



THE ASSUMPTION IN HEAVEN

2018

Religious of the Assumption



This edition was produced by the Archives, with the help of many editors and translators whom we would like to thank.

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SISTER CARMEN DE LA SAGRADA FAMILIA (of the Holy Family)

CARMEN LIÑAN MADERO

“Blessed be the Holy Trinity for it has shown me Mercy”

- Date of birth: June 10, 1919 in Beas (Granada)
- Postulancy: June 13, 1949 in Malaga
- Novitiate: August 6, 1950 in Mira-Cruz
- First Vows: June 6, 1952 in Velázquez (Madrid)
- Perpetual Vows: July 8, 1958 in Riofrío
- Date of death: January 4, 2018 in El Olivar (Málaga)

Carmen came to El Olivar after our departure from the Spiritual Exercises Centre in Granada where we had collaborated with the Jesuits for many years. The closure of Granada, the “Graná” of her heart, was very painful for her, not only because it was her native land, but also because she had a number of nephews who adored her and with whom she corresponded with great affection and pain if one of them became ill. With the successive and sometimes tragic deaths of her brothers, she became the “matron” of the family, whom they consulted and with whom they exchanged everything.

Carmen lost her mother as a young child. Her father, a widower with 8 children managed, despite many hardships, to bring them up with dignity. Her father was always a reference point in Carmen's life and it was with affection that she remembered her brothers. Her family and the hard life in her village of Beas forged in her a sense of work and responsibility that strongly marked her. She maintained her love for her village, Beas, as well as the beloved Andalusian soil.

At 13 years of age, a wealthy family, with many children, asked her to go and live with them to take care of their newborn baby. Her care and affection for the baby won over the other siblings, touching the hearts of everyone and made "Carmela" a member of the family. The Díaz Barrionuevo family's affection for Carmen accompanied her for the rest of her life, with long phone calls and frequent visits. Some of them even came to introduce the fiancé of one of their daughters to her so that "Carmela would give her consent."

During the family's summer vacation in Malaga, Carmen met the Assumption and quickly decided on her vocation. She was ready for anything.

She spent long hours in prayer. She would rise at dawn and spent hours in the chapel. She was also a hard worker. Putting order and cleanliness were her obsessions. In later years, when she had great difficulty in moving around, she was seen with one hand on the walker and the other on the mop, making the corridors shine. In Gijón and Santa Isabel she was in charge of the kitchen and the boarding school, and even in Granada, where she refused the help she was offered, given her age and the limitations that were gradually gaining on her. At times she was difficult especially when she was contradicted. Carmen had two great passions: God and the Spanish royal house which she adored despite her rather leftist and republican ideology Carmen was a person of extremes but always unconditional when it came to serving or helping those in need.

It took a lot out of her to agree to go to the infirmary. She did not want to lose her independence but gradually she needed more care. In her final years, her character softened. A stroke prevented her from speaking clearly. Only the nurses could guess what she wanted to say, which caused her great pain and a gradual paralysis. The long moments of silence in her room, in her wheelchair, in the Community or in the chapel, were for her the privileged moments

of an encounter with the mystery of God, of loving acceptance of His will, and of abandonment into the hands of the Father.

The Lord must have known how to welcome the treasure and all the richness of her personality, with her nearly 99 years of devotion, to her family, her Congregation and her Lord.

El Olivar Community - Malaga

SISTER CARMEN DU SAINT SACREMENT (of the Blessed Sacrament)

MARÍA CARMEN BORJA CASTILLO

“Domine Tu Scis Quia Amo Te.” (Lord, You know that I love You.)

- Date of birth: October 31, 1927 in Pamplona
- Postulancy: September 28, 1952 in Mira-Cruz
- Novitiate: July 1, 1953 in Mira-Cruz
- First Vows: July 13, 1954 in Mira-Cruz
- Perpetual Vows: October 6, 1957 in Velázquez (Madrid)
- Date of death: March 3, 2018 in Navas de Riofrio.

Carmen was born in Pamplona into a strongly Christian family. They were three sisters: Adela, Carmen and Mari Paz. Adela was single and because of her illness, Carmen was obliged to leave the Congregation for a while to take care of her. Mari Paz was married and had five children who wanted and needed Carmen. She was very attached to her family and her land. In early July she would get ready to watch television at eight o'clock and watch the bull races of San Fermín, patron saint of her land Pamplonica, which she loved very much.

In 2003, she was nominated as bursar in Riofrío, where she was distinguished by her generosity, her sense of responsibility, her rectitude, her joy of life and her singing. Two years later, she went to San Sebastian where, once again, she was asked to become the Superior.

In 2009, she returned to Riofrío since her health had deteriorated. Her health continued to decline until March 3 when she moved to the Father's House.

Carmen was a woman with a definite vocation for education. She was happy to carry out her educational work in the schools but the most wonderful thing was to see the happiness she brought to her

students, how much they enjoyed being with her and how much they learned.

Carmen was not only happy in the schools and teaching, but whenever the Province called for another kind of service, she welcomed it with generosity and dedication. Many of us, Sisters, can also recall her helping us to animate the Communities without ever losing her sense of humor, transmitting joy and always expecting from others much more than they seemed to be able to give.

At the Superiors' meetings, which she attended for many years, she always brought a touch of joy and relativized the difficulties that would arise. We missed her dearly after she stopped coming to those meetings. Having a Sister who helped to put things into perspective and to share joy was a blessing.

Nevertheless, we cannot forget the things we have learned from her: her strong religiosity, her faith always full of hope, maintained right to the end, in the best moments of her life as well as in the hardest ones during the last years of her illness, prostrated and unable to move. We were able to see that just as she gave herself with joy and generosity to education, she was able to welcome her physical handicaps with the same joy and sense of humor that made us all love her more. Indeed, today we still have fond memories of her which will never fade.

Carmen, we shall miss you greatly, we will miss the depth of your joy, to know how to put things into perspective, to forgive and always move forward, without losing hope!

How many times you said that in heaven you would be able to do everything you love and cannot do here on earth! You are already accomplishing that and always will with the help of your Lord Whom you have chosen and Whom you have not ceased to follow to the end and with the support of Mary whom you invoked so many times in this last period of your life.

Her favorite sentences in this last phase were: “I believe that the Lord has prepared heaven for me and that He will reward me”, “This landscape of Riofrío is beautiful for the end of life”. “My life here has been calm and good, I just ask God to let me pass into the other life, without having to suffer too much.” Her constant prayer was the Rosary.

Carmen, the Community of Riofrío is grateful to the Lord for having shared with you the last years of your life, seeing you living so happy and joyful, always wanting to make life easy for others, assuming your fragility with great integrity and not complaining. You showed us how important it is to always give one's life, in a concrete way, at all times. We still keep your beautiful heritage, which is to be always happy because God expects this from us.

From heaven, we are certain that you will intercede for us, for the Congregation and for your family whom you loved so much and that you will not forget the people of Riofrío who welcomed you during the last years of your life and helped you to be happy.

The Riofrío Community

SISTER COLETTE DE JESUS

COLETTE BACHÈRE

“I have become all things to all people...”

- Date of Birth: March 6, 1934 in L’Isle-en-Dodon
- Postulancy: April 6, 1956 in Auteuil
- Novitiate: April 27, 1957 in Auteuil
- First Vows: April 30, 1959 in Auteuil
- Perpetual Vows: July 29, 1964 in Auteuil
- Date of Death: May 23, 2018 in Montpellier

Her southern accent left no mystery about her native country. Colette was born in Gers, in an ordinary family with three children. Although not practicing religion – that Southern region is traditionally little linked to the Church – Colette was, however, sent to catechism like most French children at that time. She took part in the Church youth club and above all in the movement “*Ames Vaillantes*” [The Valiant Souls] of which she kept happy memories and a sort of veneration for their priest.

Like a lot of young people, as school was not compulsory after the age of 14, she stopped her studies with the “Certif” the ending mark of Primary studies. She always regretted this, as she was quick-witted and her good mind would certainly have helped her to educate herself more.

In the working class homes there are no “*feignents*” (*lazy people*)! You have to pay your share. Colette found a job, but, not satisfied, she decided to go up to Paris at the age of seventeen. She met some “good” families in the western part of Paris where she felt respected and later would become close to them. There she left very good memories. When the time came to make her claim for retirement,

however, she discovered that they had forgotten to declare her to the Social Security!

She learned there how to manage a large house — a quality that would make our Sister so precious in all areas and in the missions where the Assumption would need her practical art, ingenuity and talents.

Sundays were free days and could be lonely and even dangerous for a young girl alone in the capital. Providence led Colette to meet Sr. Anne de la Ste. Vierge who gathered a small group named after Saint Genevieve at the church of St. Peter of Chaillot, which met at Rue de Lubeck, 6. In this way the young people managed to have moments of relaxation and their loneliness diminished. And at the same time, their faith grew as a result of their thoughtful conversations. They visited Auteuil with its beautiful grounds where they often saw all those young Sisters from various countries. Did the Lord whisper to her heart: “*Why not you?*” Colette was not the only one.

She knocked at the door of the Congregation in 1956, much to the annoyance of her family who, not understanding her decision, argued with her many times for many years. It was her nephews’ generation that restored and maintained good family contacts.

Colette arrived at the time that the charismatic Mother Marie Denyse took over the Congregation. One of her first acts was to undo the difference between the two ranks of Sisters — the Choir Sisters and the Lay Sisters. Initiated into the celebration of the Divine Office, the Lay Sisters now wore the same habit and the same choir cloaks as the Choir Sisters. Household duties were shared by all as much as possible

This was also the moment of expansion and deepening of the Juniorate desired by the 1959 Chapter. To be chosen to go on for more study depended on the amount of former studies one had.

Without being bitter, Colette sometimes said she regretted not being able to go further. Her great sensitivity was hurt sometimes by others' lack of tact regarding the Lay Sisters.

Her availability and her spirit made her easy to “use” as the Bishop of Tarbes had once said long ago of Bernadette. After several much appreciated years of service in houses in France, including the famous day nursery in St. Dizier, her great joy was to be called to West Africa—Ivory Coast, Togo, then Bénin. There she was a catechist and councilor for the young at Vogan, through the Xaverian Movement, responsible for the formation of mothers in a nutrition program. Colette was the contact, sympathetic with everyone without any regard to rank. She loved helping for nothing but was sensitive too about friendship.

At the beginning of 1990, she returned to France, to Lourdes first, where she was near her mother who was in a retirement home. Colette was very grateful for the visits of the Community to her mother. Sister Marie Christa remembers the fits of giggles and Colette's generous service to the end. Both were in Auteuil after Sister Natalia went back to Spain. Our Colette did not hide her pride of being in her turn close to the Congregation's “chiefs” and easing their task by an effective presence. She made sure that nothing was lacking for the General Council. She guessed what the Sisters in the Community might enjoy with a soul of a mother hen!

It was with great happiness that she could help again with the children's catechesis at the Notre Dame de l'Assomption Parish and prepare them for their First Communion. One of the faithful of *Friends of no.17* recalls that time and her own happiness in receiving the Lord and talking to Him as Colette had taught her.

Montpellier, where the Community could see both its number and its average age increasing, would be her last sphere of activity. She arrived in Montpellier in 2008, still full of courage and energy. She literally took the laundry in hand and reigned over the underwear

department! She took care of the Sisters' clothing, highly recommending Damart for winter underwear! Worrying in order to give everyone what was needed, she made us think of the Biblical woman whose lamp only switches off late at night. On feast days, her joy was to make use of the beautiful tablecloths for the dining room. Collaboration with such a mistress wasn't always easy... and the reactions swelled and overflowed like the coastal rivers of the country which come back into their bed after a storm as quickly as they left it. Colette was faithful to express her regrets after her fits of temper and she kept no grudge in her heart.

A group of Friends of the Assumption was born for the canonization of MME and Colette went to Rome with Sr. Marie Blandine. This group continues today, alive and strongly linked to the spiritual figure of Marie Eugenie. With Christine Marie and two lay friends, Colette took part as one of the *leaders*, participating in the meetings, making the annual retreat, and leading the prayer moment in the monthly meetings. The members of this group were true friends who visited her often when she was in hospital, bringing her sweets, magazines, and comic books-- she even asked for *Lucky Luke!!!*...but above all, they brought their presence, and when it was possible, a shared prayer. Colette was comforted very much by those proofs of friendship. She needed to know she was loved. She had learned the value of those moments.

Her commitment in the Parish in the *S.E.M.* (Evangelical Patient Service) was her great joy. As before in Lourdes and Paris, she brought Communion to several people of our district and they waited for her coming. She revitalized herself there too and missed no formation meetings offered by the Diocese in this area.

Missionary, committed in the *S.E.M.*, she chose *to be-with* as long as she was able. That was the reason why during her stay in hospital she opted for a double room. Five other patients shared the room, some of whom were seriously impressed by her. Colette felt herself

on a mission of presence to the other patients who became attached to her. Thus she was able to share the prayer of a Muslim family. The medical staff often lingered near her when they had a break.

We were surprised by Colette's illness. Operated on for a breast cancer several years ago, she had enjoyed good regular checks.

Last autumn, urged by our new manager, the house adopted the external laundry solution. Colette took part in the evaluation but not without quickly voicing her apprehensions. She felt tired; at 84 years old, wasn't it natural? She who sang the Office so lustily began to feel hampered by a hoarse voice which did not disappear. She became voiceless, with a painful cough and her sternum pained her at each coughing fit. Finally, she was hospitalized and underwent endless medical tests series to understand what was happening and, above all, where was the source of her illness.

An easily possible ride by bus allowed us to visit our Sister a lot, to bring her Communion. She surprised us all. We met a Colette who was gentle, patient, did not complain and talked only a little of herself and of her illness (which was utterly surprising as she did not miss telling her medical appointments to everyone who was ready to listen to her)! She was interested in the life of the Community, of the parish, of friends. She shared with us her contacts with the other patients and entrusted them to our prayer. She communicated by writing to the Sisters and friends, as her weak tone of voice prevented her from using the phone. Her letters are moving with their delicacy.

She prayed a lot. When it was too painful, we would see her holding the cross of her rosary... united to Jesus on the cross. She prayed the Mercy Rosary a lot.

Her great joy was the visit of her nephew, her brother and her sister in law.

When the hospital staff noticed there was nothing more to do, Colette came home and managed her morphine pump herself. She would return regularly to the hospital for pain treatments. After one bout Colette was again hospitalized a final time. She went to her Lord a few days later, surrounded by Catherine Myriam, Marie Monique, Marie Gérard and Corinne.

On May 26, her funeral took place on the day of Amélie's Perpetual Vows in Bondy, also a feast of the Resurrection. Our large parish church was quite full and our brother Assumptionists celebrated with great fraternity. Her family was present — touched to see so much friendship and beauty in the celebration. We perceived a real relief growing on everyone...

A lovely plant, a diplandenia, given by her niece for the churchyard was left at our house. It bloomed on our terrace all summer — a picture of the friendship Colette gave non-stop — and it is still blooming. We have a lot to give thanks for!

The Montpellier Community

SISTER DANIÈLE

DANIELE ROSANE MARIE DUVILLIER

“You lay your hand upon me”

Mystery: Christ Servant

- Date of birth: April 27, 1946 in Tourcoing (59)
- Postulancy: October 3, 1967 in Arras
- Novitiate: July 1, 1968 in Arras
- First Vows: August 27, 1970 in Arras
- Perpetual Vows: September 7, 1975 in Arras
- Date of death: April 8, 2018 in Paris

Danièle was born in Tourcoing, an industrial town in northern France on April 27, 1946. She had two older siblings, Christine and Marc, born before the war, which had separated the Duvillier couple. She is therefore, as she liked to say, "the child of reunion". A few years later a little sister, Chantal, will complement the family. She lived a happy childhood in a spacious and comfortable house with a garden, Christian parents and friends. Mr. Duvillier ran a biscuit factory.

Danièle studied at the Notre Dame des Anges School, run by the Franciscan Sisters (a few years later these sisters would join the Augustines d'Arras by fusion). As a kindergartener, Danièle remembered Sister Françoise Dinnequin who used to supervise the entrances and exits all wrapped up in black. For the lively and cheerful little girl that she was, it must have had a mysterious side. When Sr. Françoise died, she shared this memory with me.

Unexpectedly, Danièle, a young teenager, saw her brother leave the family at the age of eighteen to enter the novitiate of the Benedictines of the Abbey of La Pierre qui Vire!

He became Father Damase, and was the Abbot for eighteen years.

This sudden leaving was a difficult time for the parents. The annual family visits to the Abbey were joyful and provided Daniele the opportunity of awakening to the liturgy and the contemplative aspect of life....to the conviction that all life is for God.

In his homily at the funeral of Sister Danièle, Father Damase alluded to an article¹ sent by his mother in 1981, in which Daniele spoke of her vocation: *“My first memory, she wrote, of a religious life project goes back to the time I was 8 years old, but it was on the day of my profession of faith, at the age of 12, that the Lord knocked on my door for the first time in a specific way. I remember answering him with happiness and simplicity: “If you want me to become a religious, the answer is YES”.*

A retreat during the year of philosophy was decisive. *“My answer was spontaneous and full of joy. I was filled with dynamism, I belonged to him and forever...I was involved in various groups of young people; I loved to dance”.*

After completing her baccalaureate, she studied to become an early childhood educator or "kindergarten teacher" as she called herself at the time. She practiced this profession with talent and creativity before knocking at the door of the Augustines du Précieux Sang in Arras on October 3, 1967, just after returning from a summer camp.

The months of postulancy were completed and the entry into the novitiate on July 1, 1968 began in simplicity. Sr. Danièle joined the Community known as CHA (Centre Hospital d'Arras). She joined the pediatric service section there. The Community, having left the hospital premises, moved to #9, rue Pasteur. Most of the Sisters used to go by bicycle to the hospital on the other side of town, on

¹ Article from “La Croix du Nord”, March 22, 1981

the same schedule as the other members of the staff, which shook up Community life in this rich post-conciliar period.

It was in the new Community at 20 Boulevard de la Liberté in Lille that Sr. Danièle and Sr. Bernadette Delobel lived their year of canonical novitiate. The novice mistress, Sr. Jeanine Bertrand, was also studying at the university at the same time. With them were five Sisters from the Community: the Prioress and the Assistant Director of the School for Specialized Educators, two religious workshop teachers, a Sister House Mistress, and a young professed student.

These were the times of the first Gospel sharing for the youngest members of the Community: one such sharing has remained in our minds for good reason: the fainting of a novice!

On August 27, 1970, Sr. Danièle pronounced her first commitment, promises which, following the Council, were new in the Church.

For the next three years, Sr. Daniele worked in the kindergarten with the small children of the Foyer “Beaucerf” in the Boulonnais region, helping Sr. Hélène Levasseur with the boarding school. The lack of resources was obvious in this communal establishment, entrusted to the Congregation, in Pont de Briques, in the St. Léonard district. The little ones, suffering from so many deficiencies, were not "easy" and it required a lot of ingenuity to hold their attention. However, the affection Sr. Daniele had for them became mutual as the beautiful sweet words of the children testify.

It was in a trio, together with Sr. Geneviève Fourdinier, that we met for studies at the Catholic Institute of Paris from 1973 to 1975. At that time, through common courses, we met Sr. Marie Geneviève Poulain. Danièle “let off steam” by gardening and sweeping the corridors and God knows the length of them at rue Saint Maur in the 11th district! This task earned her a “sweeping *accessit*” during “the distribution of end of year prizes” in the Community. Years

later, when she became Prioress General, she reminded me of this during a Day of Recollection at rue des Plantes when I found her — broom in hand.

On September 7, 1975, Sr. Danièle pronounced her final vows in the chapel of the Mother House in Arras, surrounded by her parents, her sisters and their husbands, nephews and nieces. On her souvenir picture, (she did not care for the typography) we read these words, so simple, so strong when one thinks of all that she would have to live: “You have put your hand on me”.

She then cared for the little ones of Beaucerf for a year.

At the opening of the Community inserted in a working-class district in Wimille, near Boulogne sur Mer, she became a kindergarten teacher there. They were four Sisters with different insertions: teaching, pastoral care, nursing and a housekeeper who gradually got to know and receive many visits from the people of Saint Patrick's district.

In 1987 the Council of the Congregation sent Sr. Danièle to Rome for a year of formation. There she had her first international experience, an approach to the universal Church which made a profound effect on her. When she returned from Italy, she resumed her work in Wimille and became Prioress of the Community.

Three years later, she was sent to St. Catherine les Arras, as Prioress of the Community, while teaching in a Catholic school in Lens, a few kilometers away. Appointed Mistress of Novices, to her great disappointment, she was left without a novice!

In 1993, she was asked to take part in the School of the Gospel which was opening in Arras, in the rectory next to the Community. “What a beautiful Church experience these past six years with Fr. Luc Dubrulle, Philippe Barras and Gerard Leprêtre. Years full of discoveries, of adventures, of joys, with and for young people who desired to know Christ better!”

September 1995, brought her back to the host Community in Arras, closer to the School of the Gospel. Following the death of Sr. Marie Thérèse Guiot, she was called to become a member of the Council in September, 1997.

The Monts of Forez then welcomed Sr. Daniele as Prioress for a year. In the Community of the Mont, a place called Essertines in Château Neuf, in the Loire, where she was able to breathe with full lungs the mountain air ...before living in Paris!

As Sr. Jeanine said:

“In July 2000, the Holy Spirit came knocking at your door through the Chapter of the Congregation, asking you for the service of Superior General. Like Mary, humbly and counting on the grace of God and the help of your Sisters, you accepted to take the helm of the boat. A new rich adventure, but how difficult too! You have accomplished this work with all your heart, for sixteen years, and we thank you very much. You have influenced not only each one of us, but also many of our collaborators by your simplicity, your smile and your warm welcome.”²

The heat made the many trips to Madagascar and Guinea a physical trial without counting the numerous worries and important decisions to be taken together with the Council but there was also the joy of meeting the Sisters, of welcoming new ones, of receiving the vows... of seeing the Region grow.

The years went by and the lack of vocations, at least in the West, was worrying. As Sr. Jeanine said: “With the Council, you knew how to take the necessary decisions and with wisdom and patience, you led the Congregation on the path of Fusion with the Religious of the Assumption.”

²Testimony of Sr. Jeanine at the funeral rites

With the fatigue, worries and difficulties of the mission, illness returned in a sneaky way at first and then demanded hospitalizations of varying lengths, not to mention the suffering.

However, “there was the immense joy” of August 6, 2016 with the Merger Decree and the celebrations of September 30 and October 1 that followed. “This alliance between the Religious of the Assumption and the Augustinians” as Sr. Martine Tapsoba, Superior General, beautifully called it. I remember that Sr. Daniele then said to me: “My work is finished and I am happy with the result”³.

Discharged, Sr. Danièle left for Belgium to share the life of the Community of Ciney, thus changing Provinces. But soon illness caught up with her and she had to return to Paris to be taken care of alternately at the Cochin hospital and in the convent.

As Sr. Elisabeth, Provincial, testified at the end of the funeral celebration: on February 14, Ash Wednesday, Sr. Danièle told her of her desire to make a retreat to prepare herself for the last phase of her life and then asked her to accompany her.

“A Word dwells in her: *“My days are in your hands”*. She chose the first Sunday of Lent to begin her retreat. “She wanted a “retreat in life” and she had chosen to take up texts that had touched her in her life...Sometimes she didn’t have much time to pray...”⁴ between home care and the services she still renders such as driving Sisters to St. Joseph's Hospital nearby to visit Sr. Myriam Bremond in hospital.

“On March 25, Palm Sunday, she felt that the last stage had arrived and asked me if it was not time to go to “Maison Jeanne Garnier”,

³ Father Damase: homily for the funeral Mass

⁴ Testimony of Sr Elisabeth Estienne at the end of the funeral, 12 April

a palliative care service. She entered on the 27th in the middle of Holy Week.”⁵

The next day, with Sr. Elizabeth and some Sisters at her side, she received the Sacrament of the Sick and then asked them to read the prayer of Charles de Foucault: “Father, I surrender myself to you”.

On the afternoon of Easter Sunday, April 1, Sr. Elizabeth was with Sr. Danièle for the Eucharist, the last moment she spent with her. “She was peaceful, followed the Mass attentively... From that day on she began to decline very quickly, gradually losing her faculties, speaking with increasing difficulty, experiencing moments of anxiety, but also of peace. Her brother Father Damase, her sister Chantal and her brother-in-law came to see her on Friday. Sr. Martine Tapsoba was there with them. She spoke with difficulty but said a few words to them.

She left on the second Sunday of Easter, Mercy Sunday, April 8, around 1 p.m.”⁶

As soon as her death was announced, many testimonies reached the Province of France Notre Dame and, in the days that followed: from the most official to the most modest, coming almost from all over the world through the different Provinces of the Congregation.

They emphasized:

“Her simplicity and her concern for people” Bishop Stenger,

“Her ‘sense of Church’” Father Benoît Grière AA

“Her delicacy, her sense of listening, her open-mindedness, her faith, her attachment to the Augustinian heritage and her desire to make it accessible to her Sisters and to the laity” Father Jean Claude Erhart A.A.

⁵ Testimony of Mr Elisabeth

⁶ Testimony of Mr Elisabeth

“Her memory will remain alive within the ACIS-France” Mr. Brulard, Director

“Courageous, dignified and always smiling despite the suffering” Dr. P.Franchi her doctor in Cochinchina...

“Marie Florence Descamps, former Superior General of the Augustinian Sisters of Cambrai...” I am moved by this announcement knowing all that we have been able to live together in the Federation, on the path of research... Knowing also all that she has done for the Congregation... We know that we are useless servants but that the Lord also needs us to reveal it.

“Danièle, through her humility and faith, contributed much to the friendship between our Congregations. Even today, she intercedes for us” Sr. Isabelle and the Province of France.

“Her great human and spiritual quality” Sr. Françoise Espéron

“Sr. Danièle has made a great impression on the Community of Ciney, despite her relatively short stay. She wrote to us one last time on February 15: "In Him I say to you 'à-Dieu' and assure you of my friendship and intercession beyond death.” Sr. Anna Kristina and the Community of Ciney

Speaking on behalf of the Sisters of Madagascar, Sr. Estelle wrote:

“Now we are here to continue to say ‘thank you’ our dear Mother Danièle for all that you have done for us: for your advice, your education, your spiritual accompaniment, for your encouragement and also your support and love for the future of the Congregation. Thank you, for your humility, simplicity and generosity that have brought us to another shore, to extend the Reign of Christ with our Sisters of the Assumption.

When all is accomplished: “the fusion, our definitive commitment to the Assumption,” you leave in peace, resting beside the merciful Christ”

The celebration of Sr. Danièle's funeral in the chapel at 68, rue des Plantes was a strong time of communion with her family, with the Sisters of the France Notre Dame Province representing the different communities, but also the Province of France, the General Council, numerous collaborators from various entities, members of the house staff and residents of different establishments on the Notre Dame de Bon Secours site. Ten other priests concelebrated with Father Damase.

This beautiful and long Eucharist, punctuated by testimonies that generated much emotion, was lived in faith and deep recollection. The short celebration at the Ivry cemetery allowed all those present to say a last word to Sr. Danièle before meeting again in the Beyond but also in prayer.

A week later, Sr. Martine Tapsoba sent a warm-hearted message to the Communities. We share with you some passages from it: *“Sr. Danièle lived with courage, in trust, abandonment and faith in God, the long months of illness.*

As General Council, we had the joy of being there for the funeral. Personally, I was able to speak with her on Holy Thursday and to see her again on Easter Friday when she was already almost no longer speaking. But she heard what was said to her and could still react. I was able to thank her in the name of all of us for the mission she had lived to the end.

As we heard in the testimonies on the day of the funeral, she could say "mission accomplished" since she was able to lead the Congregation of the Augustinian Sisters of Notre Dame de Paris to the fusion, a project that had been entrusted to her and her Council. The Congregation of the Religious of the Assumption, where we are now embarked together, is continuing her journey and will watch over us with its prayer as she promised: “I will continue to pray for you, even after...”

On Thursday, April 12, the day of her burial, the Sisters in Ambohimahasoia, Madagascar, organized a vigil and a Eucharist of thanksgiving for her, in communion with us. And at the celebration in Paris, the young Sisters from the session of preparation for perpetual vows were able to participate. Together with the other Malagasy Sisters living in Paris, the two young Sisters were thus able to represent all the Sisters of Madagascar and express their gratitude to Sr. Danièle. We give thanks to God for the journey made with her since 2009 towards fusion. She has shown great humility, tenacity and hope in her desire that the Congregation live. She loved St. Marie Eugenie and invoked her with confidence. She welcomed her with joy. May she rest in the peace and light of the Father!”

As Sr. Jeanine said: Thank you, Danièle, for everything. A-Dieu!
But we count on you, more than ever!

Sr. Marie Françoise Bisiaux

SISTER ENEDINA DE LA ENCARNACIÓN (of the Incarnation)

ENEDINA CORRAL GONZÁLEZ

“Here I am, Lord, to do your will”

- Date of birth: July 31, 1921, in Santibáñez de la Rueda
- Postulancy: January 31, 1939, in Santa Isabel (Madrid)
- Novitiate: December 18, 1940, in Santa Isabel
- First Vows: January 10, 1942, in San Sebastian
- Perpetual Vows: January 10, 1945, in San Sebastian
- Date of death: June 26, 2018, in Riofrío

Sister Enedina was born in a small village in the mountains of León (Santibáñez de Rueda) on the feast day of St. Ignatius of a family of eight children—seven girls and one boy. She was the third child in a deeply believing, humble and hard-working Christian family.

How did the news of the existence of the Religious of the Assumption reach this remote corner of the country without much communication with the outside world in those days? It is obvious that God's Providence carried out his plans in an unpredictable way and nothing would stop it.

Her father had a Franciscan-Capuchin relative who used to visit his family during the summer in a nearby village, a visit that extended to the other relatives in the neighborhood. He lived in Madrid, in the Christ of Medinaceli Parish, and had excellent relations with the Sisters of the Assumption in Santa Isabel, our school in Madrid.

In Enedina's house, he was welcomed with great joy and he spoke to the young girls about these Religious. This awakened in Enedina the desire to follow this path. Once, when she was between 11 and

12 years old, he asked them the following question: "Do any of you wish to become a Sister?" Enedina immediately answered "Yes!"

Her parents were put in touch with the Superior of the house. Enedina arrived in Santa Isabel, accompanied by her father, when she was 13 years old. From the very beginning she felt at ease in this environment, but the civil war started, so, considering the danger of living in Madrid, she returned home until the end of the war. Enedina was determined to fulfil her vocation, which had become clearer during her stay with her family.

She always kept the faith and values she had learned from her family and people, and she always interceded for them when, in her last years, she spent hours in the chapel - sometimes dozing - justifying herself by saying: "We are a big family, we are so many and I must pray for them all".

At her funeral, the words that were read at the Eucharist summed up very well who Enedina was and her life at the Assumption:

"Today we celebrate in this Eucharist the life and the passage to the house of the Father of our Sister Enedina, and we want to give thanks for her long life given to God and to the Congregation serving her brothers and sisters, with great availability in the various tasks entrusted to her and carrying them out with great responsibility and dedication.

Along with Enedina, many of the "pillars" of our Province have already left, on whom many of us have found support and from whom we have learned to be this Assumption which is helpful, fraternal, available and devoted to all that was asked of us. She has been both in schools as well as in insertions, which was new to us, like the time we spent with the children of the Messengers of Peace. Here Enedina was happy and the children appreciated her very much.

In the schools where she had been to, they always remembered her kindness, her knowledge and her attention to each one according to their needs. That is why everyone remembers her as a kind, helpful, efficient Sister who solved a number of problems for which they came to see her.

She never let herself be overwhelmed by difficulties; she always knew how to look for solutions, as the former students of the school of Santa Isabel can testify.

She had a particular gift for the infirmary. Several generations of Sisters and young girls passed through her hands. Her ninety-seven years allowed her to do a lot of good and to leave a grateful memory to many of her former students and the Sisters with whom she had lived.

She truly loved the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In the last years of her life, she spent many hours before the Blessed Sacrament. We had to go look for her because for her time did not exist and in adoring the Lord she felt happy.

She was a very sociable Sister, easy to live with, in love with the Community, where she felt happy, always with a smile and with the desire to make others happy. She suffered a lot in the last years of her life because of her health, although it did not prevent her from wanting to live and participate in everything that was happening in the Community.

She always felt much loved by her family with whom she corresponded often. She went to the village with them until she couldn't anymore and she liked to tell stories about each one.

She lived out her word "Here I am, Lord, to do your will" throughout her life, in health and in sickness. The will of her Lord was what prevailed in her.

Enedina lived many years with us in Riofrio and we thank God for having had this opportunity. We have the certainty that now, from

heaven, "You will take care of us, better than in the best moments of your life".

Today, on the celebration of St. Ignatius, her Community continues to remember her and to give thanks for the gift of her life.

The Riofrío Community

SISTER FRANCESCA PAOLA DELL'INCARNAZIONE (of the Incarnation)

FRANCESCA PAOLA LANZARA

“Mihi vivere Christus est” (For me to live is Christ)

- Date of birth: June 26, 1924 in Rome
- Postulancy: June 3, 1949 in Rome
- Novitiate: January 22, 1950 in Rome
- First Vows: March 27, 1951 in Rome
- Perpetual Vows: April 20, 1954 in Genes
- Date of death: March 1, 2018 in Rome-Quadraro

Sister Francesca, born into a Christian family, had two sisters. Several members of her family were involved in the community of S. Egidio which made her very proud. Right up to the end of her illness, they were all there for her.

A graduate in modern literature and renowned teacher Francesca spent her life in education. She had a skill for listening, advising and supporting young people and adults as well as a spiritual sensitivity and psychological subtlety.

Faithful and generous in friendship, she had good relations with people she met, uniting the human and spiritual dimension. She contributed with enthusiasm and devotion to the life of 'Assumption Together' at Quadraro, making herself available at moments for biblical reflection and knowledge of the charism.

She lived in several communities of the Italian Province. She also spent time in Brazil and at Cannes, in France. She had difficulty adapting to the various educational services made available to her and was sometimes unsatisfied and critical of her living situation. She kept abreast of current events as well as developments in the

biblical and catechetical world. She used her knowledge for the benefit of others, dedicating herself to different forms of formation at the parish and the diocesan level for catechists and catechumens.

She enjoyed spending short periods of time to rest in Genzano, where she would immerse herself in the silence and peacefulness of nature.

Her state of health went through some difficulties: surgery for breast cancer as well as a leg injury, due to an accidental fall. She dealt with the consequences without becoming hard thanks to her forceful temperament.

In the final period of her life at Quadraro, her character mellowed. From then on, she was bedridden and was cared for and supported by the Sisters, her family and friends. Her bright blue eyes expressed her gratitude and affection.

Some testimonies have confirmed the impact she has made on so many people who have known her, spent time with her and loved her: “At the memory of Sr. Francesca, tears still rise in my eyes and my heart remembers all the advice and recommendations, those moments when she pulled my ears... all that makes me feel that she is still alive and close to me.”

“She certainly had a strong character for her Sisters but also for her lay friends. But for my husband, Giulio and me, she was a pillar of the heart. In difficult times, she was a safe island ... an island not always easy to get through because severity and gentleness were alternated. However, she knew how to bring calmness to make me think and take the right path again. As a prayerful soul, she knew the hearts of many people of different ages and personalities. What made her unique was her gaze that I still feel on me ... a clear gaze that gives me great inner freedom and which makes me feel penetrated by divine mercy. I remember the day I told her how I felt. She replied: "It is my gaze fixed on Jesus" (Rosetta).”

"Lord, I say thank you for Sister Francesca's life. I shall miss seeing her limpid gaze which gave me strength and courage, after having expressed how I felt and having heard her discontent... I have no doubt that she is now fully in Your grace. Her humanity and spirituality leaves me a great treasure which I feel I would like to share with you, because we have all seen that "glance " (not always positive) that Francesca had towards life, but over the last moments I have seen her gently surrendering herself to God's will, ready for this last journey on earth... She has given her last unveiled energies to her Sisters and to us, to her friends and to those who had the chance of going to say hello to her; one last great lesson: she humbled herself to death. Ciao Francesca". (Federica)

We share these words of Federica, in her affection and truth, which synthesize our common experience and we invite you to join us in our prayer to her.

The Quadraro Community

SISTER FRANCIS TERESA DE LA COMPASSION (of The Compassion)

HORTENSIA RITA DEL MARMOL

"Exinanivit semetipsum ut vitam habeant" (He emptied Himself that they may have life.)

- Date of birth: February 8, 1924, New Orleans, LA
- Postulate: January 11, 1953 Ravenhill, Philadelphia
- Novitiate: July 12, 1953 Ravenhill
- First Vows: August 28, 1954 Ravenhill
- Perpetual Vows: November 30, 1957 Birambo, Rwanda
- Date of death: January 3, 2018 Worcester, MA

Born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1924, Hortensia del Marmol was the middle child and only daughter of Alfonso and Clara (del Valle) del Marmol; two brothers, Pancho and 'Fonso – “my kid brother who’s a Jesuit in Sri Lanka”— made up the rest of their family on Willow Street. She was a bright youngster, but as time went on, she also became an unhappy teenager. In her own words, she was “too fat and unhappy for my own good.” Since her mother’s sister was a Religious of the Assumption, her parents hit on the idea of sending her “up north” to the Assumption boarding school at Ravenhill, Philadelphia. There, she saw snow for the first time – and wasn’t too impressed by it – and had scarlet fever into the bargain. Still, something good seems to have happened at Ravenhill, for she graduated and went on to study, first as an undergraduate at Newcomb College in New Orleans, and then at the Tulane University School of Medicine, from which she graduated as a Doctor of Medicine. After Tulane, she pointed her little Volkswagen Beetle toward the Rocky Mountains (more snow!), where she served as an instructor at the University of Colorado Medical School in Denver.

But something else was also working on her, and in 1953, at the advanced age of 29, Hortensia entered the Assumption at Ravenhill, eventually taking the name of the saint who reflected her passion for healing: Francis of Assisi. At the same time, she also saluted the Spanish heritage of her family, asking for the “The Great Teresa” as her second patron. The first saint, with his love of the poor and his simplicity of life, would offer her a way to enter into the lives of her patients, especially in Africa, where she served in a number of Assumption dispensaries in both Rwanda and the Ivory Coast, beginning in the late 1950s until the mid ‘60s. After a brief sojourn in Miami, she returned to Africa once more, working first in Cocody, and then later in Rwaza and Kigali. She liked to tell about how she made her final vows in Birambo in 1957: “The ring came by foot messenger who had run all the way from Kigali with my ring in his hat.” Long after she had hung up her stethoscope, Francis still plied “the doctoring trade” unofficially, taking care of bumps, bruises and cuts with kindness and skill, and also making it clear when someone needed to stop wasting time and get to the hospital *immediately*.

The influence of the second saint, Teresa of Avila, was also very strong in Francis’ life, for she loved learning, and threw herself into the study of theology and scripture even while she was practicing as a physician. Afterward, her gift for languages (she could speak English, French and Spanish with ease, and she could read Latin as well) allowed her to help in many ways, including translation of congregational documents. For the ten years that she was a member of the Auteuil Community, Francis’ ability to speak all those languages stood her in good stead with visiting Sisters who needed some help navigating the labyrinthine ways of the house. She helped to staff the library of Auteuil and was also a member of RIAD.

In addition to her love of learning, Francis took after St. Teresa in her love of music. This was a very deep attachment, and it found

real scope once she returned to the United States and became a member of the Community at Worcester. There, she joined our brother Fr. Donat Lamothe, A.A. in his *Schola Gregoriana*. The *Schola* is a group of non-professional singers who love the Gregorian tradition and want to keep it alive. Francis was of tremendous value to Donat because she could read music – a skill lacking in most of the other members – and she understood Latin. Over the years, her fellow *Schola* members would often tell us: “Sister Francis is so sure; that helps me get where I’m supposed to be!” They had an annual potluck dinner at Christmastime; she enjoyed bringing New Orleans “dirty rice” or gumbo at the beginning; later, as she began to grow weaker, she would permit Sr. Nha Trang, a Vietnamese member of our Province, to prepare authentic Vietnamese spring rolls for her to bring to the party. Then she would come home and brag about how “everyone loved *my* food.”

Francis was also a very strong believer in the Ecumenical movement, and jumped at the chance to be part of the Ecumenical Commission of Worcester County (a group made up of Christians of all denominations, including the Orthodox, Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists, Calvinists and even a few Catholics). When the Worcester Diocese announced the discontinuation of the group, she was extremely disappointed. In fact, she was downright furious.

Francis took things to heart. And as time passed, she was sometimes less connected to reality, but still feeling things very strongly. For example, after the events of 9/11, she was furious that we would not support her traveling to New York City to help with the aftermath of the terrorist attack. As a physician and a board-certified psychiatrist, she felt that she had a role to play. At the time, she was already 77 and very crippled with arthritis. That didn’t matter. “I should be down there on that pile!”

She had to be satisfied with life in Worcester, Massachusetts for her final years. The *Schola* helped, as did work at the Assumption College library, where she was well liked and appreciated for her contributions. As time passed, however, we noticed that she became more and more reluctant to go to the Library for her morning's volunteering. Finally, she admitted that she didn't think she was any help any more – “maybe the opposite.” Sadly, she was right.

This state of affairs eventually led her to St. Mary's Health Care Center, a nursing home in Worcester, where she lived the last seven years of her life in the Dementia Unit. At the beginning, she was able to welcome visits; by the end, it wasn't clear that she really knew us. She didn't go quietly “into that good night.” Sometimes that meant that the staff had to move quickly to avoid a well-placed kick! But they also saw something in her to love, and even when they reported some very combative behavior, they would laugh about it: “Oh, you know, that's Sr. Francis.” Ironically, at the end of her life, she was surrounded by kindly immigrant nurses and care-givers from Africa, who cared for her quite tenderly – even when she resisted.

By the end, she no longer spoke, and barely lifted her head when we'd visit. The dark brown eyes and those shaggy eyebrows that she'd been so proud of were still there, but the feisty personality seemed to have already left the frail little body. We hoped that she knew she belonged to us somehow.

She died late in the afternoon of the coldest day of the winter of 2018, about 12 hours before a monster blizzard that kept most of New England housebound for two days. We thought she would have taken some satisfaction in that. As the undertaker came for her body, all the staff of St. Mary's gathered in the front hall to bid her goodbye. They had come to love her, despite her not being an easy person to help. That gesture touched me and Sr. Mary Ann very

much. So did the presence a few days later of so many of our brother Assumptionists at her funeral at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit on the Assumption College campus, as well as many members of the *Schola*, folks from the Library, and others who braved the bitter cold and piles of snow to say goodbye. In honor of her beloved hometown, the organist played that old New Orleans favorite,

O, when the saints, go marching in
O, when the saints go marching in
O Lord, I want to be in that number,
When the saints go marching in!

Which was followed by “*In Paradisum*” – pretty much the same prayer, just in a different mode.

When Francis made her first profession of vows, she chose the mystery of “The Compassion” as a way to orient her life. At its end, she went home to God surrounded by His compassion and escorted by her friends and her musical traditions. Francis had always wanted “to be in that number.” We pray now that she and all that number have marched “in” to the Compassionate Presence of God and to a joyous reunion with all those who loved her and all those whom she loved. Amen.

Sr. Nuala and the Sisters of the U.S. Province

SISTER FRANÇOISE EULALIE DE LA SAINTE VIERGE (of the Blessed Virgin)

EULALIE MIRO LUQUE

"Juxta Crucem tecum stare" (I stand beneath the Cross)

- Date of birth: June 3, 1928 in Malaga
- Postulancy: July 13, 1948 in Mira-Cruz (San Sebastian)
- Novitiate: July 16, 1949 in Location: Mira-Cruz
- First Vows: November 30, 1950 in Mira-Cruz
- Perpetual Vows: December 10, 1953 in Forges (France)
- Date of death: February 4, 2018 in El Olivar (Málaga)

Françoise Eulalie, despite her French name, was born in Malaga, of a well-known family. They were seven brothers and sisters, including a twin sister, her dear Mercedes. When her mother died in a car accident, the four-year old Françoise recalls that her father wanted to oblige the two children to say goodbye to their mother. But they were so overcome at having lost their mother, they hid under the stretcher. This moment was a huge ordeal for Françoise, who remembered her mother with great affection, despite her young age. More trials followed...the loss of the family fortune and the outbreak of the civil war in Spain. Their father and brothers enlisted in Franco's army and the girls came under the guardianship of their grandfather's second wife who decided to intern the four girls in a kind of asylum.

At the beginning of the war, the commanders of the Republic decided to take the girls to Russia to be educated there which began a journey that Françoise remembers with horror. Packed into cattle trains, without food, they were headed for Barcelona to cross the border. On the way they were dropped at the roadside so they could beg for food in the villages and country houses or take what they

could in the countryside. This is how they arrived in Barcelona where the youngest of the sisters fell ill. The authorities decided that the sick child would stay in Barcelona with one of her sisters, Mercedes, until she recovered, while the other two girls would go on to France. The outbreak of World War II prevented the trip to Russia and the two separated sisters remained in France.

Françoise was taken into a foster family in central France, where she began her studies. With a passionate and extremist temperament, she absorbed the teachings of the purest egalitarian idealism of the Communists who educated her at school and in the home of a childless couple who had taken her in. Françoise Eulalie spoke of the benevolent and affectionate character of the husband. On the other hand, she could not say the same about his wife which further increased the suffering of the child. The contact with rural life and the countryside made her discover the beauty of nature which she had always loved. The discovery that communist egalitarianism did not apply at all to the rulers, who lived in a very different way from the people, caused her to weigh her judgments regarding all these life styles and with passion, she began to search for other forms of truth.

At the end of the war, thanks to contacts with the embassy, her father was able to find her and she returned to Málaga. There she entered the Assumption College, while her twin sister went to the College of the Esclavas. Her passionate temperament made her discover, with great strength, the person of Jesus Christ and in a very short time she was confirmed, studied Catholicism and decided to enter the Religious of the Assumption.

As a Religious, she spent several years in Forges, France. On her return to Spain, she went to Pamplona, at the time of the merger with the *Guardiennes Adoratrices*, taking care of the little ones and teaching French. It was there that she met the charismatic movement that marked her spirituality.

She also spent a few years in the College of Málaga. There she tended the garden and made sure that the teachers respected the distance to park their cars, less than half a meter from the hedges. This earned her the title of the “Traffic Sister.”

Afterwards, in the Community of El Olivar, Françoise Eulalie always took care of the garden and the small orchard. Her distractions were proverbial, as were her passion, fervor and kindness. A woman of prayer, austere and poor, she was always ready to help. She was meticulous in everything she did, and this was reflected in her fidelity to her Lord, even in the smallest things. Her strength declined, as did her fragility of spirit, losing the ability to express herself. It was painful to see her inability to communicate a thought or a feeling whether in French or Spanish. Only her admiring smile enlightened her, a true gift, and a call to love and tenderness. She diminished, little by little, but we can never forget her smile which continues to accompany us.

God must have welcomed Françoise Eulalie into His Fatherly Heart — this life of close to 90 years, so rich in challenges, difficulties, and experiences and also in passion and devotion that only He will know how to value and reward.

El Olivar Community (Málaga)

SISTER INÉS TERESA DE LA SAINTE VIERGE (of the Blessed Virgin)

MARIA ROSA ENRIQUETA FIGUEROA

“Tecum” (With You)

- Date of birth: November 7, 1936, in Martinez (Argentina)
- Postulancy: July 10, 1958, in Auteuil
- Novitiate: July 2, 1959, in Auteuil
- First Vows: July 2, 1960, in Auteuil
- Perpetual Vows: June 29, 1966, in Buenos Aires (Argentina)
- Date of death: March 31, 2018, in Buenos Aires

She was born in Martinez (Province of Buenos Aires) on November 7, 1936, the last of seven siblings, three of whom died as young children. She grew up with three brothers.

She studied at the Colegio de La Asunción, Ocampo, in Buenos Aires.

She completed her novitiate and juniorate in France and then came to Ocampo College.

Following her perpetual profession in 1966, she returned to France and spent eleven years at Lamazou, Forges, Bondy and Montpellier.

In France she was in touch with people involved in Latin America among whom were the Dominicans of Montpellier and the members of CEFAL (Comité Episcopal France-Amérique Latine). From then on, she was encouraged to continue to develop contacts with several people relevant to her unconditional dedication to the poorest and to social justice (among them Pedro Casaldáliga, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Prize winner...).

On her return from France, she spent some time in San Miguel. A Sister shares this with us:

“In 1976, as a young girl, I spent some time with the Sisters of the Assumption in San Miguel and I met Inés who spoke a mixture of French and Spanish. Together with her, I learned to drink "mate amargo", with no sugar from my home province. In the early morning, between two matés, our relationship and fraternal affection developed. We read and reflected on the Word of God and at the same time we shared life. Words fail me to express what I lived with Inés day after day. I liked her so much! I thank God for giving me the gift of friendship with Inés whose simplicity and permanent smile were real gifts to me.”

In Gerli, she then worked as a "Mistress of Class" for the first, fourth and fifth grade students. She helped in particular in the camps organized with children, teachers and parents.

Inés Teresa knew how to play the harmonium and the guitar which helped her in the liturgy. She also always put her talents as an artist and painter at the service of the Community and the mission.

A serious illness necessitated surgery but her health was not something she was concerned about. She did not talk about her personal life or her feelings and never complained about anything even when she was sick.

In 1988, she was assigned to Florencio Varela, a Community in the slums. There, she participated more concretely, in the Community project of evangelization with the Family Catechesis for the First Communion. She also accompanied two communities in the parish of the Miraculous Medal. In addition, Sister Inés was the “Handmaid of the Word” in a parish where she carried the Eucharist on weekends to those who were unable to travel to church, always doing it with pleasure and devotion. She dedicated her time to visiting families and neighbors. One of them testified, *“Dear Sister, I will never forget your involvement in the Community of Santa Teresita and our greetings and discussions when you rode past my house on your bicycle. My family will never forget you!”*

A very sociable person, she instantly got in touch with people and had a special attraction for the sick and the elderly. She was sensitive to suffering and felt particularly called to accompany and pray at funeral vigils. When she left Varela, a neighboring family expressed themselves in this way:

“Inés, even though we are neighbors, we consider you, as all Sisters, as family... We have always loved your way of persevering and encouraging us in difficult times. Thank you for bringing us the Word of God every week and for the joy that you transmit to us which cheers us up when we are at our weakest; for this and for many other things we ask God that if we have to stop seeing each other, may He always accompany and protect you and may you be very happy.”

She had a strong character and sometimes reacted harshly in the Community but she had no difficulty in asking for forgiveness.

Her relationship with her family was painful. After the death of her brothers and sisters, her sisters-in-law and nephews communicated very little with her. This lack of affection made her turn to the outside world where she was well received. She always maintained many relationships via the telephone, through letters, and never forgot to celebrate important dates in the lives of her friends. Sometimes her communications caused her difficulties in the Community because she did not distinguish between the different areas.

Some very meaningful and reciprocal relationships, especially with those who accompanied her spiritually, made her happy and gave her the strength to continue walking.

Very early in the morning, at 5 o'clock, she was already up and could spend two hours drinking maté, praying and reading. She liked to keep up to date with everything, read the newspaper with interest and followed the news on TV.

When the house at Varela closed, which she greatly regretted, she joined the Community of San Miguel where the older Sisters were. The change of context, the lack of contact with the people she knew, her loss of memory disturbed her psychologically more than the physical ailments that were worsening (difficulty in walking and recurrence of cancer...).

She loved the Congregation very much and more than ever because being immobile, she longed for news. She showed great interest in all the news coming from Auteuil and the Provinces. In 1998, she joyfully attended the meeting for the centenary of the death of Marie-Eugenie after visiting some acquaintances in Montpellier.

She lived through all the growing limitations of this last stage, in silence, with much patience, and also with the small illusion of walking again...

The "TECUM" (her Word) that has always accompanied her, culminated with her ultimate gift, during her sleep, on the morning of Holy Saturday, March 31, 2018. That year she lived the Resurrection of the Lord, with Him, in the fullness of the Kingdom.

One Sister summarized her life with these words:

“Inés’ life was not blessed with success. Her death was a success. She did not shine at all. She lived a deep loneliness that she was able to fill by letting God work in her. And God worked through an apparent failure: she died and left alone. She bequeaths me peace... and a testimony of unshakeable faith. In Community, she had some loyalties. In her relationships with people, she was faithful, close and simple. Everyone remembers her smile”.

SISTER MARGARIDA DO SANTÍSSIMO SACRAMENTO (of the Blessed Sacrament)

EPHIGÊNIA MARGARIDA DA SILVA

“Ecce ancilla Domini” (Behold the handmaid of the Lord)

- Date of Birth: February, 22, 1920 in Itamarandiba, MG
- Postulancy: March 1, 1939 in Rio de Janeiro
- Novitiate: October 2, 1943 in Rio de Janeiro
- First Vows: April 5, 1945 in Rio de Janeiro
- Perpetual Vows: April 5, 1948 in São Paulo
- Date of death: November 14, 2018 in Brasília

It may have been due to an indication from a priest of her parish that Margarida came to our house in Rio. She said she first arrived when she was 15 years old (1935). But our records show that she entered the Postulancy on March 1, 1939. Perhaps she arrived at the age of 15, but being too young had to wait a few years?

In any case, she remained in Rio for the whole period of formation. Having entered as a co-adjutrix Sister, she was very devoted in the services of the house especially the cleaning. Later on, she was in charge of training the novices and young Sisters to work in the upkeep of the house. She continued this devotion in São Paulo then, many years later, in Itapaci.

It was in Itapaci that she began to work with the poor. In the 1970s she was the head of a dispensary where the most deprived would come to seek relief. The poorest mothers used to come with their children, mainly because of verminosis and malnutrition. Margarida gave them medicines, food supplements and nutritional advice and cured most of them. The children who presented other illnesses were referred to the city hospital. As for adults, Margarida gave injections and occasionally prescribed medication (which was

beyond her health authority). However, dozens, even hundreds of poor people from the surrounding area remained immensely grateful for her care.

At that time, the bishop of the Diocese of Uruaçu (which also includes the city of Itapaci) was Mons. Francisco Prada Carrera, a Claretian. In 1976, at the age of 79, he renounced the leadership of the diocese and withdrew to the house of the Claretians in Goiânia.

What we can say from that point is that Margarida's life went out of the common norm, turning into something out of the ordinary. Soon the bishop's health began to decline. The Claretian priests (to whom the parish of Itapaci was entrusted) knew Sister Margarida very well. Had they asked for Margarida to come to Goiânia to take care for Mons. Prada⁷? Did she choose to go to Goiânia to take care of him? The fact is that she left the house of Itapaci and went to live in the house of the Claretians in Goiânia. For many years she continued taking care of the bishop. She had plenty of free time, which she used helping the poor.

Around 1979, however, the Claretians asked her to leave the house. Therefore, she moved next to a church, in a house meant to receive abandoned children. Despite several calls, she refused to return to the Community. - The Provincial sent a request for exclaustation “ad nutum” to Rome, which was refused.

Since the Province had contributed to social welfare on her behalf since 1980, and having reached the age of 60, Margarida was entitled to an old age pension. All the money she received was used to help with the boys' welfare work. She made every effort to find foster families for all the girls taken in and for a number of boys.

⁷ Mons. Prada. Claretian, was born in Prioaranza del Bierzo on July 27, 1893. He died in Goiânia on July 17, 1995 shortly before reaching the age of 102.

She later claimed to have raised 54 boys in the house, not to mention the ones she put up for adoption!

To find out where to place the children that she protected, she would travel to the surrounding villages, looking for working families, who often had already several children. She would convince them to adopt another one, or even 2 or 3 siblings...

Moreover, she still found time to take care of adults, especially the ones who were sick, whom she found in the street or at the bus station and accompanied them to dispensaries or hospitals, depending on the case. She also visited the prisoners in the police stations. Her aim: to catechize not only the prisoners, but also the police. She bragged about “belonging to the Police! ”.

Margarida was well known in Goiânia. Acknowledging everything she had done for the poor, the local authorities awarded her the title of “Citizen of Goiânia” in 2010.

Gifted with a very good memory, Margarida was able to recite by heart long passages from the Bible, especially from the New Testament. She used this gift to proclaim the Good News in catechetical sessions for children and adults, preaching in time and out of time. To do so, she would compose rhyming poems or prose, which she would recite over and over again.

As the years passed and she could no longer take care of the home, one of her proteges, a father, named Valter, welcomed her into his home. She would still go out to meet the poor and refer them to the institutions or outpatient clinics that could help them.

But the years weighed on her. In 2015 she broke her neck and was starting to develop Alzheimer's disease. Despite his gratitude and his devotion, Valter had to admit that he couldn't keep her at home any longer. In fact, the Assumption had on several occasions offered to provide care for her in the Brasilia Community to which she returned. By now she could no longer walk.

Although often disoriented, Margarida could still recite her poems, pray the rosary, and pray the Litany of the Blessed Virgin by heart in Portuguese, French or Latin. There were various emergencies and crises since September that required several hospitalizations in intensive care. Then a serious blood circulation problem required surgery to amputate her left leg. When she seemed to be recovering from the operation at 12:28 a.m. on Wednesday, November 14 in the intensive care unit, Margarida left us to receive her reward.

“What you did to the least of My people, you did to Me!”

Let us pray for her and for all those she was able to help during her long life.

Sr. Maria Rachel

SISTER JOSÉ MARÍA DE JESÚS

OTTÍLIA HORTA BOETGER

“Magnificat anima mea Dominum” (My soul magnifies the Lord)

- Date of birth: August 24, 1923 in São Paulo
- Postulancy: January 27, 1946 in Rio de Janeiro
- Novitiate: May 11, 1947 in Rio de Janeiro
- First Vows: May 24, 1948 in Rio de Janeiro
- Perpetual Vows: May 31, 1951 in São Paulo
- Date of death: February 4, 2018 in Brasília

Sr. Ottilia was born in São Paul but the family soon moved to Rio de Janeiro, where she went to school. It was as a student in Rio that she came to know the Assumption. Later when her family moved again to Niteroy, on the other side of the Bay, Ottilia asked to remain at school so that she would not leave the Sisters that she loved so much! However, after finishing her studies, she decided to wait a few years before entering the Novitiate which she eventually did. Her taking of the habit and her first vows were presided over by Fr. Helder Câmara then a priest of the diocese of Rio only to become its auxiliary bishop in 1952, before being named archbishop of Olinda and Recife in 1964!

In 1949, now professed, Sr. Ottilia was sent to São Paulo. As the laws of education had changed, she had to attend the final year of secondary school, in order to finally have the official documentation of secondary studies. In 1961, in Rio, she was qualified as a teacher. Later, in Goiania, she was enrolled at the University and in 1968 she graduated with a degree in Literature.

Ottilia was small, gentle and shy by nature. She was also very dedicated to education and taught her classes, with love, enthusiasm and competence for many years. She showed the same dedication

in the work of catechesis, in both our institutions and parishes, as well as in the different communities to which she was missioned during her long life. Her ability to organize and to maintain order has also made her a valuable member of the secretarial staff of our colleges. Not to mention the fact that she was also bursar on several occasions.

Let us also emphasize her love for St. Marie Eugenie. One of her expressions: “I try to be as good as Our Mother Foundress wanted us to be! “Devotions?” according to her own words: “Mary, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Assisi, and especially St. Therese of the Child Jesus! A Sister asked her: “What about St. Marie Eugenie?” Answer: “Yes, I like her, but I love ‘little Therese’ even more!”

St. Therese attracted Sr. Otilia so much that, when she was in the Community of Teresópolis in the late seventies, she asked to have an experience of life in a Carmelite Monastery. The Provincial at the time, consented to her request - not without a fear that turned out to be intuitive—Otilia’s vocation was indeed in the Assumption and not in Carmel. However, Otilia did spend several months in the Carmel Monastery and then returned to her Community in Teresópolis. (She was over 55 years of age—an age not too adaptable for this kind of re-direction.)

Ever valiant, she was able to carry on her life of devotion and continued to give herself to the Assumption and to education whether at Goiania, Miracema or Itapaci —as long as she could, Otilia served with dedication and joy.

She was sensitive to others, especially to the poorest, acting with gentleness and kindness, sometimes even with a touch of ingenuity. She would tell how one day, in a street of Teresópolis, a man snatched her shopping bag. Slowly, she said to him: “Meu filhinho! [My little child] Why are you doing this? The man, bewildered, handed back the bag and said: ‘No one has ever called me ‘my little child!’”

Back in Teresópolis, gradually, with age, came strong health limitations. Otilia became more and more deaf. This was followed by a problem with her eyes, which developed into blindness. She patiently bore her limitations, without complaining, faithful to prayer, happy to receive visits from her friends, and especially from her nieces.

A few years later, due to these limitations, she went to Rio to a nursing home where our two Sisters, Lelia and Glorinh already shared a room. Otilia's gentleness and spirit of faith helped her accept the pain of leaving Teresópolis where she had been for so many years.

But the move also brought a kind of insecurity. Whenever there was the slightest noise, she would ask, "Who is there?" and would hold on to the arm of the person sitting next to her. Often she would say that she wanted to go back to Teresópolis. Gradually a bond developed between the three patients. They prayed the Rosary together before the Mass at the Sanctuary of Aparecida was broadcast on television. The three religious were living the last stage of their lives in loving service to the Kingdom, strengthened by the spirituality which had nourished them from their youth. The Sisters of Rio reported that, in spite of everything, Otilia loved to talk with anyone about her childhood, her family, and her first years in the Assumption.

However, the Lord asked Otilia for one more sacrifice. She was sent to Brasília in May, 2017 making the journey by car, in two stages, with a stopover in São Paulo for a day of rest.

It was in Brasília, sharing the nursing home with other Sisters, that Otilia lived the last months of her life. On February 4, 2018, as the nurse's assistant was bringing her lunch, Otilia fainted. The firemen were called to the emergency ward and quickly took her to the

hospital. Despite the immediate care of the cardiology team, her heart could not resist and within minutes, she gave up her life. We still remember her gentleness, her tireless devotion and her kindness. And we thank the Lord for giving her to us for many years.

Sr. Maria Rachel

SISTER MARÍA ANUNCIACIÓN DE LA PRECIOSA SANGRE (of the Precious Blood)

LUCÍA ARIAS GONZÁLEZ

“To You alone honor and glory”

- Date of birth: January 13, 1931, in Noceda del Bierzo (León)
- Postulancy: July 15, 1950 in León
- Novitiate: March 29, 1951 in Mira-Cruz
- First Vows: April 17, 1952 in Mira-Cruz
- Perpetual Vows: March 1, 1955 in Santa Ana (El Salvador)
- Date of death: May 18, in Navas de Riofrío (Spain)

María Anunciación was born in Noceda del Bierzo (León) in a very religious family of five girls and one boy.

María Anunciación always remembered the happiness she experienced at home with her parents and siblings to whom she was very close and who loved her very much. She described how her house was in the centre of the village, which had a beautiful garden and orchard. She would tell with great enthusiasm how the neighbors came to her house to see her sick father in bed. She also recalls how her mother worked and cared for her father with great dedication. Following the loss of her parents, the family always remained united with the nephews and nieces continuing in the same faithful way.

María Anunciación studied to be a primary school teacher in our school in León and immediately after finishing, she started teaching there. She entered the novitiate in Mira-Cruz. When she took her vows, she asked to go to a mission in Latin America. She was sent to León (Nicaragua) as a teacher. She said that she was very happy there visiting the people and that everyone loved her very much. Some years later, she was sent to the school in Santa Ana (El

Salvador) where she taught the children, still very happy and feeling very loved.

She lived in El Salvador for many years. She experienced the war situation in this country with pain and fear. She spoke little about the war at the time. She only wanted to remember how good and happy she had been in the Province of Central America. But in 1981 she returned to Spain in a very fragile state. She was sent to Gijón where she spent a few years in school as coordinator of the first year of primary school. From 1987, she lived in Collado, Los Molinos and Riofrío where she was in charge of the sacristy and liturgy until she could no longer manage.

She lived with continual thanksgiving and praise, welcoming, joyful and helpful. We enclose the opening lines of the Eucharist celebrated for her burial which describe what her life was and what she meant to her Community:

"Today we celebrate in this Eucharist the life and the passage to the house of the Father of our Sister María Anunciación. We want to give thanks for her long life given to God and to the Congregation by her service to all — both in Spain and in the missions. Her long, discreet and silent service says much today in these difficult times for the Assumption in Nicaragua and El Salvador."

María Anunciación was a kind, joyful, helpful and extremely positive woman. She saw with difficulty anything "bad" around her. She was very friendly, easy to live with, loving her Community where she felt happy, always with her smile, desiring to make others happy.

She really loved the liturgy. She prepared it with care and enthusiasm when she could. She liked to pay attention to all the details that embellished it and took great care for the major celebrations. She sang well and loved singing which helped a lot.

Realizing that Alzheimer's disease was slowly taking hold of her, she accepted this trial from the beginning. She fully accepted God's will, always trusting that the Lord would not leave her alone and that she would discover this will in her doctors and Superiors. She was an easy and grateful patient.

María Anunciación loved her family very much and they returned the favor by taking care of her and being present every week to answer her calls.

Her word was “To You alone honor and glory” which she often remembered as she kissed her ring. She lived that word daily.

“Maria Anunciacion, you lived many years with us in Riofrío. We saw you devoted and helpful, then sick and grateful. But your death surprised us because you left with the Lord without our even noticing it. God took you with Him as if He was in a hurry to have you with Him to continue to give Him honor and glory. We are sure that from heaven, being fully the Annunciation that you were, you will not forget us.

Seeing you living so happy and joyful, always wanting to make life easy for others, taking on your frailties with great strength and without complaint, you made us see how important it is to always give your life, in concrete terms, at every moment. You leave us a beautiful legacy: to be always happy because that is what the Lord expects from us.

We are sure that from heaven you will intercede for us, for the Congregation and for your family whom you loved so much and that you will not forget the people of Riofrío who welcomed you for the last years of your life and who helped you to be happy”.

The Riofrío Community

SOEUR MARÍA DEL CARMEN DE JESÚS CRUCIFICADO (of Jesus Crucified)

MARÍA DEL CARMEN MOVILLA RODRÍGUEZ

“Here I am. Amen. Alleluia”

- Date of birth: May 15, 1943 in Villafrechos (Valladolid)
- Postulancy: July 2, 1961 in Valladolid
- Novitiate: May 23, 1962 in Valladolid
- First vows: May 31, 1964 in Valladolid
- Perpetual Vows: June 27, 1969 in Guatemala - Acogida
- Date of death: February 2, 2018 in Collado Mediano

Carmen was born in Villafrechos, a village in Valladolid, where she always returned happy to and spoke of with great affection. She said it was the city that produced the best almonds in the world, which was always a source of jokes for the Community.

From Villafrechos, she participated in a retreat with the Community of Valladolid and so met the Assumption. This retreat launched her towards the adventure of following Christ. She arrived with us in Olivos ready to be a lay missionary in Central America but contact with the Sisters made her discover a greater and different vocation. She felt God's call to give herself completely to Him and wished to become a Religious of the Assumption.

At the end of her formation as a postulant and novice in Valladolid, she returned to Los Olivos to begin her juniorate. After two years in San Sebastian she was finally able to realize her dream— of making the trip to Central America. First she went to Guatemala - Zone 10, where she took her perpetual vows. But the most intense years of her life were those she lived in El Salvador in the

Communities of Santa Ana, Lourdes, Chalatenango and San José Las Flores.

These were difficult years because of the persecution of priests, catechists and Christians in general. She suffered from the war that left an indelible mark on her. She shared the suffering, exodus and martyrdom of many Salvadorans whom she helped in the shelters and she also shared their hopes, their joys and above all their deep faith. She collaborated with Monsignor Romero and mourned his death with so many others. Moreover, she was closely involved in the martyrdom of the Jesuits of the UCA and the Maryknoll Sisters, with whom she spent several years of accompanying Christian communities and persecuted farmers. Through these experiences Maria del Carmen felt such a deep unity with the suffering people that it marked her life forever. One gift that filled Carmen with joy was to be able to witness the beatification of Monsignor Romero.

Then came her departure from El Salvador to Ecuador which was a great sacrifice for her but she was always generous. She worked in the Community of Cuenca with the same dedication in the parish ministry. There she continued to visit families and form Christian communities.

Very demanding of herself, she always wanted to be more engaged, helpful and available for all that was necessary, attentive to the Sisters and attentive to all that came from the Congregation. She was a woman with a clear missionary vocation.

She had to leave her beloved Central America to take care of her parents, who were already settled in Madrid-Getafe, as well as of her only brother. She was in Santa Isabel and later in the Community of Vallecas.

She devoted herself to her mother, alone after the death of her father and brother, for many years with great love and care, first in her home and then in a nursing home where, in addition to her mother,

she cared for any other elderly person who needed it. During those years, she cared for her elderly mother, who needed all her attention. She was able to combine care and commitment in school and in the Community.

Shortly after her mother's death in August 2017, she found that she herself was not in good health. From that first moment she realized that she was going to die soon, just like her brother. On November 3, 2017, we took her to Collado Mediano and she passed away on February 2, 2018.

She always loved and supported her sister-in-law, her nephews and grandnephews who were dear to her. She felt their affection during this period of her illness. Her face lit up when she spoke of them. She enjoyed their visits and, although she was already in a very vulnerable state of health, her expression changed when they went to see her.

In Vallecas, she was very happy to work in the parish, to visit the elderly or the sick with great dedication, always engaged in the parish. She was much loved in the neighborhood where she knew everyone. She was also much loved at school where she had fun especially with the little ones in the dining room and the pre-school. She was attentive to all the staff, especially the non-teaching staff. Their massive presence at her funeral in Collado as well as that of many others in Vallecas showed their affection for her.

The Community of Collado was happy to be able to take care of Carmen in the last months of her life which was a testament to charity and service. We give thanks!

We wish to end with a hand-written and undated message on the back of a card that we found among her belongings which says well what Carmen was:

“Lord, I deeply desire that you be the center and the absolute of my life; living from within, from my deep self through the life of prayer and faith (obedience - dependence), wanting to discover God in the events of History, Mission and Community, loving me with tenderness and accepting people and brothers as they are and letting me love them in an attitude of freedom, poverty, love and service. Lord, help me live it. So be it.”

The Vallecas Community

SISTER MARÍA DEL SANTO ÁNGEL DE JESÚS CRUCIFICADO

MARÍA DE LOS ÁNGELES DE CASTRO CASTRO

“Do not allow me to be **separated** from You”

- Date of birth: July 29, 1934 in León
- Postulancy: May 10, 1956 in León
- Novitiate: September 24, 1957 in León.
- First Vows: October 25, 1959 in Valladolid
- Perpetual Vows: November 17, 1964 in Barcelona.
- Date of death: September 10, 2018 in Collado Mediano

María del Santo Angel was born in a town in Leon, Valdesogos de Abajo. She was the fourth of seven children - five girls and two boys. She helped a lot in the family and took care of her little brother, who was 12 years younger than her. When he was old enough, she was able to fulfill her own vocation, which was not surprising to her family because she was the fourth girl to dedicate her life to God in the religious life, in the Assumption.

She arrived in Collado when we reopened the house. She came from Los Molinos with a group of Sisters from the Community. Very ill and limited in her movements, she still could help herself and not need much help in spite of her limitations.

Those who knew her when she was young remember her as a devoted, hard-working and helpful Sister, and above all very happy, with a very pleasant relationship with the students who would look for occasions to talk to her.

At the age of 30, the doctors in Madrid diagnosed that she had bone cancer but the Lord reserved many more years for her to live her mystery: "Jesus Crucified". She was a little better, but her health,

already very deteriorated, made her suffer a lot, since her essential organs were very affected by the disease.

Her life then changed completely, going from being a dynamic, helpful, active woman to an invalid. This meant leaving everything because God asked her to accept suffering, knowing that it was redemptive and to orientate her life towards another type of service, prayer, adoration, intercession for our world and the acceptance of her new way of seeing life. It was very difficult for her to give up what she loved most, service to the poor and needy, a service that she considered so necessary in the favelas of León and Madrid, where she put all her hopes. With very reduced physical mobility and multiple illnesses, a restless mind and not being able to do all that her heart demanded of her, these 50 years of illness transformed María de los Ángeles from an open, simple and close person into a more introverted and solitary one. It was only in prayer that she continued to express herself as she really was.

These were many years of suffering, which she will now see compensated for by all that she now enjoys with God Whom she wanted to serve and to Whom she gave her life. Granted it was a life lived in a different way from what she expected but the mystery remained "Jesus Crucified" and she lived it generously. The words engraved in her ring "Do not let me be separated from you" reminded her of her ever-present Lord who could now reveal Himself completely to her and fill her with happiness.

María de los Ángeles, your Community with whom you have lived for eleven years, thanks the Lord for having been able to be with you in your sufferings as well as in the happy and joyful moments we shared. We have learned much from your tenacity and your desire to live despite everything that has happened to you. Now we are sure that we have one more intercessor in heaven.

The Collado Mediano Community

SISTER MARIA FLAMINIA DEL BUON PASTORE (of the Good Shepherd)

CARMINA MARTIRE

“In manus tuas Domine” (Into Your Hands, Lord)

- Date of birth: March 18, 1926 in Longobardi (Calabria)
- Postulancy: October 24, 1926 in Quadraro, Rome
- Novitiate: November 21, 1956 in Quadraro, Rome
- First Vows: November 30, 1958 in Quadraro, Rome
- Perpetual Vows: April 25, 1965 in Quadraro, Rome
- Date of death: March 8, 2018 in Quadraro, Rome

Originally from Calabria, Sister Flaminia lived her youth in Rome in the Quadraro zone where she met the Sisters of the Assumption.

She belonged to a large family, grounded in the values of faith, of hospitality and of solidarity. She had a gift for humor, common sense and intuition. Her curiosity made her attentive to people, situations and life. She loved to learn, and she willingly devoted herself to reading, passionate about human situations and history.

She was culturally limited but she made up for it through interest, open-mindedness, practicality and ingenuity to devote herself to the services that were asked of her.

In Mirto, Calabria, she carried out a much-appreciated family pastoral work.

In Venice, in the university hostel among the students, she dedicated herself to cooking, winning over the young people with her charm, her joy and her culinary art. She led the staff with her human traits full of great respect. She assumed her responsibilities with dedication and creativity, taking care to satisfy the tastes of the young people but always with a concern for sobriety that sometimes

made her economize in the amount — causing discomfort in the dining room!

Her feisty character led her to sometimes have angry reactions that were not too pleasant for her neighbors but which passed like summer storms, without great consequences.

Her spiritual sensitivity led her to frequent the neo-catechumenal community for some time in the parish of the Frari. She was able to take advantage of the deepening of the Word of God and the fraternal dimension of this experience.

The relationships of collaboration and friendship established in Venice have lasted over time. The memories of faithful friendships accompanied her throughout her life.

During the last years of her life at Quadraro in Rome, not far from her family, she willingly took care of the sewing, responding to the needs not only of the Sisters of her Community but also of the whole Province. She also devoted herself competently and generously to the kitchen and left us with nostalgic memories of her "specialties".

She loved to go to the garden, to contemplate nature and gather its fruits. She planted, watered ... and it was in the garden that she was seized by a sudden illness that marked the beginning of the decline of her strength... The tumor that had been on her face for sometime got worse, causing her great physical and moral pain.

She was lovingly accompanied and comforted by her Sisters, family members and friends who stayed close to her until the last moment.

The Quadraro Community

SISTER MARIA GORETTI

PAULETTE GRENON

- Date of birth: April 23, 1934 in Saint-Quentin-Lamotte-La Croix-in Bailly (80)
- Postulancy: October 10, 1953 at the Augustines of the Sacred heart of Abbeville
- Novitiate: May 20, 1954 in Abbeville
- First Vows: April 25, 1956
- Perpetual Vows: August 28, 1960 in Arras
- Date of death: October 3, 2018 in Notre Dame de France (nursing home) in Abbeville

To everyone's total surprise, Sister Paulette left us unexpectedly on the morning of October 3.

Paulette Louise Marie was born on French soil at St Quentin-Lamotte-la Croix in Bailly in the Somme region which she left relatively rarely throughout her life.

On October 10, 1953, at the age of nineteen, she entered the Augustinian Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Abbeville. She received the habit on May 20 of the following year and was named Sister Maria Goretti, before being called Sr. Maria and then taking back her baptismal name.

She soon took part in the care of the patients at the Hôtel Dieu in Abbeville, then entrusted to the Congregation.

Following the merger in 1954 of the Augustinian Sisters of the Sacred Heart with the Augustinian Sisters of the Precious Blood of Arras, it was undoubtedly in Arras that she pronounced her first vows on April 25, 1956.

In the meantime, Sr. Maria Goretti became an assistant nurse and practiced at St. John's Hospital in Arras, in children's surgery, then

at the rural hospital of St. Valéry on the Somme. The same year, in 1960, on the celebration of St. Augustine, as was traditional among the Augustinian Sisters, she pronounced her definitive commitment in Arras.

For a few years, she was in the Pas de Calais, at St. Omer in the Community which was involved in the Saint Louis Hospital. She then went to Arques while studying to become a nurse, still in St. Omer. The Augustinian Congregation is at the service of the "hospice" as they used to say at the time. The residents, most of who came from the rural world, were poor in all respects. The Sisters worked hard to bring a sense of humanity into these collective structures. Other Sisters provided hospitality for the families of the prisoners in the nearby prison.

Diploma in hand, Sr. Maria Goretti provided home care. She would perch first on a motorized bike and then at the wheel of a small 2CV, well known to all the children as she went from house to house to provide care: bandages, injections etc. without forgetting to listen to the sufferings, and to give encouragement, sometimes being the only person to whom one could entrust oneself— a beautiful mission!

A year of human and spiritual renewal shared with other Sisters in Arras was a special time for her. Afterwards, she often spoke about this 3rd YEAR.

In 1980, on her return to the Somme, Sr. Maria arrived in Moreuil where a Community was established. For many years, she was in charge of home care, not only in the town of Moreuil but also in the surrounding villages. At the same time, being very ambitious, she became involved in the parish. Sister Raymonde Lefebvre, who lived with her for a long time in Moreuil, shares the following:

“She ensured the flourishing of the church, the function of sacristan, and many other things. As a member of the funeral team, whenever

she was on duty, she would take the other animators back to the Community for a cup of coffee. Each spring, she organized the gathering and sale of daffodils to raise money for the Congregation's charities in Madagascar. In October she also had a stand at the fair to sell goods made in Madagascar. She did not spare any effort. She is a “gifted person”, affable, very sociable, which brought in many donations in kind (vegetables and fruits) as happens in the countryside.”

When Sr. Maria Goretti reached a certain age, a difficult and painful time began for her. She was unable to practice as a nurse. She loved driving and was in a serious car accident that would have discouraged many others from getting back behind the wheel.

In 2012, when the Community of Moreuil had to close its doors due to a lack of recruitment, Sr. Paulette, as she now called herself, arrived in the land of St. Benoît Labre, in Amettes, in the Pas de Calais. She remained active and involved in the Evangelical Service for the Sick and also visited the people of the surrounding villages.

Being very discreet about her own health although suffering from a serious illness, she acted as if nothing had happened; until another illness caused her mental faculties to gradually diminish.

The closure of the Community of Amettes was the opportunity for her to return to Notre Dame de France nursing home last July. She adapted well there keeping a strong relational life. She "felt good in Abbeville" as she said to her cousin the day before her death, as Sr Madeleine Lamiot, in charge of the Community, said. Her cousin, the only family link, was to welcome her for a short holiday a few days later and no doubt with this in mind she had gone to the hairdresser.

Thérèse Véronique Quandalle, who was her Superior at Amettes, wrote: “The sudden loss of our Sr. Paulette left me very sad”. I went to Abbeville last Monday to bring her back here in Arras to visit the

oncologist on the 2nd”. On Tuesday morning I said goodbye to her as she was returning to Abbeville. Wednesday morning we heard of her passing away and we knew that nothing could have been foreseen except that her memory was fading a bit more. From up there, she helps us.

In fact, this Wednesday, she started the day as usual: Lauds, breakfast, prayer, then went back up to her room and went back down to the chapel but on her return she could not find her room until a resident helped her. As Sr. Madeleine came to make her sign a document, she found that Maria Goretti had fallen down, lying unconscious behind the door.

Her funeral was celebrated in the chapel of the Notre Dame de France nursing home, a simple and prayerful ceremony, in the presence of her cousin, the Sisters of the Community who could attend and those from Arras. Sr. Françoise Martin read the welcoming words in the absence of Sr. Jeanine Bertrand who was detained elsewhere.

Yes, throughout her life, Sister Paulette incarnated the word of Jesus: “What you have done to the least of My brothers and sisters... you did it to Me.”

Sr. Marie Françoise Bisiaux

SISTER MARIA IRENE DEL SANTÍSIMO SACRAMENTO (of the Blessed Sacrament)

PRUDENCE LOITI ARANZÁBAL

“I am the servant of the Lord, may it be done for me according to Your word”

- Date of birth: April 28, 1922 in a farmhouse of Anguiozar, Vergara
- Postulancy: December 7, 1942 in Mira-Cruz
- Novitiate: January 2, 1944 in Mira-Cruz
- First Vows: January 9, 1945 in Mira-Cruz
- Perpetual Vows: January 9, 1948
- Date of death: June 20, 2018 in El Olivar, Malaga

Maria Irene arrived in El Olivar (Málaga) in July 1978 and since then, with the exception of one year when she returned to Mira-Cruz to be close to her family, she spent the last years of her life in Málaga, which she loved almost as much as her native land.

The eldest of six children, whenever she spoke of her homeland, her eyes lit up, almost blind at the end of her life. She remembers the nonsense of her childhood, the care of her siblings, the fact that she was the eldest, excursions, visits to her relatives, especially grandparents. One by one, her siblings died. She followed with great concern the illnesses of Javier and Lorenzo, "the little ones" as she called them. She offered her sufferings for the intentions of her beloved nephews whose visits gave her such joy. She prayed constantly for the work and the religious practices of her relatives and kept in touch with them.

Irene was a woman of a strong, deep and unshakeable faith, which shaped her life and her work. After a few years in Mira-Cruz, in

charge of the household and the young girls who helped her, she was called by Mother Marie Denyse to Auteuil. This was a very happy moment for her. She was in charge of the laundry. At that time, with no modern-day advances, with almost 200 people in Auteuil, her work was not easy. She was helped by the novices. The Mistress of Novices, Margarita Maria, sent to her those whom she considered as having the most difficulty integrating or the weakest. Maria Irene's good judgment, affection and example helped many Sisters to find their way. Work was not hard for her and the possibility of being in the Mother House, of meeting so many Sisters from so many countries was a gift for her which she greatly appreciated.

On her return to Spain, she also spent a few years in Olivos as a cook, and two years of indelible memory in the Foundation of Aralar. The contact with nature, the mountains, always white, and the atmosphere of the old people's home left their deep impression on her.

Her last years in El Olivar were a constant source of gratitude for her. She took care of the garden, a small orchard that did not last long because of the dryness of the land. She helped with cleaning, cooking, wherever necessary. But her great passion during these years was the people in need who would come to the house or she would go looking for extremely poor families to help out. She would visit them and help them. She asked for money, work, and food, whatever she wanted for "her friends". It took a lot of work to make her understand that sometimes their needs were not so serious and that they could get help through other means. But her loving heart and her immense kindness would not accept it. She was aware of their work, of the costs of paying for their house, of educating their children, of finding solutions when they were unemployed and she managed to get them, if not the material solution, at least understanding, listening and consolation. Her love for the poor and her apostolic zeal earned her the nickname of "Sister-with-a-cane"

because leaning on it she travelled throughout the city and its surroundings.

A woman of character, independent, Maria Irene found it difficult to accept her limitations and the need to let herself be helped. Her heart began to fail, her legs too, but above all the macular degeneration of both eyes was the greatest trial of her life because she had always been a great reader. She prayed a lot, spent hours in the chapel, sometimes sleeping peacefully with her Lord. She prayed the entire Rosary every day assigning each decade in advance for each intention. From the moment she could no longer read, she would listen intently to Radio Maria. Even her personal schedule depended on the programming of Radio Maria.

Spiritually, she wanted to live more and more the fervor of her early years. During this year's Holy Week retreat, as she prayed before the Blessed Sacrament, she understood that her prayer would henceforth be that of: RELATIONSHIP, ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING and this experience filled her heart with peace and joy.

She enjoyed walking in the garden, contemplating the flowers, the trees, determining the exact time of pruning, sowing and tending the many fruit trees in the garden. She suffered every time a tree had to be cut down, uprooted or had withered.

Irene was an intelligent person although she could hardly understand a joke or a double meaning. And she understood even less when the Community laughed at her gullibility... "If you say it, it'll be true..." was her definitive and endearing argument in Community. She was always ready to ask for forgiveness, loyal and true.

A couple of months before her death, she began to feel very tired and breathless. A diagnosis something that looked like a cancerous lump that had invaded a whole lung but which, given her age - 96,

the doctors did not want to investigate further. She slowly faded away, losing consciousness, until, with no contraction, no apparent pain, she stopped breathing. A few days before, she had had the joy of seeing two of her dearest nieces, who had crossed Spain to give her a final hug.

God, her Father, in Whom she trusted with the naïveté of a child, had to open wide His arms and in Him she met all those she loved so much. We are sure that Irene will continue to share with the Lord and His Blessed Mother the mysteries of the Rosary, that is to say, to intercede for all her Sisters, family and friends, without forgetting the “Child of the Miracle”, a child healed by prayer directed to Saint Marie Eugenie. (This child is now 12 years old, healthy and exceptionally beautiful).

Thank you, Irene, for the beautiful testimony of life that you leave us.

Thanks also to Ma. Jesus for helping in the writing of the circular.

El Olivar Community

SISTER MARÍA MERCEDES DEL SANTÍSIMO SACRAMENTO (of the Blessed Sacrament)

MERCEDES SALVADORA SALINAS ZEPEDA

“Lord, you know that I love you”

- Date of birth: March 25, 1937 in León, Nicaragua
- Postulancy: January 6, 1955 in León, Nicaragua
- Novitiate: October 29, 1955 in Val Notre Dame, Belgium
- First Vows: November 1, 1956 in Val Notre Dame, Belgium
- Perpetual Vows: November 1, 1961 in Guatemala
- Date of death: January 26, 2018 in Diriamba, Nicaragua

Our dear Sister Maria Mercedes was born in the house of Don José Salinas Salazar and Doña Mercedes Zepeda, in Leon, Nicaragua, on March 25, 1937, the date which, that year, coincided with the celebration of Holy Thursday. She said: "The Lord was already calling me to venerate this sacred mystery in a special way". She took the name of Maria of the Blessed Sacrament when she pronounced her first vows. She was the third of seven children; her sister Leila Maria is also a Religious of the Assumption.

Her childhood took place in León, the colonial city which, at that time, preserved many religious traditions: the hourly rhythm of the day, distinguished by the sound of the bells of its imposing cathedral; the many ancient churches and, above all, the Solemnity of the celebration of Holy Week with its beautiful and pious processions. All this must have marked her childhood, as well as the piety of her mother, who regularly attended the celebrations in the church of San Francisco, near their house and the charity with which she welcomed a cancer patient at her table.

Since her childhood, she began and finished her primary education at the school of “La Asunción” in León. She was an intern for a while at the Colegio La Asunción in San Salvador where Mercedes recalled “...the sweet song of the Divine Office came from the chapel to my bed and filled me with peace and gentleness; it was like a sweet call,” she said.

She attended high school at Assumption Academy, “Ravenhill”, in Philadelphia and then returned to León to complete her studies. Soon after, she answered “Yes” to the Lord's call. Her mother wished that, before entering the convent, she be presented in society as was customary at that time. María Mercedes accepted to please her mother, but on the appointed date, the director of the celebration died, which meant that the feast was postponed after the day fixed for her entry into the convent. Despite the insistence of her entire family, she kept her word and entered the postulancy on January 6, 1955.

She made her novitiate in Val Notre Dame, Belgium, where she took her first vows on November 1, 1956. Then, in 1957, she was sent to Guatemala where she took her final vows on November 1, 1961. It was there that she began and finished her university studies and then worked in that school until 1966.

She returned to the Colegio de León and in 1978 she was appointed Superior and Headmistress. These were years when student unrest was beginning before the uprising of 1979. After a year in Auteuil, in 1980, she arrived at the Collège Sainte-Anne and successfully took over the management of the primary school. She worked with lay people and accompanied a group of lay people to Rome, Italy. She remained in Santa Ana until the school closed in 1993. She then returned to Guatemala and spent several years taking excellent care of her mother until her mother's death.

With a desire to live a contemplative life and to help the Community of La Palmera, Nicaragua, Mercedes got there already suffering

from Parkinson's disease and other conditions that weakened her. However, she found the strength to prepare some of the children for their First Communion and also to teach a staff member to read and write.

She strived not to fail in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and in all acts of Community life. She was concerned about the poor and the reconciliation of her compatriots. With a fine soul, a capacity for relationships, forgiveness, a great love for praying the Rosary, the Eucharist, her family and the Congregation, she stayed courageous and joyful in spite of her woes. In the Community, we did not think she would leave us so soon. The Lord called her back on January 26, 2018. She now enjoys the adoration of her Lord, face to face.

We received many words of affection and solidarity from friends, family and former students before her departure. The testimony of Maggie Matheu, a former student of the school in Guatemala, summarizes how much María Mercedes touched the hearts of those who knew her:

“I am sad ... a few hours ago, Mother María Mercedes Salinas died ... my teacher since I was 10 years old, my great friend for thousands of years; my teacher so important in my tenderest years. She was the one who taught me to pray, to study, to learn, to fight for a cause; the one who formed my will and challenged my intelligence to overcome a thousand obstacles and generate new ideas; the one who discovered my missionary spirit and opened a thousand windows when I saw a closed door; the one who gave me an example of exigency and illusion, who accompanied me in my adolescence and encouraged me to reach unthinkable goals. With her, I laughed so much that I also cried... the one who was my teacher and, years later, my student. She taught me to be courageous, to dream, to pray, to be tolerant. From her I learned the most essential values and to fight for my convictions. I accompanied her through a thousand

steps in public offices... overcoming a thousand obstacles. It is to her that my mother handed me over so many times, with the certainty that she was taking care of me, with whom we made a thousand joyful and incredible mistakes. Today she is gone, the person who educated me with my parents and who saw me grow up... my teacher and friend, an example of tenacity and success, a testimony of vocation and dedication. She died without realizing it... in this sense she was rewarded by the God of life who, like Samuel... called her again at night while she slept, but this time for real life, Eternal Life... I am sad and it hurts me that she is gone, but I thank heaven that she fell asleep ... in the beloved, and that she did not feel that she was gone until she met her mother and Manola, her sister, in heaven, who had gone ahead of her.

May God keep her already in His Heart and may He reward her with the crown that is given to those who can come before God and say, "Here I am Lord ... mission accomplished ...". "You know, Lord, that I love you."

Rest in peace, Mother Maria; this is how I came to know you in my childhood, as a young professed. In 1966, she invited me for her perpetual profession. It was very impressive for me, as a child, to see my friend dressed in her gown and wearing her little crown to celebrate the YES given to the one who had called her.

May she rest in peace and receive the award she deserves for giving herself."

La Palmera Community, Diriamba, Nicaragua, 2018.

SISTER MARÍA ORIELDA DE NAZARET

LUCIANA ABURTO MENA

“I am the servant of the Lord”

- Date of birth: May 24, 1917, in Jinotepe, Carazo, Nicaragua.
- Postulancy: June 4, 1942, in Managua.
- Novitiate: September 19, 1944. in San Sebastian, Spain
- First Vows: October 8, 1945
- Perpetual Vows: November 9, 1948, in Managua.
- Date of death: December 20, 2018 in La Palmera (Nicaragua)

From a very Christian family, her parents - Nemesio Aburto and Josefa Mena - instilled in Orielda the human and Christian values that she cultivated throughout her life. From her childhood, she always remembered that her mother used to tell them: "When you see a cross, think of Our Lord Jesus Christ". "When you see nails, think of the nails of Our Lord. "In her family, there were three sisters and two nephews who became Religious.

She entered the Assumption but felt, after a first attempt, that there was too much work. She left but later came back to follow her attraction to the Assumption life. She had an energetic, gentle and affectionate character.

Her Christian life was simple and profound, devoted to the Eucharist, in giving herself to others, in adoration. She persevered and always tried to be a witness.

She had a great devotion to the prayer of the Rosary and prayed for many intentions. She was devoted to the Lord of Mercy and the Child Jesus. She loved the Divine Office. She used to say: “Let us enjoy it now that we have it”.

Her religious life was simple; she always was attracted to the Lord, right to the end. She had begun her Religious life in the time of Mother Francisca, who was very fond of her simple devotion and charity. She did her novitiate in Spain, with M. Isabel, in San Sebastian. Her novice mistress loved her very much. After her canonical novitiate she returned to Nicaragua.

Orielda spent all her time at the school in Managua. Her life there was made up of work and prayer. She gave herself totally to others. She lived for a long time with M. Francisca and was devoted to her especially when M. Francisca became old and sick. Orielda became her faithful shadow, day and night. M. Francisca's friends became her friends.

Orielda's heart, so full of love of the Lord, drew people of all social classes who recognized this richness in her. She led each person to God through her relationships, her example, and her testimony. She taught with love. Her words reflected a great depth of life.

She loved to read the Word of God. Immediately after breakfast, she would ask a Sister to read the Word of God to her for the day. This was her great devotion. She was hard working and very devout. She would run and make others run. She went to read, to pray, with all her heart. When she was sent to La Palmera, she helped in the kitchen. Always on duty! In Community meetings she always made a special mention about loving Our Lord.

She had a special love for priests and prayed a lot for them and in particular her two nephews who were priests. During her final days, she asked that we would pray with her, and if the Sister did not arrive, she would have her called. She felt at ease with everyone and left her mark on them.

For us she was a school of fidelity, of intense love for Our Lord, of love of the Eucharist, of silence and solitude, of life for God alone. She already enjoys now her Lord whom she loved so much!

SISTER MARIE JOSEPH BERTHE

MARIE-EUGÉNIE-JOSÈPHE BERTHE

“Lord, you know that I love you”

- Date of birth: April 22, 1930 in Givenchy-la-Bassée in Pas de Calais
- Postulancy: September 14, 1955 in the Convent of the Augustines du Précieux Sang d’Arras
- Novitiate: 1956 in Arras
- First Vows: July 27, 1953 in Arras
- Perpetual Vows: August 4, 1958 in Arras
- Date of death: July 5, 2018 EHPAD St Nicolas Arras

Marie Eugénie Josèphe was born in France on April 22, 1930 in the village of Givenchy-la-Bassée in the Pas de Calais department, today called “Les Hauts de France”.

She was welcomed into a large family, four girls and a boy, the youngest of the siblings, “le bradé” according to the local expression that is “the spoiled one.” He later became a priest and for a long time the Archivist of the Arras Diocese, which made his father say after his ordination “I have a son and now he wears dresses like the girls!” (A secret told by Sr. Marie Joseph who was deeply attached to her brother Léon)

Over the years the Berthe family has given several of their members to the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Precious Blood of Arras, with Sister Thérèse Berthe in Arras being the last witness. We know very little about her childhood and youth, it being a time when family was not much talked about.

It was at the door of the 13 Pasteur Street in Arras that Marie came to knock, (where later her funeral would take place) with a great desire in her heart to answer Christ’s call as a nurse. After a time of

formation, one year at the Novitiate and a second year in a Community, she, now Sr. Marie Joseph, pronounced her first vows on July 27, 1953. (This year 2018 would have been her 65 years Jubilee.) And she lived it near the Lord, with her loved ones, among them her brother and one of her sisters. While still in Arras, she pronounced her Perpetual Vows on August 4, 1958.

During one of my visits to St. Nicolas in January, 2017, she confided to me that, as a young Sister, when she was asked about what she would like to do, she immediately answered “to take care of sick people!”

The Superior General at the time seemed to have doubts about her ability “because Sr. Marie Joseph came from the countryside” she told me. However, she completed easily her nursing studies in the school of the French Red Cross in Arras.

Sr. Marie Joseph also told me about her “verbal sparring” with Canon Achille Pentel, the ecclesiastical Superior, who lived in the Mother House in Arras. He was a man with a “hot blooded” temperament but a golden heart, who could not bear the least movement during his lectures to the Community. One day, Sr. Marie Joseph arrived late because of her duty and unintentionally caused him to stop his lecture on the spot and telling her to give the talk!

Gifted with a beautiful voice, she loved to sing and was always ready to take part in the choir for the ceremonies.

She practiced nursing in various places in the Hospital of Arras under the “guidance” of the famous Doctor Capron but also in the Hospital of Boulogne sur Mer. A long-time department head, she always kept her directive style as a leader which sometimes caused some “confrontations” in Community.

She also worked for a year in the private hospital of Doctor Débiez at Saint Hilaire la Varenne near Paris where there was a Community

of 5/6 Sisters, living in a lovely house in a pleasant park ideal for walking when the surgeon allowed it. Sr. Marie Joseph also did there what was called “home visiting” that is giving care to patients at home. “Just enough time to catch hepatitis B and a moment to offer a cure since I was living in the patient’s home.”

Two years later Sr. Marie Joseph came back “half-time” but not in the new hospital, Centre Hospitalier d’Arras, CHA instead she was responsible for the Community, numerous at the time, living in a small house next to the hospital.

When it was decided to leave the responsibility of the Health Services to promote the well-being of the nurses, that is: not to live in the work place and not to take the night shift, the Sisters went to dwell in a small house, part of the Mother House, 9 Pasteur Street. This was the period of the “bicycle Sisters” cycling to work at the end of the town, later to give way the “2 CV Citroën.” In 1975, still supervisor at the CHA, she came to the Community of Ste. Catherine-les-Arras.

At the moment of her professional retirement Sr. Marie Joseph went to the Community in Tourcoing, rue des Piats, in a house like all the others on the street, in an old and populated district. Sr. Marie Joseph then turned to different charities: Catholic Help, Underclass people. Sister Marie-Claire Brebion, the youngest of the Community, worked near old people, and another Sister near people living in the street. The most senior Sister, native from Flanders, cultivated all sorts of trees and plants in the garden. It was nearly Paradise except it was the climate of the North of France. In season, it was possible to enjoy succulent kiwis.

At one moment the house in Tourcoing had to be closed and Sr. Marie Joseph moved to Moreuil, a market town in the Somme district in a Community with close relationships and various services : home nursing, catechesis, etc. in a Community linked to the parish and with the people.

Four years later she discovered the Artois hills in Amettes, a small village in the District Pas de Calais well known because of Saint Benoît Labre. Child of the village, European before his time because he went all over a large part of Europe, he was at the origin of a yearly diocesan pilgrimage and also the source of inspiration of a spiritual movement “Les Labriens”, he who had been rejected from the abbey when he wanted to give himself to God.

Since the Community was located far from the shops, a seven mile drive, a new Sister and a second driver were welcomed. A bakery and a pub, “The Hunters”, were the only retail outlets in the village. Besides food shopping, there were the compulsory visits to the drugstore for a Community of eight Sisters—there was much to do!

Sr. Marie Joseph became involved in the Evangelical Sick Service, always careful for the more neglected ones. She took an active part in Community life, preparing the evening meals and thousands of other services, without forgetting to go and visit the Sisters in the Retreat House.

Ten years later, her age increasing, she entered into an EHPAD at St Nicolas les Arras. With part of her family near her, she managed to build deep ties with both. She kept a lovely table cloth, signed by the family at a reunion in her bedroom. We saw her becoming more and more reduced but lucid until July 5, 2018, the day of her meeting with her Lord.

Sr. M. Françoise Bisiaux

SISTER MARIE JOSEPH BERTHE MERIAUX

- Date of birth: September 10, 1922 in Cambrai (in the Nord of France)
- Postulancy: February 3, 1943 in the Congregation of Franciscaines des Saints Anges in Tourcoing
- Novitiate: September 23, 1943 in Tourcoing
- First Vows: September 23, 1945
- Perpetual Vows: September 23, 1948
- Date of death: October 21, 2018 in Abbeville

Born in Cambrai, in the north of France, in a Christian family, Berthe Mériaux, was baptised very shortly afterwards. She grew up in a family of two brothers, one of whom would become a priest, and two sisters.

The sorrow of her mother's untimely death remained with her throughout her life: "My poor mother suffered a lot," she said. Her father worked at the large sugar factory in Escaudoeuvres, a flourishing industry at the time, in the rich wheat and sugar beet lands of the Cambrèsis plains.

Before the Council, her father was already involved in parish liturgy. Berthe loved to sing and would, later in Community rehearsals, not fail to say: "Sisters, open your mouths!" joining gesture to word! Perhaps she did the same in the various parish choirs she animated and founded?

She was "the person looking of the expenses" at 48, rue des Ursulines in Tourcoing, in a house inherited from the family of a religious Sister of the Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Angels. On February 3, 1943 she knocked at the door of the novitiate. There she received the habit and the name of Sr. Marie Joseph on September 23.

It was on this same date that she made her first vows two years later, followed by her perpetual profession at the age of 26.

A kindergarten teacher as they used to say at the time, she was part of the educational team of the Notre Dame des Anges Institution, at Tourcoing. Among her former little pupils was Madame Brigitte Fossey who kept in touch with her for a long time and came to visit her when she lived in Paris.

Then, later, she became a catechist always keeping her same enthusiasm.

In the meantime, the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters had merged with the Augustinian Sisters of the Precious Blood of Arras an event which always touches each Sister.

In 1962, she was sent to Madagascar as Superior of the Community of Ampasimanjeva. There she gave sewing classes to young girls from the surrounding villages.

She had the joy of welcoming three young Malagasy girls who wanted to follow Christ. Marie Joseph gave them their first formation in religious life. She will always retain a certain nostalgia for her missionary life outside the frontiers. She spoke about it very often.

After two years, during the Congregation's chapter in April 1964, a telegram urgently called her back to France to become "Mistress of Novices". She liked to tell the story of this episode which had earned her a sleepless night!

It was, in fact, a very heavy responsibility to form the future Religious Sisters but she dedicated herself to it with all her heart and with her lively faith and confidence in all trials.

The following year, she was in Paris, at 19 rue Saint Maur, a recently founded Community, in the 11th district, which was still very industrial. The house was surrounded by two metal working

factories and very noisy plus, the “melodies” of the trumpet of the tenant on the second floor!

Sr. Marie Joseph ensured the accompaniment of the young Sisters in study (2nd year novices and young professed Sisters), while at the same time being Superior of the Community which also had professed Sisters, one of whom was at the service of the parish and three nurses who provided home care and others working in the “dispensary”, a care center located at the entrance of the house. A Sister takes care of the kitchen and a bursar who has her hands full!

It was at this time that she was awarded the title of “Mother of the Pierrots” by two novices who climbed up, at her request and with her, onto her desk to reach a box (what was in it by the way, I don't know anymore!). We were not in silence, as you can imagine. She told us, “You are chirping like little sparrows!” and one of us answered as quickly as she did, “So, you are the Mother of Pierrots!” [In French, a pun on the word stone and also the word sparrow.] This earned her years of receiving a Christmas card with birds on it which she answered in the same way.

Their house was a place of intense life where the Congregation took over from the Little Sisters of the Assumption. It was also the meeting point of the catechumenate, a reception point for women coming out of La Roquette prison that a religious came to accompany.

With her customary dynamism and faith, Sr. Marie Joseph then went to Lyon, 24 rue Bournes in 1966 where she stayed for eight years. She became involved in catechesis and the parish, while keeping the office of Superior. Similarly, in 1974, she went to St. Catherine les Arras, where she founded the parish choir and helped in the parish.

1986 saw her return to Tourcoing and 1987 to the General House in Paris, rue des Plantes for a time of formation.

The following year she discovered the countryside in Amettes in the Pas de Calais. It was with great fervor that she became acquainted with the life of Saint Benedict Labre and animated the various liturgies of the annual pilgrimage. At the same time, she devoted herself wholeheartedly as Superior of the Community working in the small retirement home.

Sister Marie Joseph was "a prayerful person" known for her living faith and cheerful, joyful personality.

In 1992, there she was in the Monts du Forez, in Montbrison, still "Prioress" of the Community, to welcome the Sisters who arrived from Roanne after the closure of the Community there. Friendly and attentive, she helped each one to adapt to the new place.

In September 2001, she joined the Notre Dame Community in Paris where our elder Sisters lived but from January to September 2004, she went back to Champagne, in the city of Troyes, to replace someone in the Community where Sisters still worked in the retirement home "Mon Repos". She then returned to the Notre Dame Community in Paris but no longer as Superior.

As she grew older and her health deteriorated, she went to the Saint Benoît d'Amettes retirement home on October 7, 2008. In May 2017, together with Sr. Odette Debavelaere and Sr. Jeanne Thérèse Trioën, she joined the EHPAD Notre Dame de France in Abbeville, where 5 other Sisters resided. This was a difficult passage for her.

"Yes, Sr. Marie Joseph suffered a lot since her arrival in Abbeville. She had difficulty getting used to her new surroundings, not being able to locate her room nor the chapel. I did everything possible to ease her suffering. Her last day was very difficult, I did not leave her, but the Sisters took turns to keep me company...I know that she contemplates God and that she finds those she has loved so much. I know that now she watches and prays for me," wrote Sister Jeanne Thérèse Trioën in response to my request.

Thank you, Sister Marie Joseph, for all that you have done for me.”

Sr. Marie Françoise Bisiaux

SISTER MARIE RENÉE

JEANNE DENNEULLIN

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in you”

Mystery: All the mysteries of Christ

- Date of birth: March 3 ,1929 in Liévin
- Postulancy: February 2, 1948 at the Augustines du Précieux Sang d'Arras.
- Novitiate: August 26, 1949
- First Vows: August 23 ,1951 in Arras
- Perpetual Vows: August 10, 1957 in Arras
- Date of death: May 29, 2018 at the EHPAD in St Joseph in Etampes

Born in Liévin, in the Hauts de France, Jeanne lived a happy childhood with her paternal grandparents. Her father was an accountant at the Bureau des Mines. Having seen one of her friends jump on a mine during the 1914-18 war, her mother had been deeply affected.

“She was unable to cope with frequent births. My grandmother (her stepmother-in-law) offered to take care of me to help her. One day, she told me: ‘You mustn't blame your mother, she is a victim of both wars.’ — She confided this to me on December 22, 2016 while together we visited Sr. St. Marial Cottin at the hospital of Etampes.

Her grandmother was a very pious woman who went to Mass at 6 o'clock every morning and was committed to praying the “dizainière” praying part of the rosary daily, something rare for a girl at that time. She had received her primary school certificate. Her husband was a coal miner. They lived in a small house in Liévin, near an ammonia factory.

At the age of 5 Jeanne entered the little school. She liked reading which gave her a great cultural background because she was curious about everything. Thanks to a friend her first book was the Gospel.

At the age of 6, she made her First Communion on Christmas night but the Sisters' headdresses prevented her from seeing the altar, which she regretted very much. She remembered that the priest who came to her grandparents' house had taken her on his lap to question her to make sure she was well prepared. It was a beautiful recollection for her.

Soon she became part of the Christian movement “Les Ames Vaillantes” and sang with all her heart “Nothing impossible for a valiant soul.” Proudly from the age of 8 to 10, she carried the pennant.

Afterwards she went to the youth club for girls and learned to sew with Sr. Julie (Daughter of Charity?). She particularly appreciated the meetings of “leagues” where they prayed and reflected. She sang with all her heart while ironing: “Sacred Heart of Jesus”. She always loved to sing, having a beautiful voice and a good ear.

The outbreak of the war (1939-1945,) had so traumatized her mother that it, in a sense, caused her death. Her father then remarried a woman who was not very maternal. When her grandmother died, Jeanne and one of her sisters went to Belgium to the boarding school of Mont Saint Aubert where the Augustinian Sisters of Arras found refuge for their boarding school in Bapaume during the expulsions from Catholic schools in France. Although their father paid all or part of their boarding school fees, both girls had household tasks. It was there that Jeanne learned music theory and piano to her great joy.

At the age of 16, she wanted to enter the convent with other boarders but her sister prevented her from doing so because she found her too young. They returned to Liévin.

She finally entered the Augustines du Précieux Sang convent in Arras on February 2, 1948, at the age of 19. She made her postulancy under Sr. Marie Madeleine Hanot in the Community at the Saint Jean Hospital in Arras. The Superior was Sr. Gérard Marie. Sr. Marie Renee was in the service of the children under the responsibility of Sr. St. François de Sales.

She received the habit on August 26, 1949 and the name of Sr. Marie Renée. She made her first vows on August 23, 1951 in Arras and her perpetual profession on August 10, 1957. Sr Marie Renée studied nursing and received her state diploma in Amiens.

From August 8, 1958 until 1961, she was part of the Community of Douai, following the merger of the Augustinian Sisters of Providence of Douai in the North. It was there that she met Rosette Lecerf who, without having spoken to her, entered the same Congregation and became Sr. Françoise du Christ, who also preceded her to the Father.

On several occasions, Sr. Marie Renée needed to go to a sanatorium along with two other Sisters. It seems this stay helped her to develop her talents as an actress. She also learned knitting and typing. Sometimes she changed the night time obligatory "rule of silence" into an escapade...!

For five years, she provided home care in Lyon, walking the steep streets of the Croix Rousse and discovering with the Community the region and beyond. Her 2CV was legendary in the neighborhood.

She returned to Lyon twice, from 1973 to 1978 and again from 1983 to 1989. She was thus able to see the growth of the plants and trees she had planted, particularly the fig trees. Her passion for gardening would only disappear due to the resurgence of osteoarthritis in Arras, many years later.

In the meantime, she discovered Solesmes in the North where a Community was established on the square in front of the church and the town hall in an old mansion that had become the Saint Joseph school. Two Sisters taught there, Sr. Thérèse Véronique and Sr. Jeanne Maillard. Sr. Marie Thérèse Grenier was pastorally inserted in the St. Michael's Institute while Sr. Marie Astrid was full-time in the parish.

Sr. Marie Renée always provided home care before participating for one year in the 3rd Year in Arras from 1978 to 1979. The lessons given by Sr. Madeleine Demaldent on Church History made her “enthusiastic” as she told me and prompted her afterwards to read all the books at her disposal on this subject. A great reader, she was as great as her eyes allowed her to be until unfortunately they gave way in her last years. She was also a good driver who could drive for miles over mountain roads.

With a cheerful and lively temperament, loving to sing, smile, and laugh, "any little amuses her" as the former Superior General, Sr. Marie Véronique, who was her Superior in Lyon, used to say. She had affectionately given her the nickname of “Butterfly.”

From 1978 to 1983 she returned to Solesmes, before going to Lyon and then returning to Arras to still provide home care and work in the office at the Care Center at 13 rue Pasteur in Arras which we called the “dispensary”.

She was for a short time at the reception desk of the retirement home run by the Congregation, in Abbeville, before returning to the fresh air at the Mont from 1997 to 2000 and “descending”, according to the consecrated expression which corresponds well to the geographical reality, to the Community of elderly Sisters at Montbrison for one year.

Her return to Arras allowed her to indulge in the joys of gardening but woe to those who got too close to the flowers or even thought of picking them!!

Her vitality declining, she left the Community of the Procure and then asked to enter the EHPAD St. Joseph d'Etampes on July 15, 2015. There, she found for a time, "a new youth" in the discovery of new people. She quickly became friendly with the other residents.

But, soon, she lost more and more of her sight and another disease broke out which brutally took her away on May 29, 2018.

Simply, Sister Marie Renée was able to say as Mary did: "I am the servant of the Lord".

Sr. Marie Françoise Bisiaux

SISTER MARIE ROSE DE L'ENFANT JÉSUS

THÉRÈSE PARGOIRE

"Here I am, Lord, to do your will. »

- Date of birth: May 3, 1924 in Saint Pons de Mauchiens (Hérault)
- Postulancy: October 15, 1943 in Lyon - Bellevue.
- Novitiate: December 10, 1944 in Bordeaux.
- First Vows: February 1, 1946 in Bordeaux.
- Perpetual Vows: February 1, 1950 in Montpellier.
- Date of death: August 8, 2018 in Montpellier.

On St. Dominic's day, a few minutes after the broadcast of the Rosary of Lourdes, which she followed as long as she could, the Lord and the Virgin Mary came to take our Sister to the Father. Marie-Rose was a fervent believer in “Cha-peu-let” (said with an accent).

Thérèse Pargoire belonged to a large country family near Montpellier. The whole village knew each other, and she had many family members there. Her simple childhood was divided between her slightly crowded house and her godmother's house. The Pargoire clan had already given birth to a son, who had entered the Assumptionists; having gone through the seminary, he became a very great specialist of the Orient. Marie-Rose was very proud of him and a whole page was dedicated to him in the book of the Missionaries of the Hérault in the 19th century which she called “her book”.

At the end of her primary schooling, thanks to her brothers who were well-situated—one at the service of the bishopric, the other as gardener at the Assumption, a third as stretcher-bearer in the nearby Carré du Roi clinic, Thérèse left her village and entered the boarding school kitchen as a "scullery maid" only a few days before

her 14th birthday. “Mother Bursar” - Sister Irénée - begged her not to take the risk of cutting herself before her birthday!

Marie Rose willingly shared the memories of a time when as a child she learned a lot, led a hard and tidy life, had a lot of fun with the other “little household ladies” and went out prudently on Sunday afternoons to her brother's house at the bishopric, every corner of which she knew. During the war she left for her postulancy in Lyon, made her novitiate and temporary vows in Bordeaux and her perpetual vows in Montpellier.

Everywhere she went: Cannes in 1946, Bondy-Allée des Fresnes in 1969, then the School, Pierrefonds in 1984, Lourdes in 1994 ending in Montpellier in 2004 - Marie-Rose left the memory of a courageous Sister, who remained very much herself... she was lively, full of finesse and common sense, had a cheerful repartee, able to grasp the funny side of life and the little foibles of people whom she would imitate in a very humorous but not mean-spirited way. Her southern accent did the rest and her audience would cry out in laughter. This did not prevent her from being an outstanding cook. She did not spare herself any trouble whether she was in Cannes, where she reminded us of her hard work with a coal stove, bringing in the goods from the market, diversified cooking for “the lady boarders”, the Sisters, and the “children” or in Bondy where she teamed up with Madame Dallara, an Italian lady from whom she learned a lot and who became a real friend.

We would enjoy her little cakes on Community feasts and when we asked her for the recipe it was always an approximate one: a cup of this, a cup of that, a twist of the hands like that! It was a real sacrifice for her when the house in Montpellier, now the home of the older Sisters, hired a catering service for its large and tired Community which meant that the kitchen was now “out of bounds” to those not part of the catering service.

Marie Rose, with her love of nature would comfort herself in the garden, grasping the plants and making many cuttings here and there. Whenever her back would allow her to do so, she would walk around the park with lots of: “You should... You should...” pointing with her stick at the corners where things could be better. As for her balcony, it was a garden covered with flower pots and plants.

She was a simple soul, faithful to prayer. For our meetings, those we called “small groups”, she would prepare the Gospel sharing in writing and with care, giving a beautiful illustration of how the Lord communicates to the simplest and the smallest. Her trust in the Blessed Virgin culminated in the pilgrimages to Lourdes where she had the grace to go for several years in a row at the time of the "National Pilgrimage." She took part in them as an elderly person, accompanied by her fellow countryman from Saint Pons de Mauchiens, Father Henri Scaglia A.A, — both of them were accomplices and mascots of the young stretcher-bearers and nurses that they met every year.

Her room, always impeccably tidy, was a small sanctuary that she regularly changed in different ways. The statue of N.D. de Lourdes had a prominent place and on the wall facing her bed she had the photo of Jean Vanier, the founder of l'Arche , who meant so much to her! A very deep and mutual friendship!

Being part of the founding team of Pierrefonds, her ten years there saw the blossoming of her personality as a Sister of the Assumption in a simple closeness to the villagers, parishioners, members of the L'Arche homes, both assistants and handicapped persons. Taking her place in parish life, she took care of the sacristy and the funeral pastoral. Her Solex journeys in Pierrefonds have remained legendary. Above all, it was her good heart that rallied everyone to her.

Here are some testimonials:

“Sister Marie-Rose was a woman of small stature but with a big heart which allowed her to reach both young and old. Her bursts of laughter were inimitable and so warm... She took great care in everything she did; I remember the bouquet of white flowers at the foot of the altar for my confirmation; she had tried to represent the dove of the Holy Spirit.

Later in Montpellier, she always welcomed me with such warmth and generosity, seeking the best for me. That is how I was able to do the specialized catechesis and the preparation of young people with disabilities for Confirmation, a beautiful journey with the Holy Spirit, thanks to her!”. Celine Bréant.

Sister Françoise Martin reminds us of this souvenir:

“Marie Rose was in Pierrefonds in the 80s. She always stopped on her way back from her visits to the home of a handicapped person living at L'Arche. This Michel is now in an elderly home care...” When I was in Trosly,” Sr. Françoise tells us, “every morning, before saying ‘good morning,’ Michel would ask me: ‘When are you going to see my ‘angel-that-laughs?’ His angel was Marie-Rose, who would make him laugh in Pierrefonds, especially when he was angry. Thirty years later, he never forgot that he still needed his “laughing angel” to restore his good mood. Another day he told me: “In heaven, I will find her easily; she is the only” “laughing angel,” and she’s just for me, Michel, alone.”

The end of Marie-Rose's life was difficult, especially in the last two years. She had lost her bearings and often wanted to go see her godmother or her mother, or tried leave the park, even with her walker.

She was surrounded both by the Sisters who visited her many times, as well as members of her family who came by very often. When she stopped walking, a Sister brought her Communion every day, which she fervently waited for.

Father Jean Rouquette, who celebrated the Eucharist several times a week in our house, and who was originally from the region, liked to visit her in her room and say a few Occitan words to her. It was he who gave her the Sacrament of the Sick.

During the Farewell Mass on August 11, our chapel was full to a bursting point with several generations of her family who came to accompany her with us. Through her, their family rediscovered what had linked them to this house in Montpellier for so many decades and this touched us very much.

We know that from heaven, Marie-Rose keeps watch over them and keeps us all in her prayers.

Sr. Jacqueline and the Community of Montpellier

SISTER MARY JOAN OF THE CHILD JESUS

JOAN ANN RICE

"Et Verbum Caro Factum Est" (And the Word was made flesh)

- Date of birth: May 31, 1931 in Philadelphia, PA
- Postulate: June 15, 1957 Ravenhill, Philadelphia
- Novitiate: June 15, 1958 Ravenhill
- First Vows: August 23, 1959 Ravenhill
- Perpetual Vows: August 23, 1964 Coconut Grove, FL
- Date of death: July 1, 2018 at Lansdale, PA

At Sister Mary Joan's funeral, in Lansdale on July 6, 2018, Sister Clare Teresa, who had known Sister Mary for more than 60 years, spoke about her by exploring how Mary had grown into both her religious life and her human life over those 60 years. This excerpt from her words of farewell at the Mass seems very fitting for this edition of Deceased Sisters.

Introduction

Our Provincial is away at the General Chapter of our Congregation in Lourdes, France and other Sisters are also away on various summer activities. That is why I am here today to speak about our Sister Mary Joan.

First Phase

When she entered the Assumption, Joan Ann Rice became **Sister Mary Immaculate of the Child Jesus**. On making her final profession, she received her ring and chose to have "*Et Verbum caro factum est*" engraved in it. (We choose a word from Scripture to direct our spiritual way.)

She was older than I but younger in religion. As a young Sister, Sister Mary Immaculate was very proper, paid attention to

appearances, very set on being the model religious – like Thérèse of the Child Jesus. That made her also quite formal and uptight. A very strong personality, she made great efforts to be in control of herself and to acquire the virtues of the Child Jesus. She didn't *say* things but still had ways of letting her feelings be made known.

I used to tease her that I was getting black and blue because she kicked me so many times under the table to express her amusement, disapproval or dislike of something. At other times, she would say: *"If you only knew...."* To which I would reply: *"Knew what?"* But I never received an answer.

A wise, old Jesuit once told me when I was a novice: *"When they are young, they look holy – but they aren't."*

Second Phase

After Vatican II, which stressed the importance of a Christian's baptismal identity, Sister Mary Immaculate reverted to her baptismal name, becoming **Sister Mary Joan**. During those years, she really became herself.

She was an educator: principal in three different elementary schools: first at Ravenhill Academy in Philadelphia, then at St. Hugh's and finally at St. Ambrose's in Florida. She went on to become Director of Religious Education in Delray Beach and Director of Religious Studies for the Archdiocese of Miami. (Sister Anne Christopher recalls how they enjoyed going on weekends to a very poor parish in the Everglades.)

Those of us who worked with her or under her – students, teachers, parents – all appreciated her professionalism and competence, along with her concern and affection. She put charity above all and earnestly worked at being friendly and kind to everyone. She became easier to know.

When Sister returned to the Northeast, she saw the need for psychological counselling and spiritual direction and responded.

Her last assignment -- one she loved – involved helping women who worked full-time to get a degree. By a happy coincidence, it brought her back to her Alma Mater – Chestnut Hill College. There, she did advising and counselling in its innovative *Accelerated Adult Degree Program*.

If Mary devoted herself to Catholic education, she also gave herself equally to the necessary study. Her undergraduate degree was in Philosophy and, before entering religious life, she had envisaged becoming a lawyer. For her apostolic work, she acquired Masters Degrees in Education, Religious Education and Psychology, undertaking other studies as needed. She was pastoral assistant here at St. Stanislaus Parish in Lansdale, working with people seeking to enter the Church through the RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults] program and with other groups and individuals as well.

Third Phase

In her elder years, Sister Mary Joan was known most often as just **Sister Mary**. This was the time of fulfillment; the time when the Spirit completed the work begun with her religious profession. Our Foundress St. Marie Eugenie, when relieved of her charge as Superior General, responded: “*Now I can just concentrate on being loving*” This seems to have been Mary’s call as well.

The move into nursing care is a difficult one. At first, Mary thought she would be returning home to her Community but that was not to be. Her Community would go daily to her. She adjusted herself to the new reality, entering into activities for which she had no attraction – to make others happy. She had a cunning way of disguising the onset of old-age dementia – by asking questions, making you talk. “*What’s new?*” was the usual greeting, repeated often during your visit, whether that was for thirty minutes or ten. Nevertheless, she always made sense when speaking of Jesus and could still offer words of spiritual advice and comfort. When you

left, she'd inevitably say: "*Give my love to everybody.*" That covered pretty much the whole world.

Residents and staff liked the one they just called "Sister": her kind words, her way of saying "*Thank you, dear,*" her smiles and sense of humor.... An Irish lass, throughout her whole life she was known for her ready and welcoming smile, her sense of humor and kindness. These became signs of her true self.

Et Verbum caro factum est... The Word had taken flesh in her. The Christ-life had transformed her. As St. Paul said so aptly: *For me to live is Christ.* Her love, her wisdom, eternal life -- all were in her smiling eyes. When I'd visit her, I would see that old song, "*When Irish Eyes Are Smiling,*" in Mary's face.

That wise, old Jesuit had told me: "*In the beginning, they look holy but they aren't at the end, they don't look holy but they are.*" He was right.

SISTER MARY EDITH DE LA CROIX (of the Cross)

MARY ORMEROD

“Father, into your hands”

- Date of birth: December 20, 1922, in Lance, Blackburn
- Postulancy: September 11, 1949, in Ramsgate
- Novitiate: May 3, 1950, in Ramsgate
- First vows: November 13, 1951, in Ramsgate
- Perpetual vows: November 14, 1954, in Ramsgate
- Date of death: May 27, 2018 in Saint Catherine’s House

It’s very touching to recall that the last Requiem Mass celebrated in this chapel was that of Sr. Martha, Mary’s great friend. I remember that Mary was sitting in the stalls at the right-hand side, and she was smiling, perhaps in thinking that, by any reckoning, she wouldn’t have to wait long before they were re-united. They had much in common; age, shared experience, occupation. They looked after each other and played together. The Times crossword every evening was a fixture. It is good to begin with this tribute to friendship and to think on what we may learn from them, singly and together as we ponder the meaning of the gospel story of Martha and Mary, friends of Jesus.

One afternoon last week, in St. Catherine’s at teatime, we reminisced together about Mary, and this is the picture. She was born in Blackburn, Lancashire. The north of England is well known to breed strong characters, and Mary aged twelve came under another such influence when she was sent to school in Richmond, Yorkshire, where the educational ethos of Marie Eugenie insisted on the formation of strong characters. Apparently Mary’s parents, William and Mary, looked out, in their daughter’s school reports, only for two things, deportment and courtesy. More later. Afterwards you can see a photo of a group of fifteen year old

schoolgirls whose deportment is far from Ormerod standard, except for the girl in the centre, ram-rod straight and demure.

After school Mary did a Montessori training in Richmond from 1940-42 and obtained a Teacher's certificate at Selly Park in 1945. She was then on the staff at Richmond until 1949 and that year entered the Congregation at Ramsgate. Legend has it that her parents did not wish their only child to be a nun, so Mary, strong character that she was, dealt with opposition by running away. This must have been painful for everybody.

She was professed in 1951. Subsequently her task or role in every Community she belonged to, Ramsgate, Richmond, Kensington, was that of bursar; Community bursar, Maria Assumpta College bursar, provincial bursar. We all know how she carried out this task over so many years; careful stewardship, professionalism, vigilance, all the signs of the high sense of responsibility with which she looked after our affairs. Her mind resembled a filing cabinet, and to the end of her life she could provide information that no one else had access to or memory of. We remember with affection, retrospectively if not at the time, how blithely she would sign cheques for thousands of pounds and then the look of pain which crossed her face when one asked for a book of stamps or a pair of shoelaces.

We must not forget Mary's pastoral roles. In the age of experimentation following Vatican II the Sisters at Kensington were divided into smaller communities, and Mary had charge of two of these. But another one must be mentioned. In Richmond in the early 1960's Mary was responsible for the Apostolic School, definitely the forerunner of our present Come and See' programme. Here girls aged from fifteen to nineteen were able to explore the possibility of religious life while following the normal school curriculum. Mary had charge of six pupils, one of whom is Sr. Clare Bernadette who recalls her memories. I quote: "Mary was the

perfect choice for guiding us through these years before postulancy. We were all a bit rough round the edges, but day by day we got to know this extraordinarily strong, calm, gentle, and yes, motherly Sister. We grew to love her deeply, respect all she stood for and the excellent foundation with which she sent us off to join the novitiate at Kensington.” Clare recalls how Mary kept a promise made when she, Clare, was seventeen to send her a medal that had special significance on her 21st birthday, and that, sure enough, four years later, it arrived. Clare took it to show Mary two days before she died. She recognised it and handed it back again with a smile.

Other sides to Mary show up in two other photographs. One is on holiday with windswept hair, and she is wearing trousers. In the next photo she is habited, veiled, hatchet-faced, and clutching a bottle of wine. Mary was good at conviviality, with the proviso that she alone retained possession of the only key to the cellar. One more photo, dressed up to take off to a T a member of our one-time maintenance team, known by us as the Mafia. Mary was a marvellous mimic and had a scintillating wit. In a few pithy words she would describe spot on, any incident, character, or situation.

Mary’s parents had a prophetic point about deportment and courtesy, and by courtesy to them I change deportment to comportment. She was dignified and reserved, even private, and if she didn’t exactly wear her heart on her sleeve, it nonetheless broke out in that heartfelt kindness, gratitude and appreciation of others which are the marks of genuine courtesy. Hospital stays are not the most enjoyable experiences, but in her last, and thankfully short illness, Mary’s only comments, in hospital and at home, were how good the staff were to her.

There was an aura surrounding Mary which is hard to define or to decide whether it generated or resulted from the fact that everything she did had the touch of orderly perfection about it. The trueness of her singing voice, the quality of her speaking voice; the

exquisiteness of her needlework. Her columns of figures were a work of art, and so on.

In 1993 Mary became a founder member of the new St. Catherine's Community, bringing to it all her gifts and experience. Right up till her death, although latterly increasingly frail, she still kept the Community accounts and a steely grip on the household affairs, and went shopping.

Heritage, nurture, education and life's experiences have been mentioned in the making of Mary's rounded personality. At tea time last week Muriel ended with speaking about the most important transformative agent of Mary's life. It is found in the Mystery that she chose, or God chose for her, at her profession, the Cross. The key element to every Christian's journey, Mary took on its implications and lived in its power and its grace, accessing these by the prayer she took as her Word: "Father, into your hands . . ." where she now is, safe and secure.

Lastly, although clichés can be irritating and annoying, I fall for this one a propos of Mary: 'They don't come like that anymore.'

Thank you Mary, your memory will never fade.

SISTER MERCEDES DE LOS ÁNGELES

MARÍA DEL CARMEN DE MOLINA Y GIL DE LEÓN

"Lord, you know I love you"

- Date of Birth: April 16, 1925 in Madrid
- Postulancy: February 1, 1946 in Malaga
- Novitiate: October 20, 1946 in Mira-Cruz
- First Vows: April 1, 1948 in Mira-Cruz
- Perpetual Vows: April 7, 1951 in Colmar
- Date of death: May 18, 2018 in Riofrío

Sister Mercedes Molina was the youngest daughter in a family of five children. The two youngest sisters, Teresa and Maria del Carmen, were Sisters of the Assumption and took the names Teresa de los Angeles and Mercedes de los Angeles.

Mercedes lived a major part of her religious life in France, a country to which she always felt very united and grateful. It was difficult for her to return to Spain, not because of a lack of affection, but because having spent so many years in France, she had to start a "new life", leaving behind a country, a lot of friendships, a great number of relationships created, both inside and outside the Congregation... all of which have been a great part of her life. Mercedes was able to do this with generosity and detachment.

Mercedes was sent to different communities and works in the Province of France. Auteuil (Paris) where she spent and enjoyed many years, Bordeaux, Orleans... among others and finally Lourdes. A place with so much life, with so many gatherings, with so much religious fervor — Mercedes greatly appreciated the time she spent there and she was much loved in her mission of welcoming all the people and pilgrims who came to the house. It

was very hard for her to leave Lourdes but she realized that the time had come.

Mercedes was a person whose life brought her into contact with many different people, creating lasting, fraternal and friendly relationships. She knew how to be close to them by showing them her affection and interest. In many places she will always be remembered with great gratitude. In spite of the years spent outside Spain, she always maintained contact, interest and knowledge of the events that marked the history of the Congregation and of our country.

Upon her return to Spain, it was the Riofrío Community that welcomed her. It was there that she lived the last stage of her life, marked by a painful illness which she often said she did not wish for anyone. She lived it patiently, trying not to weigh on others, on the Sisters of the Community or on the nursing personnel who took such good care of her. Mercedes was able to live in Riofrío close to her family after so many years away from Spain. Mercedes had a big heart, often hidden by a personal discretion that did not mean distance. One could find many feelings in her. She was well aware of all that had been done for her in her illness and she was grateful for it.

Slowly, she passed away, living the last moment with hardly anything to say. Her silence, sometimes imposed by her illness and sometimes by her love, let us guess the Paschal Mystery she was living. Mercedes, like all the Sisters who are leaving us, leaves an unforgettable memory.

Los Angeles, (of the Angels) was the Mystery she chose to live and it accompanied her as did the word engraved inside her ring – “Lord, you know that I love you” - a word that she whispered unceasingly in her heart, giving her strength and certainty.

The Community of Riofrío thanks God for having shared Mercedes with us these long last years of her life.

The Riofrío Community

SISTER MONIQUE ELISABETH DE LA MÈRE DE MISÉRICORDE (of the Mother of Mercy)

MONIQUE ELISABETH DONNET

“Sitio – I thirst!” (John 19, 28)

- Date of birth: December 13, 1925 in Anvers
- Postulancy: December 8, 1945 in Val Notre Dame (Belgium)
- Novitiate: September 17, 1946 in Bordeaux
- First Vows: September 20, 1947 in Bordeaux
- Perpetual Vows: September 23, 1950 in Val Notre Dame
- Date of death: December 31, 2018 in Ciney

Born in 1925 in Antwerp in a united and happy family of 4 children, Monique was the eldest. Her father was a lawyer, a barrister, the first to plead in Dutch. Her mother founded an association attached to the army, the “Welfare”. During the war, the children grew up with this maxim: To be happy, you have to make the others happy. At a young age, Monique trained as a hospital assistant and accompanied the wounded: *“I picked up the injured from the streets, whether English, American or German, to take them to the hospital.”* Wartime, insecurity of the future. *When we came home, we never knew if we would find her in one piece!*

Monique and Thérèse were first enrolled with the Daughters of Mary and then at Val Notre Dame where they attended a final class, thus completing their studies. The first impression of the Val was Mother Marie Denyse opening her arms wide and their parents exclaiming: *“Here, one is loved!”*.

Monique entered the Assumption novitiate in 1946, at Val Notre-Dame. She continued her language studies in Leuven to obtain a regency. She then left for France where she was a teacher in Lubeck,

Superior of Orleans in 1968 following the merger with the Guardiennes Sisters of the Eucharist until her return to Belgium in 1982. From 1982 to 1991 she was Provincial of the Province of Belgium-Denmark, to which Sweden was added in 1984.

In 1985, the Sisters left Val Notre-Dame and opened a Community in Welkenraedt where they were welcomed by a very committed committee of lay people.

At the end of her term as Provincial, Monique was sent to the United States for a well-deserved sabbatical year. On her return, she was sent back to Welkenraedt where she gave herself selflessly, sharing friendships and apostolic mission, which she always did in every Community she lived in. She also assumed the Provincial Bursar's office, with generosity and intelligence, forming generations of bursars.

Ciney was her last Community. There she committed herself fraternally with the other religious communities living in the house, spending herself without counting the cost, animating the liturgy, visiting the people, knowing all the merchants of the city and also all the poor. Yes, she had a special love for the poor. When she travelled, she always had chocolate in her pocket for the tramps and her friends at the station. She did not heat her room in union with those who had no lodging. Active in ACAT, she wrote letters, prayed, and was attentive; she was delighted when prisoners were released. She lived a life of self-forgetfulness.

Monique was a woman of faith, joyful. She loved to sing, to play, and laugh out loud. She was radical and wanted an authentic religious life. She loved a beautiful and prayerful liturgy and added much to make it so. Monique was also a free woman, passionate about meeting people whether a football match on the main square of Ciney, public demonstrations in favor of Belgium or other great causes, she liked to mingle with the crowd. She prayed faithfully for the King and his family.

God gave Monique a youthful heart and body. She thought only of others. She took care of her sister Thérèse with tenderness and dignity. A joy radiated with a joyful detachment. When the illness, a fulminating leukemia, struck her at 93 years of age, she exclaimed: "I am going to see God!" The God she had loved all her life.

This prayer of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity which she prayed every day is a testimony to this love:

“O my God, Trinity whom I adore, help me to forget myself completely...”

To establish myself in you, motionless and peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity!

May nothing disturb my peace nor make me leave You,

O my Immutable, may each minute take me further into the depths of your Mystery.

Pacify my soul, make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling place and the place of your rest;

May I never leave you there alone, but may I be there all the way,

Fully awake in my faith, all adoring, all given over to your creative action.

So be it.”

How can we not give thanks to God for creating her? For giving her to us? Now she is in the Kingdom, therefore, in our midst, where she promised to “work” for us.

Paul's letter to the Romans (Rom. 14) fits her life:

“None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself:

If we live, we live for the Lord; if we die, we die for the Lord.

Thus, in our life as in our death, we belong to the Lord.

For if Christ knew death and then life, it is to become the Lord of both the dead and the living.”

“THANK YOU, Monique, for what you have been, for what you are still for all of us, for your family, for your Sisters, for your friends! THANK YOU.

Sister Anna Kristina and the Community

Testimony of Sr. Thérèse Maylis (France):

“I met Monique and Thérèse and the young Belgian Sisters at the time, during my novitiate at Le Val in 1954. Then I spent several years with her in Lubeck. In October 1960, I made my perpetual profession and as, in my emotion, I thought I could not sing the "Suscipe", Sr. Monique proposed to me to be “our” voice. She was a great Mistress of Class — dynamic and, enthusiastic. One student described her leading the singing as a subject of wonder! For the celebrations, she lent her voice to the Superior, Sr. M. Christine Sinan, as she or Thérèse did at Le Val for M. Marie Denyse!

In 1966, she was sent to Lyon. Then in 1968, it was the merger with the Gardiennes Adoratrices of the Eucharist. Monique became the Superior of the Community of Saint Aignan in Orleans. They were 18 Gardiennes Sisters and 10 Sisters of the Assumption, of which I was one. I greatly appreciated her attention to each one, her delicacy in changing lifestyles, premises, and employments.

Sr. Monique was a link between all of them, open to the present, rooted in the history of the Assumption, attentive to the history of the Gardiennes, to their veneration for Mother Therese of the Cross, at the same time as St. Marie Eugenie became "the foundress". Relations with the Sisters of St. Mary at the bottom of the garden were frequent and good. The originality of each one was not kept hidden...

Sr. Monique helped me with the transition from one Community to another: St. Gervais, Bordeaux, Auteuil, the Archives. We continued to work together, she was always dynamic, fraternal and a musician.”

From Sr. Nuala Cotter (USA)

“After her time as Provincial, she was in our Community in Worcester, USA on a sabbatical... and it has really changed my life! I was a novice and had some difficulties with a Sister in Community and I didn't feel too enthusiastic about religious life. It seemed a bit restrictive and often crazy to me. When Monique arrived everything changed. Her joie de vivre, her love of the Assumption, her energy began to affect me.

After her stay in the United States, she would say to me: "Yes, you were my project in Worcester. I was beginning to understand that religious life (and more and more deeply, life with God) was an adventure. And that each religious was called to live this adventure by being totally herself.

I came to Belgium after my first vows to learn French and to do my juniorate; it was then that I met all of you and you all changed my life, leading me to go ever more deeply into the Assumption.

When I told her about my little difficulties, she said: "We have to go for it, Nuala". Monique was a friend, a person who encouraged and more than a teacher. Remembering her promises to pray for me, I am filled with gratitude... and tears flow, good tears because they unite me to all of you.”

From Sr. Bénédicte Rollin (Lithuania).

“Mother Monique, as we called her in Lubeck... Since I had met her through the "Cadet du Christ" movement for which she was responsible, I had been waiting to have her as my Mistress of Class, and I was lucky that she left Lubeck for Orléans only after my senior year.

My sister France, who had had her as a teacher 10 years before me (and who had the nerve to ask for her age, 30 years old), still remembers with gratitude that she trusted others and showed it. At the age of 14, during her adolescent crisis, this relationship was decisive and salvific for her.

I was fascinated by her luminous, permanent smile, which inspired in me the desire to transmit joy to others as well. I liked her inventive and open pedagogy: visits to the synagogue and meetings with young Jews, work groups on various subjects in religion classes, interventions by a gynaecologist for a formation in sexuality that was quite daring for the time. She had great respect for our freedom and our personality, as I experienced again when I finished my novitiate with her 10 years later.

I had the joy of learning to sing with her in her little choir. Her voice was beautiful and powerful. I have an amusing memory of a Communion procession at the Sacré Coeur de Montmartre where Monique led the singing standing in the middle of the central aisle: three meters before and after her, I could no longer hear my own voice!

I liked the fact that her name was that of two married women... and I thought to myself as I watched her that one could be a religious at the Assumption without becoming a "bonne Sœur"! Yes, Monique Elizabeth was a true woman, a woman of God, all given, free, benevolent, and joyful. We thank God for her.”

SISTER MYRIAM BREMOND

JEANNE PAU LETTE BREMOND

- Date of birth: December 22, 1924 in Lyon
- Postulancy: September 30, 1947 (Sisters of St. Elisabeth of Notre Dame de la Compassion, rue Joliot Curie, Lyon)
- Novitiate: March 30, 1948
- First Vows: June 5, 1950
- Perpetual Vows: June 6, 1953
- Date of death: November 18, 2018 (EHPAD St. Joseph Etampes)

It was during the night of St. Elisabeth's feast that Sister Myriam left us to be near her Lord. Her funeral took place on the day the Church celebrated Saint Cecilia, also her patron saint as she was a musician.

Probably, it was also Mary, about whom she said last August 16 during a Community meeting "I love her very much. Mary is interested in each of us. One day I'll meet her." Sr. Myriam said it with such a faith that we won't be able to forget it. Mary led her to Jesus and He, the Spouse, welcomed her with open arms in the middle of the night. We have no doubt about that. She went without a sound as she always lived.

Born in Lyon on December 22, 1924, little Jeanne had a difficult childhood within a large family. She was the last of four daughters. Her father died as a result of the war six months after her birth. Her mother re-married and other children came, but life was more difficult with the new father. The impish little Jeanne ended up in a home for children in the Croix Rouse district in Lyon.

As was the custom then, at least in some houses, her name was changed to Miriam.

"The Lord gave it to me," she told Françoise Bouttemy one day.

When she was 23 years old, she knocked at the door of a small local Congregation, the Sisters of St. Elisabeth of Our Lady of Compassion, to answer a call to follow Jesus more closely by serving Him in the small ones, especially the children. The Sisters operated the management and the different services of a big institute with a social imprint: “The Refuge of Our Lady of Compassion”.

After a time of formation to the Religious life, she was sent to another children’s home of the Congregation in Brignais (Rhône). Sister Marie de la Visitation was the head and although there was little extra money, she managed the situation efficiently. Sr. Myriam was in charge of the laundry in addition to caring for the children — positions to which she devoted herself generously.

In Lyon, after her studies to become a teacher, she showed the same devotedness and spared no effort for the children and young when family or social troubles appeared.

With the help of an assistant manager, she was now ready to take over the leadership of the house now called “Educational Center of Our Lady”. She took on this heavy responsibility generously and unselfishly for ten years, at a time when it was necessary to develop the institution where they accommodated, schooled, and gave a professional formation to young people from 5 to 18 years of age (dealing with girls and boys up to the age of 10).

Always with a smile and an unceasing trust in the Lord and in her various colleagues, Sr. Myriam made her mark. Employees still testify to this day, keeping as they did such a high respect for her. An educator through and through, she knew how to speak with strength and gentleness.

In 1978 when the union with the Augustinians of the Precious Blood took place in Arras, she entered with all her heart into their spirituality and way of life. For one year, Sisters Anne Marie Pruvost and Marie Françoise Bisiaux were sent to Arras to take part

in the life of the Community and work there as educators. Next, a small Community with four Augustinian Sisters was set up with shared educational activity. Through meals, meetings and shared responsibilities, mutual knowledge developed.

In 1978, two Communities were set up — “Saint Elisabeth” for the elderly and “Our Lady” for the six Sisters working full time in the institute. Lunch was shared and meetings were numerous. Each Community had its own Superior and lived according to its own rhythm.

Everyone has good memories from that period. Here is one story:

On a Saturday, one of the Sisters had worked from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. with young people and was a bit tired. When she arrived at the Community, the singing rehearsal was going on. At the end, Sr. Myriam said, “We should repeat this song too.” Then that Sister said without being unkind but with some humor (and a bit of aplomb!): “She will use us to the core!” That “core” remained proverbial and not only in Lyon! Some months before her death, a memory of that Sister made Sr. Myriam open her eyes when she was already very weak in the hospital and made her laugh willingly, saying, “It’s you!”

At the moment of her retirement, when the Congregation made its first foundation in Africa, Sr. Myriam volunteered to be a pioneer. In Fria, Guinee-Conakry, she took her part in the foundation of the first Community. Since she had never left France before, her discovery of new surroundings, of another way of living and teaching was profound. Her age and the respect she inspired led the Guineans to see her as their “Mama”, feeling love and respect. For ten years she worked closely with Father Barry at the service of the parish.

(Father Barry was the only priest who survived the Regime of President Sékoutouré)

When she came back to France in November 2002, after a time for rest, she went to the “Mont” Community in the Forez Mountains. Always a good walker, she discovered the pleasure of long solitary walks. But there was also the care of preparing soup for the Sisters and acting as host when the Community welcomed groups of the parish or the diocese for a day or more of retreat.

In August 2011, new changes and farewell to the big spaces! She went to the Ste. Geneviève Community in Paris where she could take a daily walk in Montsouris Park. She also assumed various services such as peeling vegetables in the kitchen or of singing the choral office in a large group.

She was now more and more deaf and beginning to be cut off from her circle. Some days she could not figure out how to return home. Then came the difficult moment when as a precaution someone had to go with her. Helped by Sr. Françoise Bouttemy, Sr. Myriam spent long hours sitting in her room, saying her rosary, always with a smile on her lips. For a long time, she could be seen with her rosary in hands and not “mumbling” but saying every word.

Age and disabilities continued. Two serious falls caused her to undergo long stays in hospital and little by little she lost the link with her surroundings. It was necessary to enter an EHPAD and she agreed. Very soon, she lost her strength and needed more help. When we visited her, however, she responded. The staff and the Sisters in the Community surrounded her with care and affection. Sr. Hélène prayed near her and was there as much as she could be. Sr. M. Martha was also there and Sr. Myriam made her understand with a hand gesture that she was going to heaven. The Sisters were around her when she left to meet the Lord.

Sr. Myriam had neither time nor ability to go often to the chapel but that did not prevent her from being a prayerful person. That short time in the EHPAD was enough for the staff and residents to discover her radiant smile lighting up her face with its age and

wrinkles accentuated but also her kindness, her politeness and her numerous “Thank you”.

Thank you, Sister Myriam, for having been for those who lived with you an example of humility, simplicity, and self-sacrifice. Certainly, you have been the Lord’s Servant!

Sr. Marie-Françoise Bisiaux

SISTER ROSARIO DE LA EUCARISTÍA (of the Eucharist)

ROSARIO BOLÍN MARTÍNEZ DE LAS RIVAS

“Tu solus Sanctus, Tu solus Dominus, Tu solus Altissimus” – “Thou alone art Holy, Thou alone art Lord, Thou alone art Most High”

- Date of birth: October 6, 1929 in Málaga
- Postulancy: November 21, 1952 in Santa Isabel
- Novitiate: September 24, 1953 in Mira-Cruz
- First Vows: October 4, 1954 in Mira-Cruz
- Perpetual Vows: October 6, 1957 in Velazquez
- Date of death: September 2, 2018 in El Olivar

Rosario Bolín, “Chipi” as she was called in her family and sometimes also in Community, was born the second last of six girls. She grew up in a family influenced by the culture of Málaga on her father's side and by English culture on her mother's side, especially from her maternal grandmother. Her upbringing had a strong English character, this language being very often used in the family. The sisters grew up in a rather closed family circle with few foreign friends, educated by English nannies, in a beautiful house and a big farm where they found everything they needed for their games and walks. Rosario always remembered with nostalgia the house in Las Palmeras, the garden, the little hill where they climbed to play, the splendid terrace from where they could see the sea and where, as a child, she used to sit and read the Bible.

She spent a few years in the schools of Málaga and Santa Isabel. Little by little, her vocation to the Assumption began to take shape being especially attracted by our contemplative life. Perhaps she was influenced by her older sister, Viki, Sister Begoña, a Sister well known and loved in Brazil, Africa, and Auteuil, and who died in

Riofrío after a long life of dedication to God and to the Congregation.

Sr. Rosario's first mission, of which she had wonderful memories, was in Velázquez, where she took care of the sacristy and the small services of the house. The closure of the Velázquez school meant that she had to move to Cuestablanca in the outskirts of Madrid.

She then moved to Olivos, where she also took care of the sacristy and the bursar's office. Finally, from 1983 onwards, she was in the Community of El Olivar. This was an ideal house for her, with its wide open spaces, a wide horizon, with a garden, where she could contemplate nature. Still as sacristine, she spent a few years taking care of the kitchen and helping in the dining room of the resident ladies we had at the time.

Following the death of her mother, her sisters also disappeared. Tina was the only one left, completely deaf, very diminished during her last years, which she spent in a retirement home because she could no longer be cared for at home. Rosario's concern was what would become of her sister when she (Rosario) died? Tina did die a few months before her. For Rosario, it was very painful, but at the same time, it filled her with great peace and tranquility.

Her physical limitations - her great deafness which also influenced her way of speaking - prevented Rosário from having more direct and apostolic contacts and at times made communication with her difficult. Her communication was with her God and Lord. Her great passion had always been reading the Bible. She spent hours reading and re-reading the sacred texts, commentaries by different authors, especially Cardinal Martini and Benedict XVI. Her mystery being the Eucharist, she spent hours before the Blessed Sacrament. The liturgy, the Eucharist and the Word of God have always been her centre and her nourishment.

In spite of her many and very serious illnesses (cancer, myasthenia gravis, severe osteoporosis, visual disturbances and profound deafness that the most powerful hearing aids could not relieve), her recourse to the psalms was constant, even with a certain humor: “My God, who oppresses me, be sure of me”. “I roar louder than a lion”. And “Eighty years for the strongest.” The psalms of praise were her favourite.

We remember her haste for everything and her impatience with delays. We also remember her sitting for hours in the porch, contemplating nature that brought her closer to God. She often wondered what paradise would look like. She must have already discovered it. She must have arrived in haste to the bosom of her Father, with her Bible under her arm, and eager to contemplate, face to face, the mystery of her God.

The El Olivar Community

SISTER ROSARIO DEL CORAZÓN INMACULADO DE MARÍA (of the Immaculate Heart of Mary)

MARÍA ROSARIO FELIPE MAGRO

“Praise be to you, glory be to you, and thanks be to you.”

- Date of Birth: October 7, 1928 in Guadalajara
- Postulancy: February 11, 1952 in Madrid - Santa Isabel
- Novitiate: July 1, 1953 in San Sebastián
- First Vows: July 13, 1954 in San Sebastián
- Perpetual Vows: September 12, 1957 in León - Colegio
- Date of death: April 16, 2018 in Collado Mediano

Rosario arrived in Collado in 2007 with the new Community set up for the re-opening. She arrived with great enthusiasm and a great desire to work; moreover, she was happy because some of the Sisters from the Residence of Olivos, with whom she had lived for many years, were there too. She maintained the Community's dining room very well; it was her favorite activity and she was happy to take care of every detail. Every Sister had everything she needed because Rosario remembered what each one of them needed. When she fell ill, and unable to walk, her concern was to know who would take care of the dining room which she thought was her unique responsibility until the end of her life.

Rosario was born in Congostrina, a small village in Guadalajara, into a very modest and happy family. She liked to talk about her village and the countryside and in these descriptions of what she did there one could feel how happy she had been and where she got that simplicity that she always kept and never lost in the reality of daily life.

During her long years in the service of the Province, in Santa Isabel, León, Cuestablanca and later for many years in Olivos Residencia and in the Acogida, in the kitchen, the laundry, the sewing room or the dining room, in discreet, constant and selfless service, giving her life without ever thinking about herself, active, always ready to be of service, makes the whole Province remember her with affection, as a strong, generous and devoted Sister.

She was a good woman and an even better religious, always hidden, without shining in anything, since she did not need it. She was happy with what was entrusted to her and she carried out her tasks to the full, whether small or big, since she was convinced that in the eyes of God, everything done with love is important. She was like that and this is the legacy she is leaving behind, not with words - she didn't speak much, but the best book she left us is the one we have all been able to read, the one about her consecrated life.

When God asked her to leave her activity, which she carried out with such pleasure and to which she devoted so much time, she spent that time in adoration and prayer, spending many hours before the Blessed Sacrament, always having in her hands the Gospel of the daily Mass, which she never let go of and which became old in her hands until the following year. It was her most beautiful gift on the Feast of the Three Kings.

She helped Sr. Almudena a lot. she was her eyes and her feet, always at her side in case she needed something! Both were always punctual, both in the services and at times of Community meetings... and so throughout many years she never got tired, which made us see that when a person wants and helps from the bottom of her heart, she never gets tired.

The motto of her life engraved in her ring was: “To you, Lord, praise, glory and thanks”. We can testify that although she did not repeat it often with words, she lived it in everyday life. We could all see and discover all that can be said through a life of service and

silence, through a life of dedication and commitment because for Rosario it was that, praise and glory to her Lord, shown in service of others, discreet and tireless.

During the time when she was ill and unable to work, we could appreciate where her goodness and patience had led her: everything was fine, everything was good, she needed nothing, and she left with her Lord as she had lived, discreet and silent, as something natural. You could only see in her eyes that she was not well because her lips only said “Well” and “Thank you” to the end.

We know that now you, Rosario, are better than ever, enjoying everything you wanted most. This fills us with joy because we are sure that the Lord, Whom you served so diligently in your brothers and sisters, will fill you fully.

We, your Community, where you were so happy and you shared his joy with us, we thank the Lord for having lived with you the last years of your life and for having enjoyed this serenity and peace that you transmitted to us. Now we are sure that we have someone more to intercede for us in heaven, expanding the great Community that we already have there, together with many other Sisters, and always accompanied by Mother Marie Eugenie.

The Collado Mediano Community

SISTER SAINT ROCH

CÉCILE BERAU

"I am the way, the truth, the life."

- Date of birth: March 20, 1923 in Troyes, Champagne, France
- Postulancy: July 27, 1946 (Augustines de l'Hôtel Dieu in Paris)
- Novitiate: March 3, 1947 at the novitiate
- First vows: September 29, 1949 in the Community chapel, 66 rue des Plantes
- Perpetual vows: October 20, 1952 in the chapel of Notre Dame de Bon Secours Hospital, 66 rue des Plantes
- Date of death: December 11, 2018 at the EHPAD St. Joseph in Etampes

It was at the end of a long and "full" life, as Sr. Jeanine Bertrand said in the welcoming words at her funeral, that Sister Saint Roch left us, consumed by the illness about which she had remained very discreet.

On a spring day in 1923, she was the first of the twins to come into the world. The family would have four children—three girls and a boy.

It was in the region of Aube, in the very picturesque town of Troyes that her childhood and youth took place. The city, fiefdom of hosiery, was then prosperous.

The twins, Cécile and Madeleine, looked much alike and their resemblance even in old age was surprising. Their father was blind. A great musician, he played the parish organ. The family was highly esteemed as a correspondent of Sr. St. Roch testified after her death.

Madeleine, who came to see Cecile on the eve of her return to the Father, had a little niece who read a last message:

“My Little Twin...

How much I thank the Lord for having put an end quickly to your sufferings and for having been able to see you again last Sunday in all lucidity and smiles.

The moment of your face to face with God has come for you and you now know what is in the hereafter... For me, I believe you are in the Light and Peace of the Lord Whom you have served very faithfully for 69 years, living the words of Jesus “Love one another, as I have loved you.

This alleviates the great pain of physical separation. You are going to find your companions who left before you: Sister Daniele, not long ago. You are going to give a beautiful concert together accompanied by Papa and Jean on the organ, Mama on the cello, Dinand on the trumpet and Michel as listener. How beautiful it's going to be!

Thank you, my dear one, for all that you have given me personally: faith, affection, listening, advice, encouragement of all kinds.

Now, watch over your Community, your family, your friends, all those you have known and loved in a calm, smiling and humorous way.”

Sister St. Roch was a musician and played the piano. In Paris, she was in charge of singing rehearsals. Beware of false notes which she could hardly stand! Her lively temperament made her react quickly but very quickly this movement would fade away and she would regain her beautiful smile. The mystery she had chosen was the Washing of the Feet.

At the age of 23, Cécile entered the Congregation of the Augustinian Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu de Paris, on the banks of the Seine, near Notre Dame Cathedral, whose origins go back to the 7th century.

It was at 66 rue des Plantes, in the still green south of the city where the Congregation found refuge on January 15, 1908 when the Hôtel-Dieu was expelled, that Cécile took her first steps in religious life.

A large orchard, even with cows, then surrounded the hospital buildings which had been built by the Congregation and the Community. The 14th district was still rural at the time.

After a first period of religious formation, she received the habit in the intimacy of the novitiate as was the custom, without her family present. Her first vows were celebrated in the Community chapel on September 29, 1949 and three years later, on October 20, 1952, she made her perpetual vows in the hospital chapel which remains to this day.

During one of the ceremonies “the white apron”, — symbol of “service to the poor and the sick” — was solemnly handed over and worn immediately.

As a nurse, she worked in various hospitals run by the Congregation in Paris: at Boucicaut in 1948, then at Notre Dame de Bon Secours in 1951. For two years, she was then the Assistant Mistress of the novitiate and then the nurse in charge of taking care of the elderly in the infirmary of the Motherhouse.

In 1964, Sr. St. Roch was called to the nursing school as an instructor remembered by our Sisters as well as those of other Congregations.

In 1966, she attended the formation of the School of Executives and returned the following year to the School of Nursing as a formator.

Sr. St. Roch returned to her city of Troyes in 1970 as Superior of the Community for five years. This was the time of the change of activity from a gradual transition from a maternity to a retirement home.

In 1975, she returned to rue des Plantes and was named Superior of the big Community. There were many Sisters working then in the different departments of the hospital.

The Augustinian Sisters Chapter of the Hôtel Dieu in Paris elected her Superior General the following year. For six years, she exercised this heavy responsibility and brought to a successful conclusion the union with the Augustinian Sisters of the Precious Blood of Arras which was made official on August 15, 1982.

The two Congregations were members of the Federation of the Augustinian Sisters of France, which at the beginning numbered thirteen Congregations throughout France. It lasted about thirty years and allowed a deepening of the writings of St. Augustine with the help of the Great Augustinians of Holland and then of Spain, including Father Jaime Garcia.

With the agreement of Cardinal Marty, then Archbishop of Paris, the new Congregation took the name of Religieuses Augustines de Notre Dame de Paris. Sr. Jeanine Bertrand was the first Superior General.

Sr. St. Roch became a member of the General Council, while being Superior in Troyes. One day, during one of the feasts that she liked to animate at the retirement home, she was surprised to welcome the Bishop of Troyes, dressed in a Becassines outfit!

It was to the Paris region, at Etampes, where the Congregation had another retirement home that she went to next, in 1999, still Superior of the Community until its closure in 2006.

She still animated many recreational activities for the residents and many celebrations with the same enthusiasm.

At the request of the Congregation, the ACIS association took over the management of the St Joseph's establishment which became an EHPAD (Établissement d'Hébergement pour Personnes Agées Dépendantes) home care for the dependent elderly. Sr. Saint Roch

joined the Community “Généralat- Accueil” in Paris, rue des Plantes for three years. In the parish of Saint Pierre de Montrouge, she took an active part in the knitting group and made friends there.

In September 2009, she became Superior again this time of the Notre Dame Community where the elderly Sisters lived more at their own pace, while having common Offices with the other two Communities of the house.

A surgery left her with a disability and walking became difficult.

She returned to Etampes in August 2011 and entered St. Joseph home care in a brand new building. Some of the staff members were old acquaintances of hers and she quickly and happily integrated herself into the activities offered, discovering among other things her gift for charcoal drawing. With the animator she set up a knitting group and there too she made friends who will show their friendship at the time of her death. One of the cooks will say: "With the departure of Sr. St. Roch, a page is being turned."

As Superior of the Community, she found difficult to accept the aging and growing disability of the Sisters, wanting to maintain the Community life of old times and all its demands.

With a team that includes Mr. Leray, the Director, she was the kingpin of the “Gazette de la Juine”, the small quarterly newspaper of the establishment. She wrote the column: “Your Sister speaks to you...” indicating the times of Masses in the chapel celebrated by the priests of the parish.

The son of a resident humorist and graphic designer initiated a contest. Full of humor, she agreed to be "crunched". She will even have the right to her comic book!

Sr. St. Roch liked to laugh. Very relational, she knew how to create bonds with respect and exquisite politeness.

The illness that had been eating away at her for a few years and which she only talked about to some people, worsened at a surprising speed. On returning from a hospital stay, while we were celebrating Sr. Myriam's funeral, she told me that she could not attend Mass because she was too tired. We then understood that her days were numbered. She and I agreed that I would call her briefly every day, which I did until December 9.

She entrusted a list of the hymns she had prepared for her funeral to Sr. Anne Michel, who went to see her on Sunday, the day before she died. Her twin sister and two other members of her family had also come to see her that day. She could leave but not without asking for a priest to visit her.

The Sisters of the Community surrounded her as best they could until the nurse asked them to leave. Sr. St. Roch joined her Lord in the early morning of December 11. At the announcement of her return to the Father we received many testimonies of her welcome, her smile, her availability, her concern for others, “a remarkable woman, fully given,” said Mr. Leray, the former Director.

Above all, Sr. St. Roch was a woman of faith, with a strong character, demanding of herself and sometimes of others, a prayerful person.

May she now continue her mission in God for her human family, her religious family, and all the people who lived and worked in the places where she lived — all those she met during her long life.

Sr. Marie Françoise Bisiaux

SISTER SHEILA MARIE OF JESUS

SHEILA KATHLEEN FLYNN

“Abide in my love.”

- Date of birth: February 3, 1937 in Baltimore, MD
- Postulancy: September 15, 1957 Ravenhill (Philadelphia, PA)
- Novitiate: July 27, 1958 Ravenhill
- First Vows: June 27, 1959 Ravenhill
- Perpetual Vows: July 13, 1964 Baie Comeau, PQ, Canada
- Date of death: December 12, 2018 at Philadelphia, PA

Sheila Kathleen Flynn was born into a large American-Irish Catholic family in Baltimore. She was proud of her family and of being from Baltimore. Her brothers and her sister were ever present in her interest and prayers. She spoke of them often and we felt we knew even those we had never met.

The family knew difficulties and struggle. Her father died when she was young, one of her brothers became blind. Brothers and sisters made sacrifices for each other. The family valued education highly and some worked to allow others to study. Her blind brother even became a teacher. Sheila herself never stopped studying and learning.

A life of St. Marie Eugenie Milleret that Sheila found in the public library brought her to the Assumption. She was particularly impressed by a line from Marie Eugenie: “I dream of a world where no human being is oppressed by another.” Social justice, care of the poor, helping people to realize their potential, were always priorities for her.

Sheila was full of life: she loved to sing and dance. She enjoyed people and good conversation. She had a good sense of humor and

that humor was never unkind. She confided to me that, for the Irish, the worst character trait was to be boring.

Sister Sheila was passionate about teaching. She loved her students and worked hard for them to succeed. One of her first assignments was in northern Canada and she also taught in one of our schools down south in Miami. She taught in Philadelphia at Ravenhill Academy and became Principal there. When the school closed, she went into another branch of education, studying cognitive psychology under David Burns, and becoming a clinical psychologist.

This led her to the Recovery Community at New Jerusalem Now. The years she spent there were perhaps the most fulfilling of her life. She loved and admired Sister Margaret and Gary Robbins— and all the people there. She was proud of their success and compassionate in times of weakness or failure.

Sheila took not just her religious life but the spiritual life and her spiritual life very seriously. Her love of God and intimacy with God in prayer always came first. A very active person, she found the energy and dynamism of her activity in her life of prayer. St. Marie Eugenie wanted us to be contemplatives in action. Sister Sheila was an example of that vocation. She wasn't just all about prayer but about overcoming her faults, working hard with a difficult temperament to become ever more Christ-like.

Indeed, Sheila could be the most compassionate and gentle person but she could also be rough, angry and judgmental, thinking that things – and people -- should be as she thought they should be. She showed righteous anger about the inequalities in society, prejudice and injustice – but sometimes it wasn't so righteous.

God took care of that for her. Signs of Alzheimer appeared early. It was hard for Sheila to accept. Although her doctors and I named the crippling disease, she never said the word.

It was hard for the Community also. We could feel solidarity with so many couples and families that see the faculties of their loved ones deteriorate – and care for them lovingly, generously in so many ways – and at a great price physically, emotionally, financially. We were often troubled and worried – but we have fond and even memories that are now funny for us.

I would like to thank neighbors and friends for their vigilance and help during those days.

Finally, it was impossible to keep Sheila in the house where she was a danger to herself and others. Simpson House was chosen for its religious quality, private rooms and special care.

Sheila did not complain and made the adaptation well -- although she did offer one of the caregivers “a cupcake if you get me out of here.”

At first, we were able to take her out for walks, for coffee or lunch. And you could walk a quarter of a mile within Simpson House – stopping to have coffee, see a film or get a book. Little by little, Sheila forgot our names, became incapable of any kind of conversation. But she sometimes surprised us with an “I love you,” or “thank you so much.” She became docile with the staff and also gracious. We felt, when we visited, that she knew we were related, that she belonged to us and we to her. All remarked her lovely smile. At the end, she was reduced to that smile. Death came unexpectedly – quick and gentle.

We rejoice in Sister Sheila’s having fulfilled her vocation and in our having journeyed with her. Her smile remains with us.

Sr. Clare Teresa and the West Philadelphia Community

Hna. Clare Teresa y la comunidad de Filadelfia Oeste

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