souvenir.

Since we saw in her a great availability, she was asked to render different services to which she gave herself with total dedication. She served in several schools of our Province, was also one of the pioneers when the insertions were just beginning, was sent to some small villages in the mountains of León. In everything she did, she felt happy, thus revealing to us her great spirit of service, her

generosity, her obedience, her sense of responsibility and her greatness of soul. She was convinced that everything she did out of love and for the brothers and sisters was what God asked of her. Moreover, it was visible in her person, a woman always joyful and happy, desired by all because of her character and her way of being, especially and above all, that of being a Sister.

She was never sick. She did not know what undergoing a treatment was nor to take medication, and in this house practically everyone had pills to take. She even felt some pain to see that all of us were dependent on our daily medicines but, respectful as she was, she never made it felt. When she herself started to get sick, it cost her a lot to say anything about it, not wanting to worry anyone. Arriving at the point where she could not take it any longer, she made mention of it. The doctor then announced the news that no one wanted to hear – cancer - against which she fought without even knowing what she had, very painful towards the end, which she carried in silence, without complaint, so as not to worry others.

Maria Antonia went to the Father's House as she lived - quietly. Her departure left us the testimony of a Sister who always thought more of others and very little of herself.

We have all witnessed her discreet and dedicated work, her happiness in serving others and her joy in doing her simple tasks which expressed so well her interiority as well as her detachment.

We have learned a lot from her, and we would like to live by her example, without much pretension, with our eyes fixed on what others, especially the most fragile, need.

We could still say a lot of things about María Antonia, but we would miss what she always wanted to be, that is, a simple, discreet, hardworking religious of few words but of much prayer, with an intense interior life and love, and an infinity of hidden actions.

We cannot fail to mention her love for the Liturgy, how much she appreciated it, as well as her great passion for life in Community.

Today, with her Lord, her word becomes a reality: “In you, Lord, I trusted. Never abandon me.” It was the great truth of her life, never to feel abandoned by him.

You lived the trying year of your illness in trust and abandonment. Now you are rewarded for what you have done for others. And in this Community where you have lived in recent years, we can only continue to thank God for sharing this time with you. You left here for Heaven, and you leave us the certainty that from Heaven, you will continue to intercede and take care of us, even better than you have done here below.

With all our affection,

The Community of Collado Mediano

## SISTER CARMEN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### CARMINA PÉREZ CIUDAD

“I saw you and I told you: live and grow”

- Date of birth: November 23rd, 1934, in Madrid
- Postulancy: February 15th, 1968, in Valladolid
- Novitiate: August 24th, 1968, in Valladolid
- First Vows: October 26th, 1969, in Olivos, Madrid
- Perpetual Vows: December 8th, 1974, in Guatemala, Zone 10
- Date of death: October 6th, 2019, in Collado Mediano (Spain)

Carmina went to the Father's house in a span of fifteen days and when we least expected it. She came home after spending ten days in the hospital, where we had to take her since her heart began to fail. The doctors told us that her heart was very worn out and that they could not tell us anything more unless she responded to the treatment. Some doubted her heart could take it.

Back home she lasted a week. She had a restless heart and was always working “to the utmost”. It was totally used up, which did not surprise us. Part of her heart was with us, it could not be otherwise, but most of it was in Nicaragua, and it was too much for it to take on so much love, so many memories, so many dreams fulfilled and so many more to fulfill, and she had to leave all these in the hands of the volunteers who worked with her and in the hands of her nephews. She died convinced that her latest project would be accomplished because that is what they had promised her and thus it would be.

Although it is true that Nicaragua made up a large part of her life and her heart, she also spent a lot of time in the Province of Spain, in schools, in insertions and supporting projects such as “Puente de

Esperanza” in its beginnings. Later, she had to come to Collado for health reasons. Everywhere she has left her mark and a beautiful memory because in each place she gave herself with all her soul, as was her style. There is no doubt that her heart was that of a missionary.

Before she became a religious, she had wanted to give a few years of her life in Ecuador but God asked her not to give herself only for a time, but to give her whole life forever. That was why Carmina decided to enter religious life to give her whole life to God and to her brothers, a life full of God's love, a life given in Ecuador, Argentina, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, in all the places where there was great poverty and many difficulties so as to transform this reality.

Carmina had the gift of involving all her friends, her family, many young people, and the Congregation to make all situations of poverty and death become places of dignified life with education and health for the poorest and especially in places where joy, fraternity and solidarity with one another made the values of the Gospel possible.

She returned to Spain to be able to help care for her mother. Here she continued to be an extended hand for all immigrants at the Puente de Esperanza Welcome Center.

She was a religious for whom Community life was one of her greatest sources of joy. She made use of all her creativity and ingenuity to make all her Sisters happy. A lover of celebrations, the "feasting" was for her one of the greatest reasons to express the happiness of a consecrated woman. This, together with shared prayer, was something she liked intensely and passionately. She is now living all this fully and unflinchingly.



Throughout her life she relished the affection of her family, who always supported all her missionary projects and shared all her joys and sorrows.

Her Word chosen as the motto of her life was: "I saw you and I told you: live and grow."

She lived with much passion and grew in depth and although she was small in stature, her heart and vitality were great.

Today God has given her the fullness of life that nothing and no one can take from her.

Carmina, you have left us a great void. Now we can only continue thanking God for having shared these last years of your life with you. We are sure that from heaven you will continue to intercede for us and for the many you have loved.

Thank you for all that you have given us and for that legacy of joy, service, and love for the poor that you have left us.

With love,

The Community of Collado Mediano

## SISTER AGNÈS OF JESUS

### ELISABETH DE SURIREY DE SAINT RÉMY

#### “Scio cui credidi!”

- Date of birth: July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1919, in Orléans
- Postulancy: September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1940, in Orléans (Sœurs de Saint Aignan)
- Novitiate: May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1941, in Orléans
- First Vows: September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1941, in Orléans
- Perpetual Vows: September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1948, in Orléans
- Date of death: October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Issoudun

It was while France was recovering from the First World War, exactly on July 14, 1919, that Elisabeth Marie Victoire de Surirey de Saint Rémy was born in Orléans, the sixth of a happy sibling group of seven children whose nicknames she liked to mention: "Titi, Pépé, Zézette, Nounoule (her own nickname), Nénette", Lucette and Guy! The latter two had no nicknames, they were indeed elders whose mother's affection had been taken away too soon by illness. Although Mr. de Surirey was proud of this new birth, he was less proud of its coincidence with the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, which sounded too 'republican' for this family event!

It was in the bosom of a loving and deeply Christian family that Elisabeth came to life and received, on July 16, two days after her birth, the Seal of Faith, the unshakeable foundation of her whole life.

She then began her education at the diocesan school in the rue St. Marc, not far from the family home. This establishment, founded in the previous century, according to the wishes of the bishop at that

time, Mgr. Dupanloup, was run by the Gardiennes Adoratrices de l'Eucharistie, known as "Sisters of St. Aignan".

Jesus became her life's companion and, after her studies as a nurse, she entered the Postulancy of the Congregation on September 15, 1940.

She spent her novitiate and juniorate under the German occupation and experienced the transformation of the convent in rue St. Marc into a hospital for wounded French prisoners while the Sisters found refuge in the premises of St. Mary's, at the southern end of the property.

It was therefore in the Chapel of St. Mary's that she made her first vows after a year of novitiate. And while continuing her time of religious probation, she worked as the Kindergarten Mistress with as much care as joy.

After the war, the Sisters returned to their Mother House in rue St. Marc, and this time it was in their large chapel that Sr. Agnès made her final vows on September 8, 1948. It was also at this time that she was asked to apply for her driver's license to drive the school bus. All her life she loved driving and remembered passing under the windows of her parents' house in rue Bouteille driving the bus with the children.

In 1957, Sr. Agnès was given a new mission, in Spain, more precisely to Pamplona, where a Community had been established for some years already and had opened a French Cultural Centre. It was in Spain that she experienced the fusion of the Congregation with the Religious of the Assumption.

In 1971, she was appointed Superior of the Community of Pamplona. Always happy to serve the Congregation, Sr. Agnès looked for all the means to develop the Cultural Centre, starting by learning the two languages, Spanish and French, which allowed her to meet and make friends with many children, young people and

adults over these 22 years. She kept, from her years in Spain, a fondness to speak Spanish, and until the end of her life, whenever an opportunity arose, Spanish came out of her mouth with ease and joy.

"Scio cui creddidi! All these successive obediences, was it not simply to give herself to the One in Whom she had believed?"

In 1979, Sr. Agnès returned to France. She was then called to Auteuil as Superior and remained there until 1985. Sr. Thérèse Maylis, who was part of the Community at that time, tells us: "I had Sr. Agnes as Superior in Auteuil, where during the Generalate of Sr. Clare Teresa, various Communities were gathered "to become one in the same house" according to the Rule of St. Augustine. Change, adaptation, new bonds, overcoming tensions were necessary. Sr. Agnes, with her friendly and cheerful character, was the right person to put oil in the wheels and make people live in harmony. With her sense of celebration, she knew how to highlight small events and sow joy.

In Montpellier, where she remained as Superior for 14 years, as in Lourdes, her faith, her perspicacity, her energy, her practical spirit, enabled her to accompany and support the Sisters on their journey.

It was again Sr. Thérèse Maylis who related: *"I had the opportunity to go and rest in Montpellier as well as in Lourdes! Such good exchanges! I found Sr. Agnès always available. By her side, you could unburden yourself and find courage and peace of mind... During the last few times, in Lourdes, she was not quite herself anymore and was a little disoriented."*

She returned to Orleans to the Community of St. Marie, where she was able to render service again! She went eagerly to do the ironing, where her qualities as a 'Mistress of the House' excelled! Sister Anne Bernard, passing through Orléans, was amazed at her sense of humor, despite her still being ill.

Her liveliness of spirit still enlivened the Community meetings with very accurate responses. She retained a certain art of lightening the atmosphere, of seeing things from a higher perspective. A 'Sursum corda' continued to inhabit her heart!

However, the effects of her disorientation were progressing, so it was important to find a setting more suited to her condition.

She was able to be welcomed in Issoudun, at La Chaume, the EHPAD of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, in October 2011. She was a pioneer in this house, the first Religious of the Assumption to be welcomed there. Sr. Anne Descour, who went to see her every week and visited the town or the garden with her, was touched by her ability to be astonished by everything: "How beautiful it is" was her favorite saying. Her short-term memory was an advantage. Everything was always new, beautiful, magnificent. She made her comments loudly, whether to admire or to criticize: "This Community is very good, but if I had been in charge, oh, no, I wouldn't have accepted men". She quickly took her place as a 'companion' to all the others and was often a sun shining light for the Unit, especially because of her liveliness of mind and her pertinent spirit. This did not prevent her caustic spirit from expressing itself.

One day Sr. Hermine, having just arrived as the new Superior of the PSA Sisters, came to greet those in the Unit. She found Sisters with whom she had lived in the past; it was a joyful reunion, embraces, a joyful welcome! Sr. Agnes was watching and, a little stunned, she grumbled behind Sr. Hermine's back: "*But who is she, that one? Who does she think she is, the boss?*"

Despite her illness, Sr Agnes had not lost her bluntness. Thus, another day, during a tea party, when one of the residents was touching the little cakes presented on the tray, she remarked: "*That is bad manners!*"

Her centenary was a wonderful celebration, an opportunity for her family to get together. However, Sr. Agnes had to be reminded several times of what was being celebrated and who was being celebrated. Her forgetfulness of herself was like a joyful detachment!

A few weeks after her centenary celebration, Sr. Huguette came to visit the Sisters with her family. Huguette's brother-in-law congratulated Sr. Agnes, who replied:

- *Me, a centenarian?*

- *Yes, Sister, I even saw you in the newspaper!*

- *Oh, me, in the newspaper? Never in my life!*

And yet it was true. During the celebration, she received with simplicity and dignity some 32 people from three generations of the family: nieces, nephews and cousins who had come from all over France to joyfully celebrate their 'Aunt Elisabeth'!

Father Gilles de Cibon, one of her grand-nephews, a priest, held back on D-Day by his pastoral obligations, came with his mother, after the 'Pélé National' in Lourdes, to conclude these family celebrations by celebrating the Sunday Eucharist.

During this 8-year stay in the Unit and in the corridors and various places of the EPHAD, she very naturally expressed her faith in the One who remained very present in her: "Jesus". How many times we heard her exclaim: "Yes, it's beautiful, Jesus is here!"

Thus, she had won the sympathy and affection of the nursing staff who expressed them well; we all witnessed it, especially in her final moments.

It was in mid-September that Sr. Agnes suddenly gave us such concern that hospitalization seemed unnecessary. She lived through three weeks of decline which the caregivers of the Ehpac tried to soften with delicacy. She recognized us at times. Odile and Edith,

her nieces from the Orléans region, often came to be with her and our closeness allowed us to accompany her until her last breath, witnessed in the early hours of Sunday 6 October by Sr. Annick Myriam.

Her funeral Mass was celebrated by our parish priest, Father Emerson, who had celebrated her centenary and had visited her with fraternal concern.

On October 10<sup>th</sup> of this year 2019, eight years to the day after her arrival, she left the Ehpad to be buried in our vault in Orléans, Cemetery St. Marc, in the presence of our Community, her relatives and friends from Orléans.

We know that she is at peace and happy to have finally met her Lord.

As the psychologist wrote in the condolence book of the Ehpad:

*"A 'violet' has been plucked!  
it will not wither away, for it is with God!  
for she is with her God!"*

## SISTER SANTINA MARIA OF NAZARETH

### SANTINA MARIA GAMBAROTTO

#### “Magnificat!”

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- Date of birth: November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1924, in Penápolis (State of São Paulo, Brazil)
- Postulancy: February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1956, in São Paulo
- Novitiate: February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1957, in São Paulo
- First Vows: February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1959, in São Paulo
- Perpetual Vows: February 24<sup>th, 1964</sup>, in São Paulo
- Date of death: October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Brasília (Brazil)

Sister Santina was proud of her Italian origins. Coming from a large, close-knit family, rooted in faith, she kept strong ties with her relatives. Wherever she was, her parents and then her nephews would not fail to visit her from time to time.

Like many twentieth-century immigrants, her parents were ploughmen. Living on a farm, Santina did not have the opportunity to attend school as a child. She learned to read and write in her family. That is why, despite her liveliness and gifts, she never got a certificate or diploma.

It was in São Paulo, where her parents had moved, and through the priests of PIME, that Santina discerned her vocation to the Assumption. It was there that she made her Postulancy and Novitiate, with deep gratitude to her Novice Mistress, Sr. Marie Sabine.

Santina served in several Communities, bringing to them her simple and strong piety, an original and fraternal character, as well as a total dedication to the job entrusted to her, whether it was housework, laundry or garden. Doing everything with care and



enthusiasm, she formed many young Sisters or employees of our houses. Overcoming her lack of formal training, she was full of good sense, helping in Community with reflections and prayers.

It was in Teresópolis that she spent many years. A mountain town, not far from Rio, with a humid and cold climate, in a property that was very good for the care of plants. In this country estate, Santina undoubtedly rediscovered some of the experiences she had as a child. The land and the climate allowed her to grow orchids, "copos de leite" and many other flowers. She was a sacristan and put all her love and taste into preparing the chapel. What a joy to be able to decorate the altar with roses or other flowers picked by her hands!

She put all her care into preparing the Masses. Once the chapel was ready, she was in front of the chapel door to welcome each new arrival. She made many friends among the neighbors, the people who frequented the house. She also made friends with the merchants of the town whenever she went out.

In 2018, when the Province had to entrust the house in Teresópolis to lay people, Santina came to Brasília. Again, she took care of the flowers and the sacristy. The climate was much harsher: the rainy season followed by the dry season where everything became arid. It was not so easy to grow flowers. For the chapel, the 'copos de leite' (*Zantedeschia*) - which require a lot of moisture - were missing. Nevertheless, she managed to prepare a well-watered corner in the shade of the water tower, so that she could have at least a few of them!

Santina carried well her 89 years, working valiantly. We were getting ready to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Sadly, one day she told us: "I won't make it! "No one took her word for it...

At the beginning of October, she caught a cold. The strongest cold weather had passed, it didn't seem worrying, neither to the Community nor to the doctor. However, within a few days the flu

had turned into pneumonia. She was hospitalized and left us for the reward of her life of piety and devotion.

Two of her nephews came again for a last tribute to their beloved aunt. Moreover, the Community was able to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday only in remembrance and thanksgiving for a life entirely given to the Lord at the Assumption. She receives the reward for her devotion and no doubt she won't forget all her many friends on earth. Let us pray for her.

Sr. Maria Rachel

## SISTER CLELIA OF THE MOTHER OF GOD (TERESA EUGENIA)

### CLELIA RAMONA CASTELLÓN JUÁREZ

#### “Through Christ, with Him and in Him”

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- Date of birth: July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1927, in León (Nicaragua)
- Postulancy: October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1953, in Val Notre Dame
- Novitiate: July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1954, in Val Notre Dame
- First Vows: August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1955, in Val Notre Dame
- Perpetual Vows: August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1969, in San Salvador
- Date of death: November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in La Palmera (Nicaragua)

Clelia Ramona Castellón Juárez, was born in León, Nicaragua, on July 20, 1927, and went to heaven, on November 6, 2019, in the manner she had asked the Lord: in total abandonment to His will, through a generous surrender, the same surrender that was hers when she entered religious life in the Congregation of the Religious of the Assumption.

In the first years of her religious life, she took the name Teresa Eugenia, a name by which she was known to her many Sisters and laity. After, she took back her baptismal name, Clelia.

Her apostolic life was carried out in: Santa Ana (1956-1957), San Salvador (1958-1965; 1967-1969), Guatemala (1970-1974), Milleret (1974-1977; 1986-1996), Río Chiquito (1983-1985); 1996-2006), Laborío (2007-2011), La Palmera (2012-2019).

Her life was characterized by a love for the Church, the Congregation, the alumnae, the Virgin, the Divine Office, which she prepared with great pleasure.

She was a woman of silence and depth, of constant fidelity.

She was prepared for her tasks and very interested in learning about various issues and realities of the world.

In Community, she always had an answer drawn from God and was a peacemaker. She was very fraternal. Her gaze was very God-like. When you did go to her, her response was usually fair and was accompanied by a smile and a loving gesture. She was very grateful, sweet, and patient.

Her contributions to the daily life of the Community were very interesting and thoughtful. She kept the Community abreast of news from the Pope, the Church, and the world. She was very edifying and inspired trust. She was punctual for every Community exercise. When someone was sick, she would pass by in the morning and at night to see how the person was. She has left a very big void in the Community. She relished the novena of the Assumption and that to the Immaculate Virgin. She loved to read and spent much of her life doing that. She was a well of wisdom. Ever since the Novitiate she was seen as perfect. She was trusted and was very discreet.

With her family she was tender, devoted to her sisters and grateful.

When her family lost everything, Clelia was like an angel and concerned about them till their death being able to have them all buried. She showed a lot of affection to all the people who worked for them.

She animated several Communities of Sisters. She was co-author of the "Guide to attitudes for peace", working in the Ministry of Education, during the government of Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro.

She lived out her illness with patience and in silence, expressing deep gratitude and abandonment to God and trust in those who cared for her.

The testimony of Angelita, one of her caregivers in her last year of life, sums up the beauty of a life given to God and of a goodness that was poured out on those around her.

“She was a very special person for us, who knew how to gain our affection and for all of us she had something special, a different way of treating us, calling us and giving us love and security in the work we did of taking care of her.

There was not a day that she did not thank us, that she did not bless us, both during the day, when she got up, and when she went to bed.

She said that she was grateful and that she prayed for all our families, in gratitude for the attention we gave her. Every night, even though I was worn out, she would tell me "wait for me" and immediately she was blessing, showing affection, love, attention. She had a different kind of smile for each one of us, a way of treating us.

I would ask her: "Mother, do I treat you well?" And she would tell me: "each one has their way of treating me, but don't feel bad." I would tell her: "I am a very serious person" and she replied: "Yes, but you do everything right." And she gave me a blessing for my mother, my children and grandchildren and said "here you are taking care of me, but they will receive, there where they are, that care that you give me" and I would say that I had received it, because my mother has no sores and she is well. I believe that all the blessings that Mother gave me and the prayers that she said for me, I received them in kind, because my mother had a stroke and is not well cared for because I am here, but she does not have any sores, despite her being seated for so long.

And I am grateful that she is already in glory and that even now she continues to pray for me."

Yes, Clelia is already enjoying her Lord, and all those she loved and the Assumption of heaven.

La Palmera, Diriamba

December 20, 2019

# SISTER THÉRÈSE MAYLIS OF THE EUCHARIST

MARIE-THERESE TOUJOUSE

## “Cum Ipso, hostia laudis”

- Date of birth: February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1932, in Lencouacq (France)
- Postulancy: March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1954, in Bordeaux (Val Notre Dame in July)
- Novitiate: September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1954, in Val Notre Dame
- First Vows: October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1955, in Val Notre Dame
- Perpetual Vows: October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1960, in Paris-Lübeck
- Date of death: December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Montpellier

Sister Thérèse Maylis, Marie-Thérèse Toujouse, was born on February 14, 1932, in Lencouacq, a small village in the Landes, this region of France where the pine forests, because of their being so spread out, provide beneficial shade during the summer heat, and inspired contemplation of the infinite. Thérèse Maylis had retained her love for this land, its villas and its accent. Even her first name as a religious kept the mark since Maylis is Mary's name in the local dialect, which she regularly reminded those who came to meet her. Family ties, prolonged until her departure for heaven, were important to her. In the summer she would meet with her brother and sister-in-law, François and Françoise, in the family property, in the joyful din of visits from nephews and nieces, then grandnephews and grandnieces towards whom she was full of delicate attentiveness.

A former student of the Assumption of Bordeaux, she was won over, from her youth, by the taste for literature that she studied at the university: Hugo, Péguy, Chateaubriand and many others were at the top of her list of friends. ... She then began her postulancy in Bordeaux in 1954, before joining the Val a few months later. Sister

Jeanne Marguerite recalls this time: "I was a boarder at the Assumption of Bordeaux (...) In the choir, I saw a young lady helping Sr. Marie de Béthanie, the sacristine. After inquiring I was told that she was a "postulant" and very quickly there were two, the student Hélène d'Arcangues was also a "postulant." Her vocation as a sacristine therefore, a mission she exercised until 2017 in Lübeck, also had distant roots! One can read there, without any doubt, the trace of her love for the Eucharist, manifested in her word and in her mystery.

Quite naturally, after her initial formation as a Religious of the Assumption, she became a teacher. Bordeaux (1957-1959), Lübeck (1959-1968), Orléans (1968-1970) witnessed her joy in passing on her knowledge. So many former students have retained lifelong bonds that attest to the strength of her being an educator. Here is an example of those testimonies: "There is this image of you, dear Sister Thérèse Maylis, the oldest but still alive in my memory: we are well-behaved pupils of the last level of the secondary school in Lübeck, and you, a very young teacher but already gifted with a good sense of humor. You taught us both the art of the Latin language and that of the poets of the Middle Ages." On so many occasions, we have felt great admiration for her ability to deliver long, solemn discourses, thus expressing her great sensibility.

From 1970 to 1975, she was one year Superior in Saint Gervais, another as Superior in Bordeaux and 3 years as Superior in Auteuil. At the Motherhouse, she learned to work closely with Sr. Jeanne-Marie, the archivist of the time, and received from Mother Hélène Marie, who was Superior General, a call which disconcerted her. In fact, in 1975-1976, she was sent to Rome for a year to study archival science at the Vatican. While her life seemed mapped out to take place in the shadow of the Assumption boarding schools, this project, she recalled, made her shed many tears at the idea of having to stop teaching in the classroom but she was proud, at the end of a year of study in Italian, to receive the diploma issued by the Vatican

which she would henceforth honor until the end of her life. On her return, she prepared herself a little longer alongside Sr. Jeanne-Marie before becoming, in 1977, archivist of the Congregation. She was archivist for 41 years!

For dozens of years, she threw herself into the classification of documents and very quickly developed a passion for Marie Eugenie, her writings which she scrutinized so as to pass them on. It is undeniable that she led the people she met in the wake of her passion: “Above all, there was the work that we did together on the first floor of Auteuil, when, for months, we explored the life of Marie Eugenie, who had not yet been declared a saint. With what precision, what knowledge of the slightest archival document, you knew how to re-create an era, an atmosphere, a spirituality: the living soul of our Mother Foundress and of Mother Thérèse Emmanuel! With you, I rediscovered what the charism of the Assumption was - action and contemplation - and that it was not essential for me to have taken religious vows to be a true daughter of Marie Eugenie by nourishing my life of adoration and prayer. You are now near her in the Assumption of Heaven, near the Sisters whom we loved and who welcomed you up there to take you into the arms of the Father from where I know that you continue to watch over us, to pray with us and bear in mind each of our sorrows and our joys.” (Florence de Baudus, friend of Auteuil).

She gave conferences, animated the sessions of the Young Sisters and of the 3rd Year, formed the Novices, traveled to some distant countries and forged bonds of great fraternity with the Archivists of the Church of France and those of the Assumption family.

Marcel Bouillon, professor of history and arts at the Assumption in Bordeaux, remembers the performances on Marie Eugenie for the World Youth Day of Paris in 1998: “It all started during the WYD of 1997 where the Assumption of Bordeaux presented “My weakness as an offering”, evoking the life of Mother Marie



Eugenie, future saint. At the end of those days when you did not miss any of the performances, the small Bordeaux team received your congratulations - supreme honor! - and, for my part, I had the right to read the correspondence of the Foundress of the Assumption Congregation for a week. I devoured several notebooks, but the start of the school year forced me to put an end to this exciting discovery. I honor you, Sister Thérèse Maylis, for the trust, the insight, the advice you have given me so that I could perform each of the shows that had been commissioned to me over the years as well as possible. None of my letters asking for your help regarding my research went unanswered.... And I cannot think, without emotion, of those extracts from letters of Sainte Marie Eugenie that you say with admirable phrasing: "My thoughts are like a raging sea ..."

Sr. Katrin Goris recalls the novitiate courses: "In the novitiate, she taught us the history of the Congregation. I still see her walk through the door, a pyramid of books and documents in her arms, followed by two acolytes loaded with two more piles. It was exciting, she gave us a taste for history and her eyes sparkled with joy. These courses also earned her a reputation as an inexhaustible speaker, always stopping to develop an additional aspect along famous "parentheses." One day, the novices even mischievously gave her a box of paper brackets to thank her at the end of the year.

Sister Madeleine Rémond, General Archivist of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, talks about their collaboration and the role of our Sister since the founding of the Association of Archivists of the Church of France, of which she never missed a meeting: "I got to know Sister Thérèse Maylis Toujouse in the year 2000 when I assumed the role of Archivist of the Little Sisters of the Assumption. Since then, we met regularly at the office and at the Assemblies of the Association of Archivists of the Church of France, of which she had been a member from the outset. But more often in the inter-Assumption meetings with the Novices - Young

Professed etc. without counting the archival research work concerning our religious families, for the exchange of documents to deepen certain aspects of the life of our founders, or the consultations with Father Jean-Paul Perrier-Muzet in Rome. Sister Thérèse Maylis was always available to communicate, to pass on her knowledge gained throughout the years. Her pedagogical sense for the preparation of Pilgrimages in the Footsteps of the Founders was precious."

She also created very strong bonds with Marie Eugenie's family, knowing them by their first names, their ages and maintaining relationships with them as if they were her own family. She was the only one who didn't get lost in it!

Before, during and after the canonization, the meticulous work of a literary criticism and publication of the texts (Intimate Notes, 2 volumes of the Foundation Texts, 6 volumes of Chapter Instructions) and the development of the publications "A 100 Years Ago" and "Archive Studies" gave places to hundreds of photocopies, with her small handwriting that corrected, adapted, clarified, referred to in another document, that can still be found in the Archives.

It is impossible to name all the Sisters who then participated in the work of typing, proofreading, editing. The archives were like a beehive for the good of the Congregation, a "source", Thérèse Maylis liked to say. Mother Hélène Marie, Sister Clare Teresa, Sister Cristina Maria, Sister Martine Tapsoba - 4 Superiors General - and as many General Councils - collaborated with her, recognizing her irreplaceable knowledge of Marie Eugenie, the precision for research and analysis, her dedication to the Congregation, her communicative passion. Sister Cristina, who collaborated a lot with Thérèse Maylis in the years preceding the canonization, writes: "It is this mystery of the Eucharist that has modeled, shaped her life and her mission as a Religious of the Assumption, first as an

educator and then as the Archivist of the Congregation. For 24 years, I have witnessed her work at the Archives. Through this work, Sr. Thérèse was able to show us her vocation as an educator in her way of making us and all those who wanted to consult the documents on our history, the History of the Congregation, from M. Marie Eugenie until today. Passionate about this history, and with a great capacity to pass it on, Thérèse brought it to life for us, as well as the charism of the Congregation that M. Marie Eugenie and the Sisters with whom they were able to express and live it. Today we are those who pursue this grace and its transmission.

I thank God for the life of Sr. Thérèse, for the gift of herself in and through her mission, for having given life to the charism and for having transmitted it through all those who, with her, have known how to express it and transmit it for our times. "

Working relations with the Sisters on government missions did not exclude fraternal complicity, such as that day when someone placed a small package in front of the archive's door bearing the inscription "1<sup>st</sup> class relics". It was, in fact, a plastic pipe taken from the work then taking place in Auteuil. It was Mother Hélène who made it and mischievously added the words: "pipe of Marie Eugenie's time"!

She also developed the "walks" in Paris following the footsteps of Marie Eugenie, the great pilgrimages to Lorraine where she was ahead of the flock, bundled up in her scarf. From 2007 onwards, it was the scarf of the canonization that never left her.

It's easy to understand why the archives were filled with post-it notes that read "to classify", "to continue" and why her classes were overflowing with parentheses to tell another side of the story. Sister Amélie d'Aboville recalls: "One day, while I was spending a day with you in the archives during my novitiate, you said to me, showing me the table you were working on, a little in disorder: "Amélie, you see, I can't die any time soon. The archives are in such a mess!" I replied: "Thérèse Maylis, you cannot die, you are

immortal!" To which you retorted: "My dear Amélie, only members of the French Academy are immortal, you know that well ... "And I said to you: "Then, you are my immortal member of the French Academy ..."

We also understand why Thérèse Maylis spent a long time on the phone to communicate with her family, a long time at breakfast to chat with visitors passing through Lübeck, long hours in the corridors of Lübeck where her smile reached all those who passed by, her infallible memory accumulating countless data from the lives of professors and staff. She didn't use the computer but she was a walking computer!

These multiple details expressed all the warmth that emanated from a meeting with her: "Before dealing with archival questions, Sr. Katrin still remembers, Thérèse would invite us to sit down and the first minutes were spent talking like a friend talks to her friend, with her heart: experience of God, compassion for neighbor, concern for the family... It was good to experience that! There was always a word of comfort, and for me, a true passage of God". Proximity offered to all.

Until October 2017, Thérèse Maylis walked the corridors of Lübeck, prepared the sacristy for masses with the students, went to the primary classes to make Marie Eugenie known, and maintained links with the Association of Former Students. In recent years, the route between Lübeck and Auteuil seemed long to her, but as soon as she had the strength, and her heart did not beat too fast, she set on her way to go to the archives and find her grand collaborator, Sr. Marie Claude, who opened the doors of the computer.

In 2017, when Sr. Véronique was already preparing to succeed her, a stroke suddenly interrupted Thérèse Maylis' activities. She rested for several months in a Parisian hospital and was transferred directly to Montpellier. Rude transition. But the depth of her interior life, drawn from the Assumption and more particularly from Mother

Marie Eugenie, was revealed more strongly when she was struck down by illness. Between resistance and abandonment, between fighting to regain autonomy and letting go, Thérèse Maylis suffered from "not having completed the work in progress" and often repeated it. She had taken a file on Mother Marie Joanna to continue the work, but she only had time to put the finishing touches to the publication on Mother Marie Denyse, which had started long before her illness.

A visit to Auteuil in November 2018 gave her a glimpse of new projects. An opportunity for joyful detachment and renewed confidence. She wanted to say everything on so many topics, and recordings testify to what she wanted to convey to the one who would take over the work.

A family ordeal affected her in her last months in Montpellier, the death of her niece from cancer. In addition to this, the suffering for Thérèse Maylis of not being able to be with her family during those painful moments.

A last National Pilgrimage to Lourdes, in August 2019, gave rise to the ultimate abandonment. For the first and last time, she went there joining the sick. She felt her strength abandoning her, her morale breaking and little by little she was taking her leave.

This is how, in a whisper, simply turning around, she went to the Lord on the evening of December 19, 2019, finally becoming "a host of praise", "with him", enthralled for all eternity, before the Lord, Who loved her so much.

We still have to gather the thousands of testimonies which flooded Auteuil in those days of December when a strike paralyzed France, preventing many friends from joining her for the last time for the celebration of her funeral.

Borrowing one last time the words of a friend, we can say: "I greet you, Sister Thérèse-Maylis, for this humility, which made you

write, after forty years spent at Auteuil in the midst of your archives: "The archivist continues, through her papers, to discover and to marvel' '. May you watch, from where you are now, over your little Sister Véronique who succeeded you in this site of historical interest!"

# SISTER HÉLÈNE EMMANUEL OF THE COMPASSION

## HÉLÈNE D'ARCANGUES

### “Pater-Fiat”

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- Date of birth: January 30th, 1932, in Bayonne (France)
- Postulancy: October 4th, 1953, in Bordeaux
- Novitiate: July 2nd, 1954, in Bordeaux
- First Vows: October 20th, 1955, in Val Notre Dame
- Perpetual Vows: October 30th, 1960, in Saint-Dizier
- Date of death: December 25th, 2019, in Montpellier

Who could have thought, just a few minutes before, that our Sister Héléne EMMANUEL would not end Christmas Day 2019 without going to meet the One whose beautiful Name she had chosen to add to her baptismal name? It was a little after 4:30 p.m. Héléne leaves the chapel after her adoration, pushing her walker, which continues to move as our Sister collapses in front of the door, having just completed the road begun on January 30, 1932.

Héléne d'ARCANGUES was born in Bayonne, baptized the very next day. She is the last of a solid Basque Christian and large family, which before her, besides, will give another daughter to the Assumption: Sister Monique-Marie.

It was from the Bd. Wilson in Bordeaux, where she lived as a student and then entered as a postulant, that she went to the Faculty of Arts on her bicycle to take her English degree, which she obtained in 1953.

Saint-Dizier will be her first Community at the beginning of her religious life. She was a teacher of English and very active in the services of this really poor house, which had to be torn down because of termites and had to be refurbished to make it more hemmed in. With Sister Claire-Madeleine at the helm, there is a

real joyful detachment and an ardent apostolic spirit. The wind of the Council is blowing at full speed.

In the summer, with the "Centre aéré" meant for the children of the city's many working class families, it becomes a battleground; each room changes its destination; it is necessary to move, transport, rearrange, and put certain things in a safe place until the new school year begins .... Hélène is there, courageous, and practical, and will of course take on the task of running a daily workshop while waiting for the closing party and after putting the house back in order, shortly before the start of the new school year.

In 1966, it will be the call of Africa: a succession in School Communities. She was first asked to take over the direction of the KOUDOUGOU College and later, in the 1970s, the TOUNOUMA College in BOBO DIOULASSO in Upper Volta, now Burkina Faso. Sister Marie-Thérèse Kansolé remembers: "I was at Sainte Monique. She was a very good English teacher, she made us work well and we admired her. But above all, we felt her close to us. We loved her very much."

Ten years later, Thérèse became a religious. This time they met in Daloa. "I see her so dynamic, attentive to people in the Community and outside. She perspired a lot but did not complain about the heat. She loved Africa. Africa will never forget her. We are grateful to her Province of origin."

In 1976 she met Sr. Jeanne Catherine whom she joined at Attécoubé. It was a real turning point in her life. The Sisters lived in a very small flat on the 2nd floor, above a bakery, opposite the local police station, in the middle of the noise, right in the middle of the life of the people of this cosmopolitan and very popular neighborhood. Thus begins for Hélène a new period marked by *Le Service pour un Monde Meilleur* (Service for a Better World). She lives this moment, the fruit of the Council and a response to the



Abidjan Synod, to the fullest: "It is the People of God that listens to the Word of God, reads it, celebrates it and tries to live it in the often very difficult living conditions of the outlying districts. What a burst of life!" says Sr. Marie Danielle who was her Provincial. Sr. Anne-Bernard completes "Her competence in organization, pedagogy, her passion for evangelizing using other methods, was marvelous. This movement exported as far as Africa to establish Christian communities in the parishes and the diocese had a powerful influence on the poor people who wanted to be educated".

During the Farewell Mass celebrated in Montpellier, Father Pierre Roustan, SMA, a missionary to Africa, gave this beautiful testimony: "At the beginning, after the first session of The Church and the World in 1978 in Abidjan, I was not the most convinced!... With her enthusiasm, supported by the convictions of Sr. Jeanne Catherine, Sr. Hélène will commit herself. The sessions will multiply; first in the diocese of Abidjan, then in several dioceses of the Ivory Coast. A national animation group "Service for a Better World" will be created. Hélène will very quickly become its driving force, secretary, and leader. The group works in conjunction with the teams in the countries involved in the movement: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Zaire. She will lead sessions for priests and Community leaders. Documents and notebooks are drafted every quarter to help Church and Community leaders. The Church of Côte d'Ivoire and the French-speaking countries where she leads meetings owe her a lot."

In 1989 another adventure began, "La Non-Fondation" as Sr. Clare Teresa used to say. I quote Sr. Anne Bernard: "This experience, which was to last 6 months in the Kasai Forest in the DRC, in Yesu Nkumi, the City of Christ the King, (and which lasted 5 years) in a life sharing with the poorest, corresponded to Hélène's deepest desire. With Sr. Monique Dijon and Thérèse Nyranziza, the Sisters had an apostolate of support and advice marked by the Renewal. This project of integral development was carried out by

a Zairean teacher who had left everything behind following a powerful spiritual call. He had brought his family along with him. The Sisters were well appreciated by some in the Church, but not by all priests as they were rather on the margins.”

After 30 years spent on this continent, Farewell Africa! It will be the grace of a long stay in Jerusalem. Then H el ene will be sent to Lourdes in 1997. She will not miss any of the biblical meetings organized at the Carmelite convent and Marie C ecile Girard, postulant at Bondy a while later, still sees her arriving at the lecture with maps, charts etc... to give her a first well documented biblical initiation.

But let us return to Lourdes; in this immense house of welcome, H el ene did not give up her great devotion: Community services such as the linen, the laundry, preparing breakfasts, accompanying the older Sisters by car, hospital visits and, while at the reception desk, countless balls of wool passing between her needles that never stopped moving.

She also joined the Fraternity of the Good Samaritan, founded by Fr. Edouard Gueydan, sj. Let us remember that H el ene had discovered the charismatic renewal in Africa and that, as Marie Danielle, her Provincial at the time, tells us, "The Renewal was an oasis of beneficial prayer in a spiritual life evoked as a drought endured ... discreetly, she exercised the gift of praying in tongues."

In 2013 H el ene joins our Community. One of her grandnieces is a student in Montpellier and H el ene often receives visits from her niece Fran oise, the student's mother. It is among us that, with Sr. Anne de M-I, she celebrates her sixtieth jubilee of religious life, in a celebration that brings the two families together.

Tenacious, she and Sr. Colette form an efficient but sometimes stormy team at the laundry room. Two clear-cut characters!

Despite the fact that walking became more and more difficult and her visual handicap increased, her zeal for work never wavered. But gradually, no more gardening, no more parish Eucharist, even though it is close by, no more reading, no more visits to a person isolated in the neighborhood. However, she keeps in touch with her "lost" friends, especially those she knew in Bondy. They have their regular telephone calls. It isn't only they that she very often mentioned in the Universal Prayer of the Office, with the wounded of our chaotic and painful world. Is she not Sr. H  l  ne Emmanuel de la Compassion? This compassion, similar to that of Jesus, a grace she has often asked throughout her life... And so that her fingers may tirelessly knit miles of scarves and hats for the people in the streets that she cannot approach directly, she organizes a small wool and clew traffic with friends. She is able to produce within the hour something which you need, or which will simply please you.

When one thinks of H  l  ne, it's a bit difficult to distinguish between dedication, activism and stubbornness. One last anecdote will illustrate it well. Sister Marie Laure, our youngest, reminds her of Christmas Eve, her promise from the previous year: Not to do laundry on December 25. Her answer: - Yes, I remember; we'll see!...

The following day, she hangs up her washing and says: "I know... but for the Sisters' service... even on Christmas Day!"

Anne-Bernard will conclude this long circular: "What I remember most is her generosity. All in one piece, a little gruff, with a frank laugh, she had a heart of gold, she denied her competence and wanted to be the servant of all, especially the most needy. She learned a lot from Jeanne Catherine, whose intuitions she shared and shaped."

On this All Saints' Eve of 2020, a few hours after Sr. Chantal de la Fourni  re's journey to her Lord and in memory of the six Sisters

who have left us this year, it is good for us to remember, together with Marie Eugenie, what we will see of them in eternity. Thanks for doing this with us.

The Community of Montpellier

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