

Sister Emmanuel de la Croix

Anne-Marie Doucet

“In Him”

- Born on 22 August 1923, in Oinville Saint Liphard
- Entered the postulancy on 11 February 1946, in Orléans
- First vows on 2 October 1948, in Orléans
- Perpetual vows on 8 September 1954, in Orléans
- Died in Issoudun on 18 January 2022

Sister Emmanuel's family had their roots in Beauce, near Orléans. She was born and grew up near these immense wheat fields, Péguy's 'ocean of wheat'. Her parents ran a farm next to the Bricy military air base, which was bombed and totally destroyed at the start of the Second World War. They had to leave in a hurry for temporary accommodation, and in the middle of the war, it was difficult to find a farm to house this sibling group of six children, one of whom died at the age of 7. The ordeal of war was compounded by the presence of a transmissible disease. In fact, one of Emmanuel's sisters, Simone, suffered from paralysis of the lower limbs and joined the Congregation of Jesus Crucified. Here are different testimonies according to the stages of this long life at the service of the Lord.

Introductory Remarks by Sister Anne Descour at the funeral of Sister Emmanuel de la Croix in the church of Saint Marc in Orléans:

We are gathered around Sr Emmanuel (Anne-Marie) and yet we would gladly have celebrated her 100th birthday with her. But it was a selfish thought, because on reflection, she is surely meeting the God to whom she gave her life 74 years ago! Meeting the Jesus she loved, followed and served all her life by serving, loving and being attentive to her sisters and her family.

Because in her very direct way, Sr Emmanuel always had a great deal of respect and attention for everyone.

After the shock of hearing of her death, because she seemed indestructible, the memories come flooding back: *"A great figure of our Province and of my youth, a friend of my parents and a support to our family at a difficult time, she had character, she was just and good, I give thanks to God", says one sister. And the memory of thanksgiving comes flooding back.* I quote

"Emmanuel is for me, and for many of us, the image of the faithful servant: generous, faithful, fully committed. I'm touched by her departure... far from premature, but so quick!" wrote another.

One sister even wrote from Spain, recalling her memories:

"I got to know and live with Sr Emmanuel de la Croix at Marcq-en Baroeul during my Juniorate and I have very fond memories of her. It was the first two years of the merger. In Orléans I also got to know her family, especially her two nieces Isabelle and Brigitte, who were studying at Saint Aignan.

Another:

"I had known Emmanuel since 1953, I was 17 and a half when I started teaching at St Aignan's, she was 30 and supported me in my early teaching days, even though she had never taught, and it was with her that I spoke about my future, but after the advice of a book to pray, she left me completely free, no abuse of power, weakness, etc. " says Geneviève. One of us sums up: "I'm completely overwhelmed by this announcement, even though we could have expected it at one point or another.

And together we comfort each other, happy to have known her, with another sister who says:

"Now she sees her Lord, a woman of such great faith and insight, full of humour and demanding; she combined opposites with love; a beautiful life".

Yes, a long and beautiful life, and we know, as she told her nieces who came to see her for Christmas, that she was ready for this departure which is an encounter with God.

She was sent to **Marcq en Baroeul** after completing her novitiate, having trained as an accountant and passed her public transport driving test. A sister recalls the Saint Aignan house in Marcq: *"After meeting Emmanuel in Orléans, I found her again in Marcq, where she was already bursar and in charge of catechesis for 7-year-olds, preparing them for the sacraments.*

From 1999 to 2002 we were together in Créteil, where she completed her mission as provincial bursar. Members of the management committees were amazed at the precision of her memory".

Attached by her family upbringing to natural virtues (uprightness, fidelity, courage, etc.), she easily fell into the spirit of Sainte Marie-Eugénie when the time came in 1968 for the two congregations to merge.

Brigitte Coulon tells us: "She is one of the sisters of Saint Aignan whom I knew best when I was a boarder, so she was a special presence when I returned to France, a discreet and fraternal presence. Bon voyage, Sister Emmanuel! I am sure that you are truly in Him like your word".

Sister Emmanuel, provincial bursar. Long before the advent of computers, Sister Emmanuel was lining up figures on large ledgers and pointing them out with a pencil! She was always available for the communities and for each sister, seeking to give responsibility and not to impose when it came to managing money. She was driven by a great concern for justice and solidarity, both within and outside the Congregation. Appreciated on the various committees for her rigour and kindness, she overcame difficulties with discretion and knew how to seek advice from experts (Maître DUFAU, for example). Emmanuel naturally joined a small group of provincial bursars working under the guidance of Sister Nicole Reille. This structure has now been adapted by CORREF to meet the needs of the whole of Ile de France. She was always available, and during her holidays she gave priority to supervising maintenance work. And in her free evenings she did some gardening.

Let's listen to Sister Nicole: *"My first meeting with Sister Emmanuel was in 1984. Participating with her in the session of Provincial Economes, at that time I had only just got my foot at the door of the Provincial Bursar's Office and there was nothing to suggest that a few years later I would be appointed to the General Bursar's Office where our work together would become more regular. During that session in Rome, we had the good fortune, but above all the grace, to go to Assisi and pray with St Francis. One of Emmanuel's words stayed with me ever since: "It is poverty and praise that sustain the Church", she said to me after praying near the tomb of St Francis. These words are echoed in the words of Pope Francis today. Emmanuel has courageously embarked on the task of setting up an IT system and centralising the*

communities' accounts. This start-up, with its many changes, is bearing fruit in the work of the Economat today. She also took on the bankers to help them understand our management policy, along with other Economes de Paris. She was a faithful participant in the meetings organised by the CSM - the forerunner of CORREF. Thank you Emmanuel, we can never say it enough, for everything you have put in place, everything you have given, but above all everything you have been".

The time of Fleur des Neiges. Friends of FDN wrote: *"I think of Michèle, Chantal, Nadine... the cooks who worked with Sr Emmanuel! I remember her as a 'little mouse' between the cellar and the kitchen... always alert and adjusting the meals to the budget. At the time of her departure for the Montpellier community, she, who was not one for personal sharing, told us a lot about her childhood in Beauce, her entry into the Sisters of Saint Aignan and the war period she lived through with her family. I was very fond of Sister Emmanuel, sometimes stern, but with such a tender heart! Thank you for your presence. (Marie-Christine Coulon)*

This morning," says Pierre K., "I felt associated with those who have worked a lot with Sister Emmanuel: her competence and high standards have often impressed me. Her quick thinking was matched only by the speed with which she ran down the stairs at FDN looking for a document or file. I was very impressed by her.

"I really liked Sister Emmanuel, her discretion and the effectiveness of her words and her loving presence. She helped me a lot at a difficult time.

And "I'm all the more sad for I have known her for a long time. When I was teaching at Assumption Bordeaux, she was bursar there in the 1970s. It was a great pleasure to meet her again at FDN some thirty years later.

The Montpellier period, then La Chaume where she died

The Issoudun community testifies

"A strong woman from the Beauce region, she had a great memory, loved her family very much and loved to sing. Full of common sense, uprightness, loyalty and kindness. She was very demanding of herself and of others, and because she was visually impaired, she was very tidy when it came to putting her things away. She also had a strong sense of mission, and her words carried a lot of weight in the old people's home. For example, when she asked

for the Advent path and then the crib to be displayed at the entrance hall. She was faithful to the services, even by telephone! to the rosary and to adoration. She kept abreast of events and shared the news she heard on RCF. She enjoyed Anne Michel's reading of the Cross. She also enjoyed her table companions and was happy to take part in the entertainment.

"To God, dear Sister, through you I have come to know the Congregation better. Don't forget me" and again "thank you for all you have been for us" "to God, Sister Emmanuel, you left us, the residents, very suddenly, help us to continue our journey and rest in peace! and this for eternity. We, the community of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, send our condolences to your family and your sisters, the Religious of the Assumption.

The house's management team also wrote:

"A year and a half ago, we welcomed some beautiful shades of purple straight from Montpellier. At first sight, a discreet and demanding woman, we very quickly discovered that Emmanuel was both friendly and sociable. As time went by, you gave your trust to some of us who were lucky enough to discover behind this apparent 'iron fist' a woman with an overflowing need to listen and to make human contact. We will remember her as a small, toned woman who never missed a gym session, a small woman with well-preserved abilities who was highly cultured and loved to talk and share with others. A rigorous, meticulous woman who liked things well done, while taking care to leave no room for clutter or the unexpected, as the place that every object occupied in your bedroom could testify. Your strong, independent personality enabled you to remain autonomous right up to the end. A woman brimming with openness and generosity, whose autonomy was paramount.

Thank you, Emmanuel, for all the moments you've shared on a daily basis and for the many opportunities we've had to talk. Thank you for your trust and your presence. »

For the funeral Mass, a large number of sisters had come from Paris to join the communities of Issoudun and Orléans, and then a buffet brought us all together, sisters and family, in front of a big fire in the community room; the light of the flames warming and enlightening souls as if in a final "A-Dieu". All the more so as Sister Emmanuel left us at the end of January, just as the feast of Candlemas was taking shape and the beautiful hymn of the old man Simeon was resounding: "Now, O Sovereign Master, you may let your

servant go in peace according to your word..." we sang the hymn with her, a faithful servant in her own right.

She embodied in a singular way the joyful freedom so dear to the Assumption. Thank you Sister Emmanuel.

"It is He whom they follow every day, in search of his love alone, through an austere life, in joyful detachment".

Sister Monique Roulleau

(Original in French)

Sister Madeleine of the Paschal Mystery

Madeleine Ravaosolo

"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me".

- Born on 15 November 1947, in Ambohimahasoa (Madagascar)
- Entered the postulancy on 7 August 1963, in Ambohimahasoa, in the first community of the Augustinian Sisters of the Precious Blood in Madagascar.
- Entered the novitiate on 8 September 1964, in Arras, France
- First vows on 28 August 1966, in Arras
- Perpetual vows, 22 December 1974, Ambohimahasoa
- Died in Paris on 6 February 2022

Madeleine Ravaosolo was born into a large family in Ambohimahasoa, on the Hauts Plateau in Madagascar's "Big Island". She was one of the first pupils of the Augustinian nuns at the Saint Joseph school, previously run by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Cluny. Sr Laurentine tells us that she met Madeleine in the 3rd year of secondary school, when she herself was entering the 6th year : "She welcomed me into her team at the boarding school and helped me in this new life, coming as I did from the countryside. Madeleine was already concerned about others, especially the weakest, and helped with lessons and manual work.

Called by the Lord, she entered the postulancy at the Ambohimahasoa community on 7 August 1963. During her postulancy, she taught Malagasy to students from the countryside.

Like all the first Madagascans to join the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Precious Blood, she left her island and came to France in 1964 to do her novitiate at the Mother House in Arras. She received the habit on 8 September 1964. Despite an adapted diet, the change was great and she missed the sun!

After her first vows on 28 August 1966, she prepared for her baccalauréat at the Institut Jeanne d'Arc run by the Bernardines, just across the road. She went on to study at the Institut Catholique de Paris.

She returned home in 1969 to teach at Saint Joseph's school in Ambohimahasoa and become part of the community. She later became headmistress of the school. She took her perpetual vows on 22 December 1974.

In 1983, the congregation entrusted her with a new mission in one of the new communities at Manandona. The population was suffering from material and intellectual poverty, as Sr Laurentine wrote. Sr Madeleine looked for ways to help malnourished children and saved many of them. She will be remembered for her cheerfulness, her sonorous laughter and her desire to make people love Jesus Christ and the Church through the Blessed Virgin.

Serious health problems in 1986 made the doctor recommend urgent treatment in France. Sr Madeleine did not return to Madagascar until her 25th anniversary of profession in 1991.

She was cared for for many years, sometimes under very demanding conditions. Various communities welcomed her between her regular medical visits to Paris: Wimille, Sainte Catherine les Arras, Amettes in the Pas de Calais. Her missionary zeal meant that she was always involved at the service of the Gospel: in the student chaplaincy, the Augustinian lay group in Arras, material aid from the Locon school to a school in Madagascar, and Missionary Cooperation in the diocese of Arras.

In Arras, after the closure of the Amettes community, she devoted herself to collecting postage stamps in collaboration with Brother Maurille. This

was an opportunity to further expand her circle of friends and raise money to help the missions. This earned her the reputation of being a champion collector of small treasures", which was not always appreciated in the communities! "Her repairs of rosaries of all kinds for distribution to prisons in Arras, Madagascar and elsewhere led the sisters to say that Marie heard a lot about Madeleine during her illness.

Sr Madeleine received and cultivated the talents of her people. She had a prodigious memory, spoke easily and abundantly, had a pen of her own and kept up a "minister's" correspondence, as we say in France. She was loyal in her relationships and friendships, had a cheerful disposition, made friends easily and was not afraid to approach people, including the homeless in the streets of Arras. Her legendary, infectious laugh shook her whole body and even her surroundings! Through her illness and obvious physical suffering, she showed her love of life, her courage and her faith.

She was delighted to share what she had discovered.

She moved into the Maison sainte Monique, 66 rue des Plantes in Paris, in 2018, and won the sympathy of the nursing staff and other residents. There is no doubt that today, she continues to intercede for all those she has come into contact with in her life.

Hospitalised at the Institut Mutualiste Montsouris in Paris, she "left" when she heard the prayer of St Bernard, "Souvenez-vous", sung in Malagasy.

Mary, in whom she had placed all her trust, undoubtedly welcomed her with her beautiful smile!

Sister Marie Françoise Bisiaux
(Original in French)

Sister Mary Eucharía of the Lamb of God

Mary Dinah Cousins

"Pater, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum".

- Born on 29 December 1929, in Cardiff (Wales)
- Entered the postulancy on 22 August 1951, at Ramsgate
- Entered the novitiate on 3 May 1952, at Ramsgate
- First vows on 6 November 1953, at Ramsgate
- Perpetual vows on 27 October 1957, at Ramsgate
- Died in London on 19 February 2022

The only girl, and youngest of four children Mary Dinah Cousins, spent the first year of her life in Newcastle. Thereafter she lived in Cardiff until becoming a postulant in the Congregation of the Assumption. She was devoted to her family, particularly her brother Raymond. Through him she came to know the sisters at Belmont where he was at school, then Brother Aelred in the Benedictine community.

Educated at the ordinary Parish Primary School, at the end of her schooling she trained at the Cardiff Royal Infirmary as a nurse, using her skills for much of her life in whatever house she was in, caring for both children and sisters with devotedness and wisdom. As a diagnostician she was better than many specialists, being an expert at observation. In addition, she was charged with the Junior boarders at Ramsgate, whilst at Hengrave she taught Human Biology and Hygiene plus Needlework.

Her 'straight eye' as she called it, was put to good use in her early religious life in needlework, particularly for the convent chapel, exquisite calligraphy and religious miniatures. At one period she taught Calligraphy in the Novitiate at Kensington. She was possessed of a full throated singing voice which could easily have filled the Albert Hall and would have been an ideal member of a traditional Welsh choir. Her gifts at the organ were also in frequent demand.

Extremely sociable, she made friends easily. This gift came into constant use after the closure of the school at Hengrave, as a member of the Ecumenical Community. With a child-like sense of fun, she loved dressing up, acting, banter and telling jokes. She could always see the ludicrous in any situation, enjoyed playing with the young, never hesitant about ‘letting her hair down,’ never standing on her dignity.

Within her first week in community in Richmond, she set herself to knowing everybody who lived in Newbiggin. Her success resulted in her becoming ‘visitor’ for many lonely people. Whilst there she also persuaded a parishioner, a professional chiropodist, to give her lessons in basic techniques. At the closure of this house in August 2000, she joined the St. Catherine’s sisters, then in Kensington. Here her compassion for the sisters with ‘bad feet’ was for many months put to good use.

Just over two years ago she had a stroke. Though she recovered it added to an existing loss of memory and concomitant state of confusion, but she did her best to understand what was happening, and to know who was who. ‘Are you the boss lady?’ and “Is it Tuesday?” were frequent questions. Unable to use her former gifts, she now spent many hours in the chapel.

Sr. Eucharía’s brother Fr. Aelred OSB had advised when on a visit to Richmond in the late 1990’s, that people should make more use of “Spiritual Communion”. In these last days of her life, unable to receive the Sacrament, one hopes that she was able to follow his recommendation, and that she is now joining in the chorus of ‘thousands upon thousands’ of those singing around the ‘Throne of the Lamb’. (Book of Revelation).

Our dear “Euchie” slipped away peacefully to God about 11.15 am on Saturday 19th February.

Community of St Catherine's
(Original in English)

Sister Véronique of the Eucharist

Marie Véronique Wynands

"I am with you always, until the end of the world".

- Born on 1er July 1934 in Sancourt, Somme department, France
- Entered the postulancy on 7 December 1953, with the Augustines du Précieux Sang, in Arras
- Entered the novitiate on 30 June 1954
- First vows on 25 April 1956
- Perpetual vows 28 August 1960
- Died in Abbeville on 14 March 2022

In her last message, read at the funeral she had prepared, Sr Véronique wrote: *"At last, Lord, I see you face to face. Dear Parents, Friends, Benefactors, rejoice with me. At last I have what I was made for. Since I've been in Abbeville, I've been preparing for this face to face encounter. I've been living as if I were already in your Kingdom..."*.

Marie Véronique was born into a warm-hearted family of five children in a rural setting, on a farm just outside the village of Sancourt (population 300) in the Somme department. Throughout her life, she retained a deep love of the land, sowing, planting and watering the many plants that she sometimes harvested along the way, including from the bishop's garden in Limoges!

Moved by the love of Christ, Marie Véronique entered the Augustinians of the Precious Blood in Arras at the age of 19. It was not unfamiliar territory, as Anne Marie, her eldest sister was already there and the Superior General, Mother Marie Véronique, was one of her aunts.

She entered on the eve of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 7 December 1953, and received the habit on 30 June 1954, beginning her novitiate in Arras.

After her first vows on 25 April 1956, Sr Véronique remained at the mother house in Arras. She joined the Cenacle community at Sainte

Catherine Arras in 1959, where she remained for many years. For many years, the sisters of the community provided daily adoration to support the apostolic zeal of the entire congregation.

It's in a beautiful Norman-style mansion at the heart of a large park that the community lives, and it's their job to maintain the waxed parquet floors. Véronique has done a lot of this. For years, a huge garden has produced fruit and vegetables for the sixty or so nuns living in Arras. There is a salaried gardener, but Sr Véronique has used all her talents to provide flowers for the chapels and the parish church in the town.

In 1966, hello to the capital! Véronique discovered Paris and the working-class neighbourhood of rue Saint Maur in the 11th arrondissement. Fortunately for her and the other sisters in this large community, there was a courtyard with some land and trees. She was responsible for various tasks, including the weekly market, which involved taking a small cart through the streets of Paris.

It was her home department that welcomed her to Airaines for a new type of establishment and a different kind of presence in a de-Christianised diocese. The sisters were four in number, dressed like any other women (no religious habit), and lived in a small house similar to all the others in the neighbourhood. At first, they were not known as nuns. They had various occupations and one sister was mistress and caretaker of the house. She played no less of a role because she was in good contact with the neighbourhood and the shopkeepers, the meeting places, and it's to her that people asked questions: "What about your husband? One was a nurse in a health care centre. Véronique was a family worker, having trained and obtained a diploma in Paris with the Little Sisters of the Assumption. Entering families in difficulty because of the mother's health, she discovered a great deal of misery, but also solidarity, and gave herself without counting the cost.

Her generosity, helpfulness and courage are even more evident. She did not look at her pain and sometimes went beyond her strength. She brought help and comfort. She always kept her beautiful smile, which made her stand out wherever she went.

In Saint Léonard de Noblat, on the route to Santiago de Compostela, the Augustinian Sisters of Notre Dame de Paris run the diocesan spiritual

centre, Foyer Jean XXIII. As well as welcoming people and providing entertainment, there's a lot to do in this house, which once belonged to the scientist Gay-Lussac, chemist and botanist. Of course, Véronique did her utmost, but she also took particular care of the grounds, always creating new flowerbeds. In summer, she sometimes had to be "dislodged" from the garden by her superior just after dark. It has to be said that, at this time of year, she was "on the outs" with the hares and wild rabbits that were enjoying some of the flowers just outside the house a little too much.

In her family, the bonds are deep, with a great deal of attention to others and tenderness, and very quickly the other sisters in the community were included in her relationships, where teasing also had its place. There were episodes with certain nephews that are hard to forget.

In 2002, Véronique left for Guinea-Conakry for four years in Kissigoudou. She acted as the parish secretary and receptionist, and was the superior of the small community.

On her return to France, after a period of rest, she discovered the Augustine community in Lyon, rue Bourne, where she welcomed the families of people hospitalised in nearby establishments. Committed to the parish of St Augustin, she was part of the SEM (Service Evangélique des Malades) team, preparing and taking away everything needed for the celebration of the Eucharist. Not to mention the garden, which is enriched with a variety of plants, which she saw as a way of uniting herself with the Creator.

Health problems forced her to be hospitalised in 2019 and to move to the Notre Dame de France nursing home in Abbeville in 2020.

Sr Véronique, who on the occasion of the merger added "of the Eucharist" to her first name, truly lived out with all her simple, joyful heart the phrase from Matthew's Gospel that she had made her own: *"I am with you always, until the end of the world"*.

Among the sisters in Abbeville, and close to part of her family, she was happy, preparing to meet her Lord. During a conversation with one of the people in charge, Mr Poulain, the director, was able to say: "Sr Véronique gives us joy".

With the help of the animator and her brother Léon, who provided the plants, she put her hands in the earth as much as she could, but her roots in Heaven were no less deep. As was said in the words of welcome at her funeral: "You nourished yourself every day with the Word of God, you drew light from it to give light to all those you came into contact with".

Her elder sister Sr Anne Marie testifies that at the end, Véronique had lost her sight, "it didn't bother her, she was in the hands of her Lord, praying spontaneously, loving to repeat the Gloria. She welcomed visitors with joy, never hesitating to say that the main witness we can give is to love one another and to say: "We are all brothers in Christ".

Sister Marie Françoise Bisiaux
(Original in French)

Sister Maria del Carmen de Jesus

María del Carmen Escribano García del Bosque

"Eyes fixed on Jesus

- Born on 21 November 1951, in Madrid
- Entered the postulancy on 1 October 1975, in Madrid-Olivos
- Entered the novitiate on 28 September 1976 at Madrid-Olivos
- First vows on 23 October 1977, in Madrid-Olivos
- Perpetual vows on 19 March 1983, in Gijón
- Died on 22 March 2022, in Madrid

Carmen Escribano was born in Madrid on 21 November 1951. Her father, Máximo, was originally from Andalusia (Jaén) and worked as a lawyer in Madrid. Carmen, her mother, was born in Manila and came to Spain to escape the war.

On the evening of her election as a General Councillor, Carmen spoke to us about her family and her vocation: "I came to the Assumption at Velázquez College at the age of 6, at the wish of my mother, a former

student of the Assumption in Manila. From an early age, I wanted to be a religious; at school, I would see the sisters passing by and playing with us, a young, very dynamic community. I remember as a child putting a towel over my head as a veil and looking at myself in the mirror. I was the only girl in the family with 5 brothers. That's why my mother didn't welcome her daughter's religious vocation. My father, who died when I was 14, was well aware of my vocation and called me "Mother Abbess". When I finished school in Cuestablanca, I studied international secretarial studies because, when my father died, I wanted to help out in house expenses as we were many.

Carmen always had immense affection for her brothers and family. Both her brothers and her nephews trusted her, and she always gave them her human and spiritual support. On the day of her funeral, her youngest brother Borja had this to say with great emotion: "María del Carmen, sister, mother, companion, adviser, guide for us all. You are no longer here physically. Your strength, your attitude, your dedication in the face of illness, I could never have imagined that this would happen, I could never have imagined a life without you... Our expression throughout your illness was: in God's hands. Always by your side. María del Carmen, thank you for everything you gave us and taught us... you gave everything..."

The sisters who knew Carmen as a pupil at the Assumption school in Velázquez and Cuestablanca describe her as an intelligent, open-minded, cheerful, mature and very responsible girl. Until the end of her life, she maintained a close friendship with her classmate Ana de Felipe.

Carmen entered the Assumption on 1^{er} October 1975 in Olivos (Madrid), where she did all her initial formation. During her juniorate, she completed her bachelor's degree in theology (1977-1982) at the Jesuit University of Comillas. It was there that she met Father Luis Ladaria SJ (now Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), who encouraged her to continue her biblical studies and who has always been very close to her.

After completing her studies in Comillas, she was sent to the school community in Gijón, where she took her final vows on 19 March 1983. Although she only stayed for three years, the teachers and students still

remember her with great affection. Clare Teresa, then Superior General, suggested that she go to Rome to continue her studies in theology and biblical studies at the Biblicum (1986-1990). She left for Italy for two years and stayed for 15 years, teaching at the Gregorian University and as Superior of the International Community, then Provincial Councillor.

A sister from the province of Italy recalls her memories in this way:

"Carmen arrived in Rome in the international community on September 1986, to begin her studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute and to obtain a licentiate in Sacred Scriptures, but also, as a perpetually professed sister, to help Sister Irene, who was then superior of the international community, in the area of formation and to help the young sisters in their theological studies. After obtaining her licentiate, she taught at the Lateran University and at the Regina Mundi Institute of the UISG; she also gave courses in Sacred Scriptures at a novitiate of Cistercian monks, friends of the community. She contributed to the training of the parish catechists, accompanied young men and women in vocational discernment and even some priests in vocational crisis, and shared a "Lectio" journey with a small group of young couples wishing to nourish their life and faith.

She stayed with us until the end of September of the jubilee year 2000. ...Apart from the great love for Lectio that we have chosen, shared and undertaken together in the Province and which continues to this day, she has always helped us and accompanied us with wisdom in the small and great discernments of our apostolic works and presences, on the path of a European Province, always with respect, never forcing decisions.... but always reminding us of the importance of arriving at a decision after discernment, even during her term of office in the General Council, and even afterwards. She always loved us, always blessed us".

Some of the junior sisters of the international community express what they received:

"During the two years of my juniorate in Rome, she was my superior, my guide and my companion. She left an indelible mark on my life as a young religious and a young woman. She was a beautiful soul, both contemplative and benevolent. Her loving way of looking at each person

remains a light in my life. She helped me to grow and still inspires me today.

"Carmen was my study supervisor in Rome for two years; she helped me to believe in myself and in my ability to study and succeed. It hasn't always been easy, but I can only be grateful for the gift of her life and experience."

Carmen passed on a great love for the city of Rome to all the young sisters who spent a few years there. The Sunday afternoon walks allowed them to explore the city, especially the less-known places, and often ended at San Bernardo last stop, the conventual church of the Cistercians who were her friends. In Assisi, Siena and especially Subiaco, she walked with the sisters in the footsteps of the Italian saints she loved so much. One day, during one of these walks, Carmen found a book about the lives of the 3 Cistercian founders - "I tre frati ribelli" / The 3 rebel brothers. The book spoke of their passion for Christ and their burning hearts. The sisters began reading it in the Pulmino on the way home, and it became the evening reading in community. "Arde, Roberto, per il Signore! Carmen wanted to share her passionate love with everyone. This passion also vibrated in the way she celebrated the Office and turned her whole being towards Christ.

Her classmates also liked her.

Carmen and I were rigorous fellow students from 1986 to 1989 at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, where we both studied Sacred Scriptures. From the very first day of class, I sensed her intellectual acuity, her great spiritual gifts and her simplicity of life. She was a nun who radiated God in every way, always humble and smiling. I have an indelible memory of her, especially her love for others, always putting herself at the service of all those around her, especially her sisters in community, for whom she was a point of reference because of the strength of her virtues and her ability to listen. Carmen was one of those people who quickly seduce you with the depth of her religious experience". (Mgr F. Chica Arellano)

In 2000, she returned to Spain, became a provincial councillor and then took on the role of Provincial for five years, until the 2012 General Chapter.

In the Province of Spain, Carmen was always much loved and appreciated, especially for her dedication and generosity, right up to the last moment of her life. Those who came into close contact with her have fond memories of her person and her way of living in community: she gave her best and was always attentive to her sisters; if someone needed her for something, she did not measure her strength or her time.

On numerous occasions and Lectio retreats, Carmen put her love and ability to interpret the Word of God at the service of the Province, and above all to pass it on, knowing how to reach the hearts of people of all ages and conditions. She also had a great gift for relating with people, which helped give a great impetus in the schools, for the formation of teachers and youth groups in the province. Her knowledge of our charism and of the Congregation enabled many teachers and friends of the Assumption to make contact with the sisters, to become enthusiastic and to want to go further.

Javier Platón, a member of Titularidad, explains:

"Formation in the charism of the Assumption was one of her priorities. It was a real pleasure to listen to her; her convictions, her profound knowledge, her passion for transmitting the essence of education at the Assumption made each intervention a special, exceptional moment, which always marked those who listened to her with admiration.

It was a question of making the Schools of the Assumption into a Body, where each one of us felt himself to be a member of the great family of the Assumption and responsible for the Mission that the Assumption has in this world.

Last year, right from the start of the school year, she devoted herself to revitalising the Shared Mission project, and with her we were able to rediscover the importance of sharing the Mission. In one of her most moving speeches, she left us with these words: *"We must be on the same wave length with the project, we must assume it, we must believe in and be passionate about a project to transform society through the values of the Gospel, we must get involved with personal responsibility based on what the Assumption is, so that the charism is kept alive. Our lives and our future depend on it. And she added that to be bearers of this heritage, it is necessary to know the charism well, to live it in the first person, and*

to pass on the baton". She has passed the baton to us, and those of us who loved and admired her, and who received her as a guide and model for our lives, have been particularly marked by her".

She gave herself to the province with all her strength, keeping nothing to herself, tireless and enthusiastic. She couldn't say no when asked to do something that would help others to better discover God and Jesus Christ, to better know the Gospel. Those of us who lived with her know very well how much she gave of herself and how much she helped us along a path that was not always easy.

Of her term as General Councillor from 2012 to 2018, Marjo says: "Carmen has lived her whole life at the service of the Congregation, although her love for her Province of Spain has always remained primary and unconditional. Always generous, with her many gifts, it was her deep love for the WORD OF GOD that was always the source of everything she thought, said and did.

In 2012, she gave her all as a member of the General Council, always giving generously of her time, her presence and her whole being. Her commitment was total and immense, always ready to give of herself without counting the cost, whether in action or in expressing an opinion or advice, at the risk of being misunderstood. She was strong and unwavering in what she believed to be right. And although the way she acted might be difficult for some, her only intention was a deep love for God and all that was of God. Her service came from within, from her inmost being, deep and sincere.

Shortly after joining the General Council, Carmen simultaneously assumed the position of Secretary General, a task she carried out with professionalism and grace. Her knowledge of the three main languages of the Congregation enabled her to communicate easily with the Provinces and the Sisters.

Nothing stopped Maria del Carmen from serving without compromise; even illness or cancer treatment, with the pain and difficulties they entailed, never prevented her from serving and moving forward. She knew that the important and essential thing was to do what had to be done, and so she wasted no time in doing what she could with the sole

motivation of always seeking the good of the Congregation and the Church.

Among the many things that Maria del Carmen was in her life - at the General Council, in all our meetings, reflections, visits, the sessions we led, translating, writing reports, accompanying teams, provinces and sisters, as well as the moments of leisure and recreation that we had as a community - her indelible legacy for those of us who had the good fortune to know her, to live and work closely with her, was that she was a SISTER, a companion, a friend. She was God's presence in good times and bad. She was a concrete manifestation of God's love, God's face, God's closeness. Thanks to her life and her witness, we can only say with deep gratitude that indeed, GOD IS REAL. "

While she was still a member of the General Council, she was diagnosed with cancer in 2017.

In her correspondence with her superiors and sisters, she always showed great lucidity, fortitude, inner strength and abandonment to the Lord.

"God's hand becomes very clear in everything. At the same time, I'm surprised every time: ...but in all this, He has placed the right actions and the right people in front of me. Everything comes from Him, my will plays no part, but I find myself in front of events and He inspires. That's how I've been feeling for the last month and a half. I continue to ask Him to do His will and to give me light, as far as my illness is concerned". (2017)

"I believe... that my life, as long as the Lord gives it to me, will from now on always be between periods of chemo and periods of rest... The important thing for me is to feel well and to be able to continue to lead a normal life. As I said, always in His hands, and until He decides, but I'm calm and going forward with courage, living my mission as fully as I can." (September 2019)

"I don't know if I have a better mission in Spain, but what I do know is that I want to return there with all my heart; it's my land, I feel at home there and I want to be close to my sisters and my family. The Lord has guided this moment and he's doing it in his own way." (November 2020)

And so it was. She returned to Spain on 4 March 2021, at the start of the General Council's visit to the province, and the community of Olivos benefited from her presence for a whole year.

As Provincial Councillor, she always showed such enthusiasm and strength that it was difficult to perceive her physical weakness. It was a very fruitful year that left its mark, a short time during which she lived fully in the present moment ; she gave herself to every sister in her community and province and to formation, leaving a legacy and a deep mark, in particular through her last interventions on Shared Mission.

She lived to the end, in the service of the Lord, and devoted herself to the congregation, happily helping with the translation during the CGP in Madrid. In her last letter to the sisters of the province, three days before her death, she wrote: *"We have reached the last stage of the illness, my sisters. Now, all that God wants and that nature can give. I am at peace. In the hands of God, Lord of life and death. Thank you all for everything I have received from my Province, which I love very much.*

Carmen was a great gift of the Lord for all of us, throughout her life, but especially this last year in Spain, in the community of Olivos. We give thanks for her full life, given to the end with faith, trust and joy, always thinking of others and helping them in everything.

The prayer on 23 March, the celebration of the final Eucharist in the presence of her family, Sr Rekha with her Council and all the provincials representing the 32 countries where the Assumption is present, were moments when we all remembered her with great tenderness and when we had the opportunity to express the imprint she has left on our lives.

Cecilia Manrique (Provincial of Spain) and the Olivos community

Sister Thérèse of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary

Thérèse Germaine Léa de SAINT DENIS

"No greater love than to lay down one's life".

- Born on 6 December 1930, in Brainville, Normandy, France
- Entered the postulancy on 1 May 1964
- Entered the novitiate on 2 February 1965, at Arras
- First vows on 28 August 1967
- Perpetual vows on 8 September 1972
- Died in Abbeville on 4 April 2022

"You were born on 6 December 1930, the sixth of thirteen girls. When the last girls were born, she said, "It's another tomboy". Your parents loved each other very much, and that love ran in the family. In the evenings, if there were any arguments, your mother encouraged forgiveness.

Your father worked for the commune of Brainville. He also went fishing, bringing back enough to feed the family. He cultivated a garden and had a farmyard. You said we never lacked food.

At school, you had to sit at the back of the class because you were visually impaired. One of your sisters taught you to read and count. Your mother taught you household chores";

echoes from the introductory remarks at her funeral.

Thérèse worked for a number of years in private homes, then at the Coutances hospital. Called by the Lord, she joined the congregation of the Augustinian Sisters of Coutances, who were at the service of this former Hôtel-Dieu, founded in the 13th century day and night. She did her postulancy there and received the black habit, but as the merger with the Augustinian Sisters of the Precious Blood of Arras was imminent, on 31 May 1966, Sr Thérèse quickly arrived in Arras to begin her novitiate. She received the white habit of the Augustinian Sisters of Arras. It was a big change of scenery for her, who had never left her Normandy home,

finding herself in a novitiate that was still large, in the midst of unfamiliar nuns, but the Mistress of Novices was watching over her!

She made her first vows, as was customary, on 28 August 1967 and her perpetual profession five years later, on the feast of the Nativity of Mary, 8 September 1972.

Upon completing her novitiate, Sr Thérèse took charge of the laundry, with Sr Thérèse Berthe as her "boss", whom she looked after until her death, when both were elderly.

For fifty years, despite her small size, she looked after the linen of around 120 people: the professed nuns, the novices, the older sisters in the infirmary, the lady boarders, not to mention the visiting sisters, as 13 rue Pasteur was the mother house. Over the years, the workload became lighter; there were fewer nuns and she was an expert at the ironing machine for flat linen, but she also did some of the ironing with the help of other nuns. The basement of the chapel is a veritable anthill. Each new hour is blessed by the sound of the bell of the "big clock in the courtyard", and then the work proceeds in silence, except for the words that are essential for the smooth running of the work. The novices wash the white woollen tunics by hand. They all have a short training period in the laundry.

At a time when there was no lift and no dryer (before 1963), the linen had to be carried up to the attic (above the chapel), using a rope to hang it out to dry. Sr Thérèse did not live through those days, arriving after major renovation work had been carried out in the house.

On Sundays, she accompanied Sr Thérèse Berthe, who led masses in the parishes of the town and surrounding area without an organist. A good singer with a beautiful voice, she was also invaluable at weddings and funerals. These were her hobbies.

She never wasted a minute at break time, knitting intricate stitches to perfection. When she was older, she did the same when she was on duty at the switchboard, listening to cassettes for spiritual nourishment.

Taking care of orchids was her 'passion', but other plants and flowers were not neglected, nor were certain corners of the garden. She also knew how to cook, and this was invaluable with the reduction in staff hours. On 2

February, she delighted the community with delicious pancakes. She also loved to tell stories, which she would make up if need be.

As the years went by, Sr Thérèse remained active for as long as she could, working with other sisters as a peeler in the mornings and at the switchboard in the afternoons, where she received visitors and chatted a little, not forgetting her fidelity to the rosary in union with Lourdes.

When Sr Thérèse Berthe moved to the Notre Dame de France nursing home in Abbeville, Sr Thérèse joined her and continued to surround her with her affection and delicacy, reminding the great musician that it was time to play the piano to cheer up the residents upstairs.

In her simplicity, she truly lived "her word": *"No greater love than to lay down one's life"*. Very secretive about her spiritual life, she was often seen praying the rosary.

Sr Thérèse Berthe's death marked a turning point in her life. Her illness meant that she had to be hospitalised for three months, at the height of the pandemic, without any visitors, which was a terrible ordeal. Very weakened, she entered Notre-Dame de France and joyfully rediscovered her room, the community, the residents and the staff. She had no complaints, but she was very tired. Now in a wheelchair, she is driven by Sr Jeanne Candaille, who also did little favors for her.

In the hospital and at the retirement home, "she left a testimony of love. She lived in the presence of Jesus and Mary. "Your smile amazed everyone who came near you. Thank you Thérèse for all that you were for us, for all that you did for us" (greeting given by Sr Madeleine Lamiot at the funeral).

(Original in French)

Sister Maria of Nazareth

Marie Cavasinni

"Dominus est

- Born on 26 February 1933, in Celano (L'Aquila)
- Entered the postulancy on 15 March 1951, in Rome
- Entered the novitiate on 15 April 1952 in Rome
- First vows on 11 October 1953 in Rome
- Perpetual vows on 24 October 1957, in Cagliari
- Died in Rome on 27 April 2022

Sr Maria, a woman of prayer, simple, sociable and generous, had delicate health.

Psychologically fragile, she spent most of her religious life in the infirmary, first in Viale Romania, then in Quadraro. As a young woman from 1953 to 1971, she helped with housework, cleaning, cooking and in the refectory, both in Rome and in Cagliari. She remembered those times when, as a converse nun, she gave tirelessly of herself and carried in her heart the regret of not having been able to study.

From 1971 to 1974, she happily took part in the life of the Piragineti community, where the nuns worked in parish pastoral care and at the nursery school. She was close to young people and families with her warm and sensitive humanity.

Sr Carmela, a young parishioner at the time, remembers: "I was still a pre-adolescent when Sister Maria, along with other Assumption sisters, arrived in our parish. With her smile and determination, she welcomed us and encouraged us to love the Church and to be confident and responsible in our choices and actions. When we met her at the parish, we were very curious to know the reasons for her religious vocation; she spoke to us with

great joy about her encounter with the Lord and her ongoing dialogue in prayer, and with great simplicity she compared Piragineti (our parish) to Nazareth, telling us about Mary the mother of Jesus, a young girl who had welcomed the "Word of God into her life". Explaining her mystery to us, she gave us a vocational catechesis and challenged us with questions about our future and our dreams. When she learned later that I had chosen the Assumption as the religious family to which I would consecrate myself, she was very happy. She felt responsible for welcoming me and encouraging me, and for that I thank the Lord for having met her first as a Witness to the faith and then, for only a few months, as a sister in the same community.

One thing that always amazed me about her was how vividly she remembered every person she met during her years in our parish: she was always asking for news and praying for everyone."

Transferred to the Quadraro from Viale Romania, she was happy to take on the role of extraordinary minister of the Eucharist for the parish, but soon had to step down due to her state of health.

She had a constant and loving relationship with her family. She had the joy of visiting her parents in Canada, and spoke gratefully of the experience.

Among the sisters in the infirmary, Sister Maria was a lively presence: concerned about common prayer, she willingly took part in community meetings. When they were cancelled for various reasons, she complained and showed her disappointment.

She would spend long hours in her room knitting (wool was never enough for her!), making scarves, blankets and jumpers that she would give to her loved ones as gifts to make them happy. This work, which she did with dexterity, also served as therapy; she said that the doctor had recommended it to her. Gifted with an artistic sensibility, she combined colours skilfully, but when it came to measuring, she wasn't very precise, and sometimes her work wasn't really successful! But the

recipients of the gift were no less pleased by her attention and affection, and reciprocated with joy.

She listened to the people who approached her and took charge of their prayer intentions. She had a long and growing list of names that she presented to the Lord every morning.

Her company, in the solitude of her bedroom, was Radio Maria, an instrument of formation and information as well as prayer. She enjoyed everything and wanted to share her discoveries, but found few ears available to listen.

Her companion was also the suffering caused by her various pathologies. Yet she never complained and approached everyone with a smile.

The nurse in our community remembers Sister Maria as follows: "Losing Sister Maria was like losing an aunt dear to my heart; at the university I was taught that you shouldn't get attached to the sick, but with her, that wasn't possible; when I first arrived, to get to know her, she welcomed me with her big smile and gave me one of her shawls, which she had made in beautiful, bright colours. Sister Maria's days were spent in prayer, listening to the radio and knitting, which kept her awake all night, because when she started a job, she had to finish it. Sister Maria was a pure, simple and good soul. She didn't express herself with everyone, she was very reserved, but a special relationship was born between us; her faithful love for the Lord came out in our conversations; she offered him all her sufferings, repeating that her sufferings were little compared to what her beloved Jesus had suffered. She loved the Congregation, always meditated on the Rule of Life and had great respect for each person; she was above all a great woman of prayer, presenting all the evils that afflicted the world. Her memory will always be with us, because I know that she will continue to watch over us all. Thank you, Sister Maria, for the witness of life that you gave me". (Angèle)

During the summer of 2022, as her ailments worsened, Sr Patrizia carefully looked after her. In the end, the covid isolated her, worsening her condition. She had to be hospitalised.

She has left a great void among us and for the house staff, who loved her very much.

We know that, as a loving and caring sister, she continues to be close to us and to intercede for us.

The Quadraro community
(Original in Italian)

Sister Buenaventura (Bona) of the Blessed Sacrament

María Augusta Rocha

"To Jesus, through Mary"

- Born on 22 January 1921, in Ticuantepe, Managua.
- Entered the postulancy on 4 November 1949, in Managua
- Entered the novitiate on 29 December 1950, at Santa Ana
- 1st vows on 21 January 1952 in Santa Ana
- Perpetual vows on 3 April 1956, in Managua
- Died on 4 May 2022, in La Palmera

Bona, a cheerful sister, intelligent, pious, welcoming and very helpful.

A soul of prayer, in love with the Eucharist, the Divine Office, the Rosary and adoration.

She loved her family and was loved by them. She took an interest in the families of the sisters and prayed for them.

She gave her life generously in France, El Salvador and Nicaragua. She had a great affection for France and the communities where she lived. She talked a lot about this experience.

We were impressed by the serenity with which she had lost one of her eyes and accepted it as God's will. We never heard her complain. All the doctors, nurses and staff loved her very much.

She lived her long life with joy and generosity, celebrating her 100th and 101st birthdays with great joy and gratitude. The absence of her family at the celebration of her 100^{ème} birthday, because of covid, cost her dearly.

She was very affectionate, and at the end of her life, she demanded a lot of affection, taking our hand and stroking her face with it, without wanting to let go. Her end of life was very sweet and gentle. Little by little, she stayed in bed, entering into silence and serenity. Her agony was short and she ended her days in peace. On 4 May 2022 she went to meet her Lord!

Bona, enter the house that the Lord has prepared for you!

(Original in Spanish)

Sister Carmen Luisa de Jesús

María del Carmen Yrizar Olarte

"Dominis, tu scis quia amo te".

- Born on 1st September 1930, in Miranda de Ebro (Spain)
- Entered the postulancy on 15 June 1951, in Velazquez
- Entered the novitiate on 24 March 1952, at Mira Cruz
- First vows on 30 April 1953, at Mira Cruz
- Perpetual vows on 27 May 1956, Madrid-Santa Isabel
- Died in Riofrío on 13 July 2022

Carmen was born on 1^{er} September 1930 in Miranda de Ebro (Burgos). Her parents were fervent believers and she had three sisters and a brother.

She spent her life in the Assumption, studying at the Velázquez School from an early age.

After her initial formation - postulancy in 1951 in Velázquez, novitiate in 1952 in San Sebastián, first vows in 1953 in San Sebastián - she was sent as a nun to the Santa Isabel school, where she began her educational mission with the older sisters and very soon devoted herself to vocations ministry and formation to the religious life. In this way, she left her mark on the spiritual journey of many sisters in the apostolic schools of Valladolid and León, as well as the junior sisters in Olivos. Some of her pupils at the apostolic school in León still remember her with great affection.

From 1984 to 1996, the congregation asked her to take on the role of provincial bursar, which she did with great dedication, simplicity, unstinting service and availability to everything and everyone. She was not only bursar, but also formator of many people who followed in her footsteps in the provincial bursar's office.

For most of her life, she was superior and bursar in various communities.

Carmen was the great organist of the province for many years and trained many sisters in singing and liturgy, which she carried with her deepest being.

Carmen was a woman of deep faith, always seeking God's will with great simplicity; she gave peace and inspired it, in a continuous attitude of service to the congregation and the sisters, helping them materially and spiritually.

Carmen was a much-loved and much-appreciated sister, not only for her value, which was great, but also for her simplicity, her closeness and her availability.

From 1989, the congregation asked her to devote herself to the communities of older sisters; she created communities and infirmaries to make them happy by her closeness, her service, her joy and her sense of humour.

She arrived in Riofrío in 2008, already frail but with great vitality. It was a great grace for this community to live with Carmen and to benefit from a person who knew how to live all of life's events in depth and celebrate them with the music and liturgy that she prepared with great care.

Carmen's last years were difficult because her illness affected her speech and her ability to express herself. She bore her illness with great peace, without a single complaint, transmitting peace to all the sisters and to the house staff who cared for her with great affection.

We thank God for having given her to us, and now that she is in the Peace of the Lord, may she continue to sing beautiful melodies to the Lord of her life.

(Original in Spanish)

Sister Teresa of Jesus

Teresa Vijande Brees

"Ecce hostiam laudes - alleluia

- Born in Barcelona on 20 October 1934
- Entered the postulancy on 19 May 1954, in San Sebastian
- Entered the novitiate on 5 December 1954, in San Sebastian
- First vows on 19 December 1955, in San Sebastian
- Perpetual vows on 6 December 1961, in Santa Isabel
- Died in Riofrío on 15 July 2022

Teresa was born in Barcelona on 20 October 1934 into a very Christian family. From an early age, she suffered from a number of health problems. Her parents and siblings were always very protective of her, especially her brother Pablo, who was always a point of reference for her.

She received her first education in her own family, and used to say that she had been brought up to live uprightly, with love, but also with the strength to overcome all life's difficulties.

She was educated at our school in Pedralbes, Barcelona, and used to say that she had belonged to the Assumption since she was a child. She was also much loved and pampered at school, perhaps because of that.

She began her postulancy on 19 May 1954 in San Sebastian, and on 5 December 1954 she began her novitiate, also in San Sebastian. On 19 December 1955, she took her first vows in San Sebastián and, on 6 December 1961, her final vows at Santa Elisabeth, taking as her life motto: "Ecce hostiam laudes - alleluia".

In 1961, she was appointed to Santa Isabel: she remembers it as the happiest period of her life. It was the start of her teaching career. She spent most of her teaching years in national schools, which she ran with enthusiasm and joy, always rejoicing and telling wonderful stories about the children.

Teresa was a very courageous woman. Polio severely limited her movements, but that didn't stop her from working and getting around, even on a bicycle. She was always positive and dedicated to her work. She had many friendships and enjoyed life. She had a real passion for plants and flowers, which she looked after despite her difficulties. She was also passionate about music and liturgy, and because she had a beautiful voice, she enjoyed Carmen Luisa and her music rehearsals.

She came to Riofrío in 2009 to recover from a fall, as she had broken her femur and found it very difficult to walk, but as she had a good head, for several years she prepared the children for their First Communion; the children and parents still remember her. In recent years, she lost her faculties, but she became better and always thanked the sisters and the staff when they did her a favour.

The Riofrío community gives thanks to God for the years spent with Teresa and for the joy of knowing she was with the Lord she loved so much.

The community of Riofrío
(Original in Spanish)

Sister Ascensión de Nazareth

Ascensión Menendez Gutierrez

"Lord, I am not worthy"

- Born in Madrid on 12 May 1923
- Entered the postulancy on 7 March 1942, at San Sebastian - Miracruz
- Entered the novitiate on 24 February 1944, San Sebastian - Miracruz
- First vows on 8 June 1945, in San Sebastian - Miracruz
- Perpetual vows on 8 June 1948, San Sebastian - Miracruz
- Died in Collado Mediano on 26 July 2022

A sister tells us about Ascension's childhood, which she herself recounted with such simplicity. She was one of the children of the war, selected for Russia. She was already on the boat with her little dog when he ran off, and she followed him along the Gijón beach, losing herself in the immensity of the sand. The boat set sail and they stayed on dry land. Uncles took her in and she lived with them until she entered Miracruz at the age of 19.

Her first home was Santa Isabel, where she worked hard in the little school. She lived her mystery, Nazareth, with great intensity, in the simplicity of everyday life. She gave many sewing and embroidery classes, with a taste and finesse that she passed on to the young girls. Some of us knew her from schools in San Sebastian and Malaga, and we can say that her fragile figure conveyed strength and conviction in everything she did.

She worked in several other schools of the province, always very close to the children. In the mornings, she welcomed the little ones, whom she understood very well and with whom she played; she taught them games with great grace and dedication. After so many years in the Assumption, she also lived in the residences and insertions, adapted and gave herself to everything; she was not afraid of novelty or change of life, sometimes

with very different structures. She was the founder of El Palo, where she was known as "the divine feet" because she made sure that the poor received their pensions and that the children ate at the nursery, which is why she spent so much time helping them to fill in the paperwork.

At community meetings, she was always ready to show us a good time. She would put a handkerchief over her head, put on a grandma's apron and start her repertoire of poems and songs.

Ascensión was one of the first sisters to arrive when Collado was refounded. She was already old, but still very agile and loved walking and communicating with the people she met along the way. She always used to say that she was an "asphalt woman", and it was true; she was as free as a bird and wherever there were people, she crossed to talk with them and cars had to stop; she went out in all weathers, without a coat, without an umbrella.

When she realised that she could no longer go out, she assumed her fragility without a word of complaint, which made us see that Ascensión was much more than what we had known of her at first sight.

She went to the Father's house in silence and very peacefully, as if she was already expecting it and waiting patiently for the Lord to take her into his arms. At 99, her strength was gradually failing and she could no longer sing, which had been the easiest way to express herself in her last years, but her smile and gratitude remained with us.

The community of Collado

(Original in Spanish)

Sister María Antonia of the Blessed Virgin Mary

María Antonia Villanueva Forlier

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word".

- Born in Madrid on 15 June 1926
- Entered the postulancy on 15 June 1946, in Madrid-Santa Isabel
- Entered the novitiate on 2 February 1947, San Sebastian-Miracruz
- First vows on 8 June 1948, in San Sebastian-Miracruz
- Perpetual vows on 29 June 1951, in León
- Died in Riofrío on 28 July 2022

María Antonia was born in Madrid in 1926, the second of five children, three boys and two girls. Her family provided her with a careful but demanding upbringing, one of great rectitude, which was to mark her character throughout her life.

During the war, her family moved to Elizondo, a village in Navarre. Her father was a great help to the Mira Cruz community that had taken refuge there. This contact with the sisters made her feel the call to live a life dedicated to the Kingdom like them. She studied at the Assumption College in Santa Isabel, where she began her postulancy in 1946. In 1947, she went to San Sebastian for her novitiate and pronounced her first vows in 1948 and her perpetual vows in León in 1951, choosing the words that would guide her whole life: "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your Word".

She began her service in various school communities as a bursar and nurse.

But her heart beat for the missions, and in 1969 she was sent to Rwanda, where she remained until 1994; she was always very devoted, in difficult situations. One sister tells us: "She was an apostle, devoted to the Kingdom. One night in 1994, as she was taking the boarders out to safety,

she thought they were going to need something to eat and, between two rounds of fire, she went back to the school to get some food. This gesture of service left its mark on her personal history and that of Rwanda. The Rwandan sisters showed her great affection and gratitude through their messages and letters right up to the end, and the news from Rwanda filled her with joy and vitality right up to her last moments.

In 1994, she returned to Spain and was sent to Los Molinos and Cuestablanca, where she was much appreciated for her services and her constant availability with the car and all kinds of services. Teachers, parents and students all acknowledge that she was a gift to the school thanks to her help, understanding and affection.

In 2017, she was assigned to Riofrío and experienced this change with a great deal of anguish and pain, which did not prevent her from devoting herself with all her strength to the humblest tasks in the house; the testimonies of the staff are unanimous. A fall left her very limited and, from that moment on, her life in the infirmary was at first a great cross, but little by little she accepted it and mellowed, showing her gratitude and affection with expressions of tenderness and affection.

The Riofrío community is grateful to God for having given us María Antonia as a sister. We are now certain that heaven has opened its doors to her and that she is enjoying God's presence.

The Community of Riofrío
(Original in Spanish)

Sister Inmaculada María de Jesus

Ana María Ortiz Rodríguez

"In caritate perpetua dilexi te, ideo".

- Born in Madrid on 8 December 1925
- Entered the postulancy on 19 March 1945, Madrid - Santa Isabel
- Entered the novitiate on 4 February 1946, at Mira-Cruz
- First vows on 16 July 1947, at Mira-Cruz
- Perpetual vows on 12 October 1950, Madrid - Santa Isabel
- Died in Riofrío on 2 August 2022

Inmaculada was born in Madrid in 1925 into a very religious family. She had three brothers and sister: Fernando, Carlos and Ana, the youngest. Her brothers and sister loved her very much and protected her until she entered the Assumption after leaving Santa Isabel school. She spent the war in San Sebastian, in Usurbil, where her father died in 1936.

In 1945, she began her postulancy in Santa Isabel and, in 1946, her novitiate in Miracruz. In 1947, she took her first vows in San Sebastian and, in 1950, her perpetual vows, also in San Sebastian. Her great devotion was to the Virgin Mary, which is why she took the name of Inmaculada and the motto for her life: "In caritate perpetua dilexi te, ideo...".

In several schools of the province, she was responsible for helping the girls with their studies, looked after the sacristy and provided various services in the house. Between 1980 and 1986, in Olivos, she devoted most of her time to her elderly and sick mother.

Because of her physical and mental frailty, she was a much loved and protected sister in the congregation and in her family. Very spiritual, she shared her joys and difficulties with great simplicity, expressing her relationship with God, which was not always easy. She was passionate about the Divine Office, and when she could no longer follow it, she kept her breviary in her hand. She was very faithful to spiritual reading, and

always had religious and spiritual books in her hand. She really enjoyed Lectio Divina and, even though she found it difficult to express herself, she always enriched us with a few words.

She arrived in Riofrío in 1992, in good health, until she broke her femur in a fall. It was a very difficult time for her, and from then on she had to use a wheelchair. Gradually, she came to terms with her situation and continued to live a normal life, very happy to be part of the community.

The Riofrío community gives thanks to the Lord for Inmaculada's long stay among us and for the examples she leaves us.

The community of Riofrío

(Original in Spanish)

Sister Ana Josefina of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Josefina Marcello Alonso

"For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain".

- Born on 19 March 1930, in La Riera de Babia (León)
- Entered the postulancy on 12 July 1949, in Velazquez
- Entered the novitiate on 30 April 1950, at Mira Cruz
- First vows on 14 May 1951, at Mira Cruz
- Perpetual vows on 21 June 1954, at Mira Cruz
- Died in Collado Mediano on 3 August 2022

Ana was born in La Riera (León) 92 years ago. She was always very close to her family. She spent her summers in Babia with Visitación, her religious sister of the Assumption, her brothers and her uncle, and lived happily ever after... She made her novitiate and first vows in San Sebastian and her perpetual vows in Leon-Nava.

Her first destination, after studying education, was Malaga, where she began her career as an educator.

She spent some very happy years in León as headmistress of the teacher training college, with all the passion and enthusiasm that characterised her. She captivated the pupils with her human qualities and affection, which enabled her to have deep conversations. At the Ecole Normale, she had a great desire to form teachers capable of transforming society, and her great passion as a Religious of the Assumption attracted many young women to the religious life.

Former students remember her as a lively, enthusiastic, energetic and cheerful person. Her ability to make people feel welcome, and her broad smile meant that meeting her was always a source of joy. She was interested in everyone, their lives, their joys, their worries and their families.

In her classes, she was pleasant and very clear. It was a pleasure to listen to her answers to our questions, full of wisdom and applicable to life. If she arrived a little late or in a hurry, the sound of her rosary served as an "alert" to call us to order and to praise us for our good behaviour....

She was very apostolic. She never missed an opportunity to show her love for Jesus and his word, inviting us to prayer, adoration, the Office and to speak enthusiastically about religious life at the Assumption. All of us who were lucky enough to have her as a teacher formator will always remember her with great affection; thank you for always being there for us!

In 1970, she became a member of the General Council. Her love for the Congregation was obvious. For us Spaniards who came to the Mother House in Paris, she was at our service, always attentive to anything we might need.

Dear Ana Josefina, some of the many testimonies we have received speak of Mexico, your beloved Mexico. We can't mention them all here. What they do say is that you were an integral part of the history of salvation and the development of the province.

We, your community in Collado, appreciated your simplicity, your affection and your love for the Congregation right up to the end of your life. We thank God for having received you all these years as a sister and an example of life.

The community of Collado Mediano

(Original in Spanish)

Testimony of Sister Eugenia Acosta Amado :

My dearest Ana Josefina,

Now that you are already happy, contemplating the face of your Lord, "it is right and necessary" to thank God for your many years of life given to following Jesus at the Assumption, in the footsteps of Saint Marie Eugénie.

God's pedagogy and preferential love for the Province of Mexico were shown in your appointment as first Provincial.

It is "right and necessary" to thank you for your great personal gifts, offered for the life of the Assumption in the different regions of Mexico: you were able to understand quickly, in us young Mexican religious, the "hidden" richness of our identity. With a great deal of love and "gentle demands", you led us to stand on our own feet, especially some of us, like me, by giving us the means to make our personal talents flourish and to put them at the service of the Kingdom.

We are grateful to you for motivating us to root ourselves in our identity as Religious of the Assumption:

Integral formation training informed by the Gospel.

Formation in liturgy and the Divine Office.

A love for spiritual reading, through the lives of saints.

A taste for fraternal life.

Appreciation and love of working with the laity for the sake of the Kingdom.

The mark you left on us, sisters and lay people, continues to grow in this land, "beautiful Mexico, blessed land of Our Lady of Guadalupe", which was so dear to you. You summed it up with this phrase that you often repeated: "I'm more Mexican than you are, because I chose to live here and you were born here", you used to say with humour, and with the joy that characterised you.

Thank you, Ana, because you will continue to accompany with your affection and love the Assumption journey of the Province of Mexico-Ecuador, between shadow and light, a journey of hope founded on the experience of Saint Marie Eugénie de Jésus, at the Assumption "everything is Jesus Christ's, everything is of Jesus Christ, everything must be for Jesus Christ".

Sister Françoise Bernadette of Nazareth

Françoise Bouillot

"Ecce ancilla Domini"

- Born on 21 April 1934, in Epernay (France)
- Entered the postulancy on 11 July 1958, in Auteuil
- Entered the novitiate on 16 July 1959, at Auteuil
- First vows on 23 July 1961, at Auteuil
- Perpetual vows on 23 July 1966, Paris-Lübeck
- Died in Issoudun on 4 August 2022

Sister Françoise Bernadette Bouillot was born on 21 April 1934 in Champagne, a region universally known for its festive wine! She was the sixth of seven children. Her mother suffered greatly from the material difficulties that soon arose, and the children felt the effects on their health. At the time, large families received little recognition and even less support. Then came the Second World War, which involved the father of a family of seven children, left in the sole care of a mother in poor health. The children were scattered among families or care institutions, which

cruelly bruised their hearts. Françoise was sent with her little sister Elise to an institution. A few years later, the siblings were finally reunited!

In 1946, Françoise and Elise returned to the Marne. Later, Françoise worked first in a house run by nuns in Sézanne, then as a domestic worker in Chalons sur Marne and finally in Paris, where she met the Assumption!

By Sister Jeanne Maillard :

"One Sunday, at mass in the church of St Pierre de Chaillot, you learned, Françoise, that there was a home for young housekeepers in rue de Lubeck. It was run by the sisters of the Assumption. Meetings were held every Sunday. You went there for a few years and was very happy, feeling supported by the community. The desire to consecrate yourself to God germinated in your heart. And so it was that in June 1958, you entered the Religious of the Assumption and began your formation to Religious Life. In 1961, you took your first vows, and in 1966 your perpetual vows. During these 61 years of Religious Life, you were sent to several communities: Lubeck, Orléans, Auteuil, Grenade sur Garonne, Lourdes, Saint Gervais, Montpellier, before arriving in Issoudun in 2016".

From Sister Christa :

"The image that comes to mind when I remember Sister Françoise Bernadette is that of shady undergrowth covered with families of violets that perfume the atmosphere. The violets, in fact, do not impose themselves by their size or by any originality; they are not solitary, they happily grow and live as a family and although on the ground, they are very much alive."

I first met Sr Françoise at l'Assomption, when she was one of the joyful "junioristes" of the 72s... under the guidance of Sr Monique Elisabeth Donnet.

Twenty years later, we lived in community in Lourdes where Sr Françoise was at the service of the Assomption Center; her main task was to prepare the dining rooms and serve the meals, which she did with love and precision. A daughter of nature, she could be found in the garden, picking green beans without fear of getting sore, tending the flowerbeds in particular, watching for the persimmons to ripen so that she could pick them on time, and all the while humming all kinds of songs. She loved to

sing, especially at liturgical services, which she prepared with great care. She was a rather playful, fun-loving person, and sometimes surprised us with her unexpected reflections, idealistic perhaps, but often sensible.

Then we found ourselves in Orléans-Sainte Marie in a community of elderly sisters. As cooperative as ever, she kept the place tidy, without paying too much attention to the tiredness this could cause.

Finally, it was Issoudun, where she was to live for six years. It was rare to find her at the end of the phone during the day, as she visited the Residents, pacing the corridors and floors; she had a certain concern for anyone who might be in need of help or consolation. This could irritate us during our community meetings, but for her it was "charity". Our sister Yohanie Thérèse, who was very ill, was always welcomed and understood by Sr Françoise at any time, even during the covid; she was her Angel!

Although the family suffered greatly in its early years due to the dispersal, it did not miss family affection afterwards: the telephone made it possible and nephews and nieces did not look at the distance that separated them, and visited her, bringing her little sister Elise.

One of her last joys was surely the diocesan pilgrimage from Berry to Lourdes, which she made in July 2018. Sr Françoise was faithful to the daily rosary before the grotto in Lourdes on KTO, but this week of pilgrimage was a profound grace, a great joy. And of course, the sisters of the Lourdes community came to meet her during the processions and elsewhere.

As was the case for many of us, covid invited us to Issoudun, to the Ehpad where we were all very close. Visits were often forbidden. Fortunately, the telephone provided a solution.

This time of confinement allowed me a long period of dialogue with Françoise. Every morning, I would follow the Pope's Mass, remembering his short but always profound homily, and in the morning I would call Françoise and tell her what the Pope had said; I felt she was very receptive; it did her good. I felt she was very receptive; it did her good. One day, I remembered something she said to me when we were living in Lourdes, and I quote: "Ah, you know, I wonder if I really have faith?" The

Apostle Saint James has the answer: ch 2 v22 "Man is justified by works and not by faith alone. »

From Sr Françoise :

"In every place and in every circumstance, you always showed a great spirit of faith. Your welcome, your smile... Your willingness to be of service, to start again what had just been done in vain; you never wanted to disturb. Your strong apostolic zeal, nourished by your Eucharistic life; your enthusiasm for visiting isolated people and the sick; your joy in taking part in meetings of the Evangelical Service for the Sick...

You were attentive, close to those in need, you loved the residents, you called them by name, they trusted you, you sometimes became their confidante.

You loved to sing and to help us sing... the Lord had really given you a beautiful little voice to praise Him with.

You marvelled at the beauty of creation, at the flowers you loved to cultivate and care for so that others could enjoy them and praise the Creator with you.

These echo what we have shared with you, and we say THANK YOU for your faithfulness, made up of poverty and patient, trusting abandonment. Your patient listening to everyone, especially the little ones, bringing them comfort, even by your mere presence.

"You loved your community, each of your sisters. "Françoise Bernadette of Nazareth".

"You have incarnated your name well, under the protection of St Francis of Assisi, of the little Bernadette of Lourdes, in a humble and hidden life at the service of your brothers and sisters".

From the side of the One you loved, sought and followed, don't forget us, and teach us to repeat with you, in all confidence, the words of St Marie Eugénie, whom you loved so much:

"It is God who guides all things, and never has a more loving or wiser hand guided our destinies".

A-Dieu, Sr Françoise...

From sr Geneviève :

I lived close to Françoise in Issoudun, where she arrived a few months after me and died a few days after I left.

"I remember one All Saints' Day when she was unable to take part in all the services, as she did at the Assumption, and we got together in the afternoon to sing and pray together the hymns, antiphons, Te Deum, responsories and Tropaire: "He comes singing, the people of the saved... let her sing now". It was a great joy for her and for me!

Every week, we would take time to share the Sunday Gospel, and often Françoise would start by saying: I haven't found much to share, and then she would always express something very profound, very spiritual, which helped us to pray, to penetrate the spirit of the text. She was very humble.

Above all, I want to share the last moments I spent with Françoise. After spending nearly 3 months in hospital in Issoudun, Françoise came back to the Ehpad; it was July, it was very hot, despite the efforts of the staff to relieve her, air her out, etc. On the last Sunday, Françoise seemed to be absent... Several times, I ran cool water over her forehead, hands and arms; she didn't react at all, seemed unconscious, asleep; it was Sunday evening, I was leaving the next day for my retreat, and I thought I wouldn't see her again! In the evening, I went over to say goodbye to her, to pray with her and, as she liked to pray the rosary with KTO in Lourdes, I said about ten rosaries very softly, very slowly, so as not to tire her; at the end of the tenth "Hail Mary", Françoise opened her eyes, looked at me with a smile, recognised me, she was conscious; I told her I was going to Lourdes, that I'd pray to Our Lady of Lourdes and Bernadette with her and for her, and I started a second ten-odd rosary beads. She wanted to say "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us" (even though she'd hardly spoken for weeks), but she was getting tired, so I stopped. " She died within the week. It was Mary who brought us together one last time. Deo Gratias!

From Sr Anne after her death :

"We do not forget Françoise Bernadette, who passed among us doing much good with gentleness and a smile, cf Acts 10:38, Jesus of Nazareth, who passed by doing good... (Peter's speech to Cornelius).

Sister Geneviève Lory

(Original in French)

Sister Beatriz de l'Incarnation

María Teresa Hernández Hernández

"The Word became flesh

- Born on 7 August 1922, in Las Palmas (Gran Canaria)
- Entered the postulancy on 19 March 1942, in Santa Cruz de Tenerife
- Entered the novitiate on 2 February 1943 at San Sebastian - Mira Cruz
- First vows on 13 April 1944, San Sebastian - Mira Cruz
- Perpetual vows, 13 April 1947, Santa Cruz de Tenerife
- Died on 12 September 2022, in Málaga - El Olivar

Beatriz (María Teresa) was born on 7 August 1922 in Las Palmas (Gran Canaria). She had two brothers. Her mother, Doña Concha, passed on her great sensitivity and dedication to those in need, so that Beatriz always tried to help and be there for everyone, with discretion but with the right words.

Beatriz began her educational work as a teacher in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, an activity to which she devoted herself with great dedication and skill. She has also worked in Santa Isabel, Cuestablanca, Gijón and finally Tegueste.

She also answered the province's call to accompany the juniors and pre-postulants to Olivos. She was superior in Granada. A sister who lived with

her in this community tells us: "I met Beatriz in the 70s in Granada, where she was my superior. I had just arrived from El Salvador to take my final vows. Those were difficult years, the last years of Francoise, when social revolt was the order of the day, the faculties were almost always on strike and we students had to fend for ourselves. A few years ago, I met her again in El Olivar, where she had just arrived from Tegueste, after many years spent there, close to young people, so many people, and 'loving our times'. When I returned from the liturgy session in Auteuil in 2016, one of the activities we proposed as part of the transmission of the session was a walk in pairs (the Emmaus Way). I did it with Beatriz, and I was deeply impressed by her incredible simplicity, lucidity and humility (...) I was able to see her finesse of mind, and her enormous capacity to remember (go through the heart) the events of her life.

Thank you, Beatriz, for your long life, for your intelligence, your openness to the contemporary world and your closeness to young people during the years when you were a teacher.

Another testimonial sums it up: "A great educator. She combined firmness and uprightness with closeness and attention to each individual. Her smile, peace and affability won over the pupils at the school. At Tegueste, she spent a number of years devoted to young people, working with groups and supporting them in their vocational training. She was a religion teacher at the state school. She enjoyed communicating with many people on the Internet, and she also used this channel of communication to comment on the psalms. She loved collecting stamps. She had great lucidity, simplicity, humility and gentleness in her dealings with her brothers and sisters, a reflection of her relationship with God".

Her last destination was El Olivar: she arrived there at the age of 96, fully lucid but physically very diminished. The change was very difficult for her: it was like being locked up in a home for elderly and sick nuns, with no activity except for her computer, thanks to which she maintained apostolic contact with her family, friends, former students and the people of the parish of Tegueste. Right up to the end of her life, she retained a sense of religion and prayer; the community, and also the nurses, witnessed her total devotion to the Lord and her docility: "During the morning bath and at bedtime, she always prayed Psalm 22, so I also prayed with her", one of the nurses told me.

The celebration of his hundredth birthday, in the summer of 2021, was a great joy. His sister-in-law and several of her nephews and nieces came from the Canary Islands. After a beautiful Eucharist of thanksgiving, we went up to the porch, where her family and the community prepared a snack-dinner, complete with decorations and a birthday cake. She enjoyed eating the cake (even though, as a coeliac, she was only able to eat a little), and above all she was radiant when she saw her family and the community around her. She looked so much younger...

Beatriz slowly faded away; in the last few months, she had become unable to walk or leave her room, even in a wheelchair. When we saw her so exhausted, we took her to hospital, where we were told that she was in the final hours of her life. We were nevertheless able to accompany her for three days. And she fell asleep peacefully in the Lord.

We thank God for having lived with Beatriz, for having seen her decline physically while her heart grew in fidelity, love, dedication and interest for the congregation and for each sister in her community.

The Good Shepherd will make her rest with him in endless happiness.

The community of El Olivar

(Original in Spanish)

Sister Maria Nélia of the Eucharistic Heart

Maria de Souza

"The Lord is my strength

- Born on 4 November 1921, in Inhauma - Minas Gerais (Brazil)
- Entered the postulancy on 30 November 1949, in Rio de Janeiro
- Entered the novitiate on 26 March 1951, in Rio de Janeiro
- First vows on 17 April 1952, in Rio de Janeiro
- Perpetual vows on 30 May 1955, São Paulo
- Died in Brasilia on 19 September 1992

Sr Nélia (Maria de Souza) was born and brought up in the countryside, she understood the art of gardening and growing plants, and gave herself to it with joy. She was very good at handicrafts, sewing, cooking and preparing meals. In all the communities - Rio, São Paulo, Itapaci, Sítio Betânia and Brasília - she took on these tasks and trained the staff with a great sense of education. She liked everything to be done properly. She worked in catechesis with children and disadvantaged families, introducing them to the Christian life. Everyone has fond memories of a sister who was a friend and teacher, and we are eternally grateful to her.

Wherever she went, she made her mark with her serene and firm way of being and acting. A person of faith, energetic with herself, she always remained faithful to prayer, the Eucharist, the Office and her love for the Congregation. She took an interest in the Assumption journey, even at an advanced age.

Right up to the end of her life, she had a great affection for her family, whose birthdays she remembered and reminded them with great lucidity.

She marked us all as a person who spoke little, but with great wisdom. Discreet, simple, attentive to the needs of others and respectful of differences, she had a good sense of humour that reflected her perception of reality and her understanding of people.

Sister Nélia received many blessings throughout her life and one of the greatest was her centenary, which we celebrated in Brasília with the sisters of the province and their families. It was an unforgettable moment of great joy and fraternal communion.

She left a testimony of a life dedicated to service. She intercedes for us all before the Lord, who is her stronghold.

The Brasília Community
(Original in Portuguese)

Sister Nidia del Socorro of Christ

Nidia Delgadillo Bermudez

"Yes"

- Born on 30 October 1936, in León (Nicaragua)
- Entered the postulancy on 14 August 1964, in Paris-Lübeck
- Entered the novitiate on 6 August 1965 in León (Spain)
- First vows on 5 August 1966, in León (Spain)
- Perpetual vows on 11 December 1971 in Guatemala City
- Died on 22 September 2022, in La Palmera (Nicaragua)

The Lord took her on 22 September 2022 and she gave her definitive "Yes", sealing the Covenant for eternity.

Nidia was a very sincere sister, full of good qualities. Strong and humble, she never held a grudge or cut anyone off. She easily forgot about quarrels.

A person who was free to express what she thought and felt. Independent.

Highly intelligent, she put her knowledge and professional training to good use.

Benevolent and close to the poor, generous.

Contemplative and profound. She loved and cared for nature and showed an attraction for Carmelite spirituality.

An artist, she expressed her art through drawings, paintings, poems and had a particular interest in symbols.

She lived her life as a sister without discrimination, with a special concern for the most vulnerable. She was particularly close to simple people.

Her former pupils remember her as someone who was able to overcome the rejection she suffered when she replaced another sister, who was much appreciated, and who was able to offer them her wealth and gifts many

years later, when they sought her out; she then gave them a great deal for their lives.

In her passion for the Kingdom, she gave herself without measure to the poor in the dispensaries of Tactic and Lechecuagos, with a care that made them more worthy; she also devoted herself to the liberation of women and the poor, from a perspective of gender equality. She worked to educate women and men to overcome the androcentric and macho mentality, with a view to building an equitable and inclusive society based on the Gospel. This seed has been sown in El Salvador, Guatemala, Ecuador and Nicaragua. As a woman, a religious and a Christian, she has contributed to the network of women against violence.

She devoted the last years of her life to this network and to the women deprived of their freedom in Granada's "La Esperanza" prison. The themes addressed were gender issues and women in the Bible. She celebrated Women's Day, Easter and Christmas with them.

She was very attached to her family, who took to heart the fact that she was the eldest of her brothers and sisters, and was the one who always brought them together. At the end of her life, she was surrounded by the affection of her siblings, nephews and nieces, especially her sister Rosario, who spent time with her in her final year.

At the Eucharist celebrated on the occasion of her funeral, a former pupil, a representative of the women's network, who had been marked by her life, shared her testimony, and it was Nidia herself who spoke among us, as writings from her spiritual experience were read, including one entitled "I am thirsty", in union with Christ in the pain and suffering of humanity. Moved by Mary's "Yes" in the discovery of her vocation, we read how, according to her, the Mother of God taught us to unite ourselves to Him in the Covenant, going beyond palpable certainties and transcending, as at the Assumption, the emptiness that God alone fills.

(Original in Spanish)

Sister Joseph of Compassion

Taeko Fujii

"It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me".

- Born in Osaka on 10 February 1932
- Entered the postulancy on 7 October 1954, at Val Notre Dame
- Entered the novitiate on 11 June 1955, at Val Notre Dame
- First vows on 14 August 1956, at Val Notre Dame
- Perpetual vows on 8 September 1961, in Sumoto
- Died on 18 October 2022, in Minoo

God was faithful and merciful in the life of Sister Joseph Emmanuel of Compassion. She was born on 10 February 1932 in Osaka, Japan. She celebrated her 90th birthday this year.

Sister Joseph Emmanuel and Sister Maria Akiko were the first Japanese sisters of the Assumption. They braved a long journey and received their initial formation in Val Notre Dame, Belgium, where they took their first vows. During her 66 years of religious consecration, she was a dedicated educator and was headmistress of Seibo Hishoten Gakuin High School for many years. She was one of the first sisters of the Sumoto community, where she took her perpetual vows. Faithful to her word, the word engraved in her ring, "It is not I who live but Christ who lives in me", she faithfully followed Jesus, her beloved, and served him generously. Even when her physical decline became very evident, she remained a joyful and hopeful presence. In the last years of her life, she was part of the Nishinari community before returning to Minoo. She continued to be a serene presence in the community, creating artistic works such as magnificent origami. Her final years at the Graciya residence were marked by serenity - a quiet, unshakeable religious presence, a source of true trust in a faithful God.

It came to full life on 18 October, the feast day of Saint Luke, the evangelist. The Gospel of that day said: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into

his harvest". As a joyful worker devoted to God, we entrust Sister Joseph Emmanuel to the love of the Father, the grace of his Son and the power of the Holy Spirit. She will surely continue to intercede for us and our Congregation in eternity. Thank you, our dear Sister Joseph Emmanuel. Please pray for us.

(Original in English)

Sister María Olegaria of the Blessed Sacrament

María López Ruiz

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord"

- Born on 21 March 1925, in Fuengirola (Spain)
- Entered the postulancy on 25 October 1944, in Malaga
- Entered the novitiate on 27 April 1946, San Sebastian
- First vows on 11 October 1947, in San Sebastian
- Perpetual vows 15 September 1952, Barcelona
- Died in Málaga - El Olivar on 20 October 2022

Sister María Olegaria (María López Ruiz), born in Fuengirola (Málaga) on 21 March 1925, was the second of five children. She was 12 when her mother died at the age of 28, leaving behind a 14-month-old daughter. Her mother's family looked after the three youngest children; she and her brother Antonio stayed with their father in the countryside.

No sooner had she taken her final vows that Olegaria was assigned to Montpellier. She then went on to Cannes, Forges and Orléans-Saint Aignan. In total, 41 years in France.

She has always lived very happily, recognising the providential presence of God the Father in her life. In personal encounters, she often recalled the difficult times she had gone through since her childhood and early youth, and always ended in the same way: "But I was very happy because I felt that God was with me and he always gave me people to help me". She always expressed the same thanksgiving for her vocation and that of her brother

François, an Augustinian Recollect, to whom she had always been very close spiritually. Her confessor had directed her to the Congregation and she went to Malaga where she did her postulancy.

She kept a wonderful memory of the 41 years she spent in various houses in France, where she worked tirelessly in the service of the Congregation: looking after the boarders in the dormitory and on feast days, cooking, gardening, looking after the elderly sisters. Right up to the end of her life, she really enjoyed manual work, always wanting to be useful. God gave her the grace to find her own spiritual path. She told us countless anecdotes that happened because of her French, which she continued to use right up to the end, speaking in Spanish.

On her return from France, from Orléans, and after visiting her family in Marbella, she came to Cuestablanca, where she took up cooking admirably, as she had a talent for everything, especially pastry-making.

The sisters in Cuestablanca remember her: "Olegaria arrived in Cuestablanca accompanied by Rosario Cubillo, who was the provincial at the time, and she had to brush up her Spanish after 41 years in France. She was very busy with the community's kitchen, garden and orchard, and took particular care of the elderly and sick sisters. She was attentive to every detail of the infirmary, especially during the time of Elisa Masfarré.

She was a sister who was faithful to our spiritual life and very keen to understand what she was reading and, if she didn't, she would ask questions. She was a very intelligent and delicate person who, with her artistic talent, made the characters from the Gospel, her famous knitted figures, which we all received as gifts on many occasions. She had an Augustinian brother who came to visit her and enjoyed the community. She began to have lung and heart problems and needed more care and more hours of oxygen. All this led to her being sent to El Olivar".

Her last stop, in 2018, was El Olivar. She arrived already very weak, with heart and lung failure, but that didn't stop her from working constantly, making scarves, aprons, dolls, etc.... almost until the last day of her life. Working and praying was her life. She felt she couldn't waste a minute. She combined her working hours with listening to Radio Maria and reading the newspaper. An intelligent woman, when she didn't understand something she

had read, she didn't stop until someone explained it to her, because she was always self-taught, in work as well as in cooking and reading.

Here are some testimonies from sisters who lived with her:

"During the almost two years that I lived in El Olivar for health reasons, I was lucky enough to meet Olegaria, whom I'd met in passing when she was in Cuestablanca and I was in Vallecas.

Throughout this time, I was always amazed and admired that, despite her long stay in France, far from her homeland of Malaga, she had retained her Andalusian roots, which made her so simple, intuitive and endowed with a certain sense of humour, as well as a great affection for her family.

I was struck by her interest and openness to reality, to the modern world, to everything in general, and by her deep sense of belonging to the Assumption.

She was lively, pleasant, positive, hard-working (always creative in her work) and very kind. She never stopped praying; I believe that God loved to hear her prayers and accepted her discreet and humble service for the Kingdom. It is good to have known people like her who, like the mustard seed, small and humble, have an inner greatness that enables many people to benefit from their ability to create relationships.

Thank you very much, Olegaria, for your life."

Another sister writes: "Our sister Olegaria is already at the Assumption of Heaven. These days, I can't help but smile when I think of these anecdotes: the mid-morning croquettes during our year as postulants. When we lived together... always on the lookout. I loved seeing her in the chapel with her Rule of life, the Kempis and her rosary. The care with which she knitted her little things for each sister. My mother keeps them at home. Her stories about Forges I thank God once again for all the fidelity I have seen and continue to see in my older sisters. Words are superfluous because Life speaks. Thank you, Teo, for taking care of her. Thank you to the care team for taking care of each and every one of them.

Her desire was to love God and the sisters, because she considered that community life, although difficult, was the most important thing, "because together we receive from God and go to God. Like the spokes of a bicycle, we must be united to Christ, to propel one another".

Her heart was weakening rapidly, and the suffocation was causing her great distress. On the morning of the 20th, we took her to the hospital to see if her breathing could improve. At midday, in the hospital observation room, her condition began to deteriorate very rapidly, she lost consciousness and was no longer reacting; we were authorised to take her home and, at 9pm, she left without suffering, without suffocation, peacefully.

Her nephews and nieces, who visited her regularly at least once a month and whom she loved dearly, were very close to her during her stay in Malaga, and especially during her last days.

She is in the Father's house, with her mischievous smile, her crochet needle, her wool, her newspaper and above all her constant prayer for everyone.

The Community of El Olivar

(Original in Spanish)

Sister Agnese Maria of the Good Shepherd

Rita Mingoli

"Doce me facere voluntatem tuam" - Teach me to do your will

- Born on 18 May 1923, in Livorno
- Entered the postulancy on 19 March 1947, in Rome - Viale Romania
- Entered the novitiate on 5 October 1947, Rome - Viale Romania
- First vows on 8 October 1948, in Rome - Viale Romania
- Perpetual vows on 15 June 1952, Rome - Viale Romania
- Died in Rome- Quadraro on 26 October 2022

Sister Agnese's smile and tenderness have touched the hearts of many generations.

Faithful spouse of Christ, in love with the Gospel and the liturgy.

She worked in the bursar's office in various houses in the Province: Viale Romania, Padua, Como. At Quadraro, she worked with the provincial bursar, Sr Dina. Available, precise and meticulous, she carries out her work with serene dedication.

A woman of prayer, faithful to prayer, spiritual reading and dialogue with her superiors, with whom she maintained a respectful and trusting relationship.

She said that in her prayerful relationship with the Lord, she had had periods of consolation, of special graces, and that she longed for them. In fact, especially in the last period of her long life, she complained of no longer finding him, of shutting herself away in silence and aridity. Attentive to people, she cultivated friendship, seeking and giving affection, which she said she had missed in her lonely childhood. Sincere, straightforward and gifted with a sense of humour, she also knew how to smile at herself and her frailties, which she never hid

In Rome, her nephew Claudio was very attentive to her, visiting her and bringing delicious doughnuts for the community.

She walked slowly, always punctual, and took part in the common prayer. When she passed by the painting of Mother Maria Eugenia, she would stop for a moment and look up; it was clear that there was a good understanding between them!

Over the last few weeks, her skin had become very delicate and cracked, causing wounds that made her suffer, and it was clear on her face, but she wasn't complaining.

She would smile at anyone who came up to her to say hello.

Sr Dina remembers:

During the year I taught at Viale Romania 1991-92, Sr. Agnese served the Lord in the administration of the school and I was her express courier, as I transported to Quadraro, for Sr. Berica, considerable sums of money in cash, which she entrusted to me each time, saying: "Don't forget, try not to go on holiday!" I lived with Sr. Agnese in Como for a year in 1998-99, it was the year of her 50 years of vows, on 8 October, which, that year, we celebrated in community with great solemnity, but without too many people around. Here too, Sr Agnese served the Lord in the administration of the school, with

the help of an external professional to keep the accounts and salaries, as well as active participation in the Finance Committee made up of some parents and the President of the students

She had a simple, affable and cheerful way with the people who passed through the administration every day, and never failed to be attentive and supportive of people who were less well-off or going through a period of economic hardship.

Following Sr Berica's illness and death, I was sent to Rome, to the Provincial Economat, but our contacts always remained active because we were dealing with the same things and the process of recognition of Equal Schooling was beginning in Como... In the meantime, she tried her hand at learning and using the computer, to the point where she became something of a wizard with Excel. She used to make spreadsheets for everything... but even today you can still find her inevitable scraps of paper, scattered in every drawer, register and file, where she still wrote everything down by hand... and which, I told her, would have delighted the finance police if they had come to do an audit!... And she laughed!

In 2001-2003, a succession of illnesses due to heart problems led to her being fitted with a pacemaker, and the consequent decision to transfer her to Rome. I went to Como to work in the administration of the school while continuing my service at the Provincial Bursar's Office. So Sr Agnese was sent to the MME Community to help me serve the Lord at the Provincial Economat.

I officially named her "my secretary", asking her to check correspondence, sort papers and documents, look after "my chair" because you never know... and work with Rag. Panizzoli, to whom we had entrusted the management of tax and administrative procedures and accounting in my absence from the Provincial Economat.

Sr Agnese continued day after day, with perseverance and meticulousness, to take care of the little things that had been entrusted to her, the results of which we never see, except the satisfaction of a job well done: "We have done what we had to do. We are not useless servants" ... but precious in God's eyes.

Every time I went down to Rome it was a party, she even dusted off my 'armchair' to show me that she 'wanted' it so that no one else would use it and

take my place! We laughed a lot... when she could still hear and understand what I was saying, often responding to a provocation she threw at me.

It's not easy to cope with the fiscal and economic problems of living 600 km away, especially when you have to search for old documents and papers, spending your nights and days in the dusty papers of the archives. We also had our disagreements, because she sometimes went beyond what was asked of her... she would put away and throw away documents just because "they were old", which made me shake my head every time!

In 2014, I was once again sent to Rome-MME. She was 91 years old, and her strength was diminishing, but the desire to serve and help was still alive and burning in her. Agnese continued to serve the Lord with me at the Provincial Economat as best she could; her memory was beginning to fail her. Sometimes she would say to me: "It's a long way down the corridor... I often have to stop and sit down before I get here". But it was never with sadness or resentment, but only with the awareness that her age was advanced and that she could no longer ask of her body what it could no longer give her: agility and speed, even if she did everything she could to keep her body agile.

In fact, she only used the wheelchair for the last four months of her 99 years of life; until July 2022, she continued to walk, with her quick little steps, using the walker!

From 2015 to 2018 I received the service of communion, as superior of the MME community. Sr Agnese loved the sisters of her community and always tried to forgive, trying every day to look at the sisters with new eyes and a new heart.

Agnese loved the community meetings, even if she felt little or nothing, especially the Lectio sharing. She, who could no longer read or scrutinise the Scriptures, drank and was nourished by what the sisters shared, by what they had rediscovered, by the information, even historical or cultural, that deepened the texts she could no longer access because of her bad eyes. She collected the "crumbs" that fell from the Table of the Word of the Sisters to make them the nourishment of her heart-body-life.

Sr Agnese often told me about her sufferings, her inner loneliness, her fear of meeting the Lord because she was afraid of not having asked him for forgiveness for all the evil she might have done: the theology of fear won out

over that of mercy, but it was enough to remind her that the Good Shepherd carried her in his arms and loved her as she was to reassure her and make her leave more joyful and full of hope. Another of her great fears was dying alone... "At the moment of my death, I would like you and Sr Egle to accompany me in prayer, so that I am sure I will not be afraid".

The Lord thought differently, just as the Good Shepherd, when he found his lost sheep, wanted to meet it, in the middle of the night, and meet it "face to face", just the two of us, in an infinite embrace".

Thank you, Agnese, for your simple, discreet and faithful fraternity. Your sisters remember you with grateful affection.

Sr Dina and the community of Roma - Quadraro

(Original in Italian)

Sister Mary Fidelis of the Incarnate Word

Ana Maria Calvo Estrada

"Credo, Domine

- Date of Birth : February 24, 1946
- Entered the postulancy on July 2, 1963 in Herran, Manila
- Entered the novitiate on May 17, 1964 in Herran, Manila
- First Vows on July 27, 1965 in Herran, Manila
- Perpetual Vows on June 28, 1970 in Herran, Manila
- Died : October 31, 2021
- Word engraved in her ring : Credo, Domini

Sr. Mary Fidelis du Verbe Incarné was born Ana Maria Calvo Estrada on February 24, 1946 to Mr. Salvador Estrada and Mrs. Rosario Calvo Estrada. She was the eldest among 6 siblings, the only girl, with 5 brothers. She was one of the first graduates of Assumption College San Lorenzo. During her 57 years in Religious Life, she was assigned to several communities in the Philippines and was a missionary to Kenya and Tanzania in Africa in 1980-

1988 and 1992-1993, respectively. In the Philippines, she was assigned to Herran (5 years), San Lorenzo (5 years), Santiago (4 years), Cagayan de Oro (1 year), Bo. Obrero (2 years), Baguio (8 years). It was in Iloilo that she stayed the longest – 15 years, the first time and 4 years as a “balikbayan”. She was mistress of class, principal, professor of Theology, Headmistress, campus minister, Retreat facilitator and director, psycho-spiritual animator to Laity, Clergy, Seminarians and Religious. She was community superior in Baguio in 2011, then Iloilo in 2019 and was Provincial Councilor in 1997 and was elected as Provincial Councilor of the RA-Asia Pacific Province in 2022 until her passing on to greater life. More importantly, she was a mentor, a counsellor, a champion of causes that concern our country and the natural world as God created it, a mother, a Sister, a friend to many of us and a lover of God and of His creation.

True to her Word, the Word engraved in her ring, “Lord, I believe” she followed Jesus, her Beloved, passionately and faithfully and served him generously. Deep in her heart, she must have known that her time was coming and she was well-prepared for it even if we were not. Deeply attuned to God, she expressed several times that her only desire was to enter into God's plan fully and joyfully...to behold God who makes all things new! She said that we do not understand it now but God will reveal Himself beyond what we expect. Until the end, there was nothing but love and gratitude in her heart.

Last October 31, her last few hours on earth were filled with serenity and grateful surrender until she gradually breathed her last, quietly and peacefully, surrounded by her Sisters and her family. On the eve of the Solemnity of All the Saints, she passed on to fuller life and entered heaven for all eternity. She has now joined the Saints in heaven and I know that she will intercede for us constantly. In one of the Sessions she gave, Sr. Mary Fidelis has coined the word, **PhD** to mean, **Preparing for a Happy Death**. She lived what she preached. She has truly graduated to fuller life with flying colors. Mission accomplished. Sr. Mary Fidelis, we love you and we will surely miss you. Pray for us. Till we meet again.

Sister Lerma, Provincial of Asia Pacific

(Original in English)

Sister Catherine Savio of the Holy Family

Catherine MUREKATETE

"He lifts up the humble"

- Born on 26 May 1945, in Shyombwe Nemba (Rwanda)
- Entered the postulancy on 23 April 1966, in Birambo
- Entered the novitiate on 18 May 1967, in Birambo
- First vows on 23 May 1968, in Birambo
- Perpetual vows on 26 August 1974, in Kabuye
- Died on 10 November 2022, in Kabuye

As a child, Sr Catherine Savio received a good education from her Catholic Christian parents and teachers, who made her love God so much that she decided to give herself to him. She completed her initial formation to become a religious of the Assumption in Birambo.

In the different communities where she lived (Birambo, Mwezi, Higiyo, Kabuye, Rwankuba, Mukarange and Gikondo), Sr Catherine Savio Murekate gave of herself without counting the cost, especially in her long and perpetual mission as bursar and manager of the community. She was a gentle, calm and humble sister who loved work and the poor. She never complained, never dwelt on useless words, keeping an eye on everything and ready to brighten up the community with her humour. In her last days, the young women who watched over her heard her say with a smile: "We have abandoned ourselves like Peter". She was thinking of Jesus' words to his apostle Peter: "When you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will put your belt on you to drive you where you don't want to go..." (Jn 21:18).

As her mystery indicates, "He lifts up the humble", she believed in Jesus who takes care of her and, thinking of the way she served others rather than seeking to be served, she liked to repeat: "We are simple servants: we have only done our duty". (Lk17,10)

Sisters who knew her testify:

Sr M. Stéphanie :

I didn't live much with Sr Catherine Savio; she was a reserved sister; at the same time she knew how to converse slowly and kindly. She was a good bursar and a good catechist.

She was neat, tidy and patient. She gave herself to the bursar's office for most of her life, and knew how to look after her sisters.

Sr M.Claire Kambugu :

What I noticed about her was her respect for everyone. She was a compassionate sister who knew how to look after her sisters. A woman of action and prayer. She never complained.

Sr Agnès Eugénie :

Sister Catherine was a sister of natural simplicity and humility. A sister who did her work impeccably. She had an extraordinary capacity for fraternal relationships. A sister who cared for everyone. A sister who loved the bursar's office and fulfilled this service with passion. Simple service, without complaining.

Sr Annonciata :

I met Sr Catherine in my youth as a student at Ste Thérèse, which became the Centre d'Accueil Marie Eugénie. Sr Catherine was our bursar. She was a sister of remarkable delicacy. She looked after us well. She was like a mother to us. She loved to tell us stories with tenderness. We loved her very much.

When I became a sister, I was put in charge of the community bursar's office. She was an example to me of how to do my work with care and love. At the bursars' meetings, she explained everything to me and made me love this work, which she herself carried out with great care.

The last time I saw her she was seriously ill, suffering a great deal but silently, which touched me deeply. I often prayed the Rosary with her, and as soon as she saw me coming, she gathered her strength to pray with me, looking joyful despite her suffering. Sr Catherine Savio, thank you for your life.

Sr Colette:

Sister Catherine was my bursar at Rwankuba. She was a very generous sister, who took good care of the house and the sisters with a pronounced delicacy. She was gentle by nature. Umumararungu was a communicative woman. During her illness, she was silent, uncomplaining, surrendering herself like a lamb. In short, Sister Catherine left us a good example of simplicity, joy and work well done. May she rest in peace.

Mugisha James, her nephew:

Aunt Catherine Savio Murekatete loved everyone who came to her. She was a mother full of mercy for the young and the old, those she knew and those she didn't know. She knew how to cajole. She wanted to know if I'd eaten well, if I'd rested, if I'd slept well... One time I had a work assignment and she took such good care of the people who worked with me that they were amazed. Even when we children got into mischief, she knew how to correct us in a calm, gentle voice, because for her it wasn't a big deal. She was clean and tidy and taught us to do the same: clean/shine shoes, do the washing, wash and make herself/themselves beautiful. She did her job well and calmly. Aunt, rest in peace.

Dear Sister Catherine Savio, thank you for being our sister, our teacher and our friend. As you hurry to meet the one you have loved all your life, rest beside him, sing to him with all your heart, contemplate Jesus whom you have adored every day in the Eucharist. You are now with the Holy Family, contemplating the glorious face of Christ. I am not telling you that we are praying for you, but I am asking you to pray for us. May Jesus Christ, whom you loved, shower his blessings on the consecrated persons whose covenant you share, on the members of your family, their children and their friends, who accompanied you to your final resting place, through the intentions for the Masses of the month of November-December, celebrated in every community in your memory, until the day when we find you again in glory to sing the praises of the Most High, the Holy One for ever.

Testimonies collected by Sr Marthe Ntuyumve
(original in French)

Sister Emma Luz de Nazaret

Emma Luz Diaz Corea

"My food is to do my Father's will..." (John 4, 34)

- Born on 1er January 1940, in Chalchuapa (El Salvador)
- Entered the postulancy on 28 November 1967, in Guatemala City
- Entered the novitiate on 12 January 1969, in Guatemala City
- First vows on 24 June 1970, in Guatemala City
- Perpetual vows on 24 January 1976, San Salvador
- Died on 19 November 2022, in Santa Ana

Born on 1 January 1940, in the municipality of Candelaria La Frontera, department of Santa Ana - El Salvador.

She returned to the Father's house on 19 November 2022, in the community of Santa Familia, Santa Ana, El Salvador, province of Central America and Cuba, at the age of 82 and after 52 years of religious life.

She was a sister of deep prayer, she loved and appreciated the liturgy, she prayed with the psalms and appreciated them ; she often commented on what she discovered in the psalms, the liturgy of the hours, the Word of God. She said that in the psalms she found prayer for all the situations in which we and our people live. She took great care in preparing her prayer and spent long periods in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. She prayed with great affection and devotion for the Congregation, for La Madre and her Council, for our Province and our Provincial and her Council. She also prayed for the reality of the world, the country and the Holy Father.

She loved community life and when she recently had to adopt a sick rhythm, it was difficult for her, but she took it on patiently and conscientiously, offering it to the Lord. In the same way, when she was preparing the community meeting with another sister, she would say: "I can't help you any more", and it was the same for the liturgical life and the singing, which she loved so much. A woman of contemplative prayer,

she deeply appreciated and valued the grace of the sacraments. One day before her meeting with God the Father, I asked her if we could celebrate the anointing of the sick with the whole community of sisters in her room. She expressed her joy and said, "WHAT JOY... and ALL!"

A very fraternal sister, easy to get on with, very simple, she got on very well with everyone. With her family, she wanted to get to know all the new-born members. She was very devoted to pastoral work with adults, adolescents and children; in Nicaragua, Guatemala, Ecuador and in her native El Salvador, she is remembered with great gratitude. She was a sister who was available for whatever was needed.

When she was ill, she was able to suffer in peace, to embrace the cross, especially after the accident she had, without complaining, which totally changed her apostolic life; she underwent several operations and tried to help in every way she could. She never missed an opportunity to evangelise like St Paul... 1 Co 9, 16... "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" in order to bring people to God. From her sickbed, she showed great gratitude. A great apostle.

Ema left our hearts in peace; we remember her as a sister, simple, humble, affectionate, always smiling, warm in her welcome, always ready to serve, to help others, very close to people, with her slow pace to get everything done, with an "evangelical ingenuity, which is of God", with a joy that flowed from within and was contagious. She was capable of admiring nature and discovering the Creator. She lived a great fraternal love and a great love for the poor. She embodied the values of the Assumption in her life.

She loved community life; she loved sharing in community; she contributed with freedom, respect and spiritual depth. She was very charitable. She left her mark on many hearts, "the soul of God, for God, and for her brothers and sisters". I thank the Lord for having crossed my path with Ema, for she is a religious who has left an indelible mark on me. She chose her path well by consecrating herself to God at the Assumption, "Jesus was the centre of her life, patient..."

She had a great love for Sacred Scripture. She read it not just for pastoral work or prayer, but with the desire to know it in depth, to meditate on it,

and she spontaneously shared the spiritual dimension of the text and her desire to make it known.

She was a sister who was appreciated, loved and valued by the priests and the doctor who looked after her; she easily entered into conversation with them, asking them for news of their families and giving them books for spiritual reading.

Finally, she was "a true presence of God among us and for others".

Santa Familia Community, Santa Ana - El Salvador

(Original in Spanish)

Sister Dominique Mitsue of Mary Immaculate

Marie-Louise Manne

"Cum illo, omnia nobis donavit".

- Born on December 28th 1932, in Huy (Belgium)
- Entered the postulancy on October 28th 1951, at Val Notre Dame
- Entered the novitiate on July 2d 1952, at Forges
- First vows on October 25th 1953, at Val Notre Dame
- Perpetual vows on 1er November 1956, at Auteuil
- Died in Minoo (Japan) on December 4th 2022

Today we come together to celebrate the gift of life of Sr. Dominique Mitsue de Marie Immaculée to us in the Assumption and to the Church of Japan. Sr. Dominique was born Marie Louise Manne on December 28, 1932 in Belgium. This month, she would have celebrated her 90th birthday.

Sr. Dominique Mitsue had her initial formation in Val Notre Dame in Belgium where she made her First Vows on October 25, 1953. She made her Final Profession at the Mother House in Auteuil, Paris, France on November 1, 1956. She arrived in Japan as a missionary in 1958. During

her more than 60 years of living in Japan, she was known for her love and dedication to her students, knowing each one of them personally and giving each of them special attention. She was also in friendly terms with some parents. Even when she stopped teaching she maintained her contact with her students, meeting them at the convent, welcoming them regularly and making them feel at home. Even when her physical diminishment became very obvious and her memory started to fail, there were two things that she would always remember: she would insist on going to the train station thinking of meeting her students there and she would go to the Parish for the Masses there no matter what time of the day it is. She remained beautiful all throughout inside and out.

She passed on to fuller life on December 4, 2022, the Second Sunday of Advent. The word engraved in her ring, is “God who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Rom 8:32) Following the life of her Beloved, Jesus Christ, she spent almost all the years of her religious life in Japan until the end, giving her all to educate the students entrusted to her care. Now she is resting in peace in God’s loving embrace. Let us entrust her to the love of the Father, the grace of His Son and the power of the Holy Spirit. There in heaven, she will surely continue to intercede for us and our Congregation in eternity. Thank you, our dear Sr. Dominique Mitsue. Pray for us.

In this Eucharistic Celebration, let us celebrate her life, lived to the fullest in loving service.

Sister Lerma, Provincial of Asia Pacific

Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus

Thérèse Libert

- Born on 23 May 1929 in Le Portel, France
- Entered the postulancy (Augustines du Précieux Sang), in Arras, on 2 February 1962
- Entered the novitiate on 28 August 1962
- First vows on 28 August 1964
- Perpetual vows on 28 August 1970, Arras
- Died in Abbeville on 15 December 2022

Thérèse Libert was born on 23 May 1929 into a family of fishermen in the small port of Portel, near Boulogne-sur-Mer. She was proud to be "a daughter of the sea".

During the 1939-1945 war, like many of the region's inhabitants, she experienced the "evacuation": to escape the Germans, families left their homes. As she would later say, she knew what it was like "to no longer have a home, to sleep on the straw in the homes of strangers".

Small in stature but practical and active, she joined the Augustines du Précieux Sang in Arras on 2 February 1962. It was no doubt through the sisters working at the hospital in Boulogne sur Mer or at St Augustin's school that she came to know the congregation. She received the habit and began her novitiate on 28 August 1962. During her novitiate, she sometimes helped the less experienced novices with household chores, sometimes with a little roughness but with a good heart.

She took her first vows in 1964, on 28 August, the feast of Saint Augustine. She discovered the world of nursing while living in the community of La Varenne st Hilaire in the suburbs, where the sisters were at the service of a surgical clinic.

She studied nursing in Paris, at the Red Cross nursing school on rue des Plantes run by the Augustines de l'Hôtel Dieu de Paris. Like other sisters, she lived there during the week, but returned to the new community at 19 rue Saint Maur, where the congregation had opened a house for students and a

health centre. It is also the meeting place for the Catechumenate of the Diocese of Paris.

For several years, she provided home care in the Pas de Calais in Corbehem, where the Beghin sugar factory was based, and in Paris on rue St Maur. Then, from 1973 to 1979, she spent a long time in Solesmes in the North of France, still providing care and leaving a lasting impression on the local population.

Her health then required a period of rest and in 1981 she joined the community in the Brequerecque district of Boulogne sur Mer. From her Boulogne origins, she retained a lifelong devotion to Mary, praying the rosary. To the end, she was faithful to the recitation of the rosary at Lourdes.

Of a straightforward nature, sometimes a little rough, she was keen to help others but was sometimes demanding, particularly as she grew older.

Sr Thérèse discovered Normandy and the town of Coutances in particular when she worked for four years at the Foyer St Vincent, a home for the elderly. Then it was on to Lyon and the La Croix Rousse district, where she still works in home care.

From 1994 to 2003, she lived in Dunkerque, in the small local house near the sea, still for home care.

She had a great love for nature and flowers, meticulously tending the orchids, but could not bear anyone picking a flower from the garden, especially in Arras.

In 2003, Sr Thérèse arrived in Arras, first at the host community, then at La Procure, and finally at Bethany. Her eyesight was failing, but for a long time she refused cataract surgery. It was not until she was admitted to the Notre Dame de France nursing home in Abbeville that she accepted and regained her vitality.

At the time of the merger, Sr Thérèse added "de l'Enfant Jésus" to her first name; she was very fond of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. It was on 15 December 2022 that she was able to "meet" her, perhaps entrusting her with her words, which she did not share with us.

Sister Marie Françoise Bisiaux

(Original in French)

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