



Dearest Sisters,

Today, 30 December 2006, at 9,20 pm (local time), from the Divine Master community of Antipolo (Philippines), the Lord definitively called to himself our sister

SR. MARY PAUL – ZENAIDES LADESMA
born in Sorsogon (Philippines), on 14 July 1932.

Today's liturgy underlines an aspect which describes Sr. M. Paul well. *"In the great silence which embraces everything, while the night reaches the end of its course, your omnipotent Word, O Lord, descends from heaven, from his heavenly throne (Entrance antiphon).* The word, *silence*, characterized the life of Sr. M. Paul. She passed in our midst, filling the atmosphere with that silence savoured and assimilated in her meeting with nature which she contemplated, loved, respected.

Sr. M. Paul was accompanied by her mother to the Pious Disciples, newly arrived in the Philippines, lodged in the house of the Society of St. Paul. Indeed it was in the Pauline house in Pasay City near the parish entrusted to the Paulines, that she entered the Congregation on 25 January 1958 at 26 years of age. Zenaides, born in a family of profound Christian values, hails from Sorsogon in Bicol, a region in the Philippines which has given many religious and priestly vocations to the Church. From the very start, she was motivated by a strong love for Jesus Master and by the prospect of donating her life in charity and service.

In a small house rented near the vicinity of the Pauline house, in St. Scholastica street, Zenaides joined the first group of novices in the Philippines on 24 March 1960 and made her first religious profession on 25 March 1961. Her exposure to the Pauline communities has given a strong apostolic dimension to her formation. She made her perpetual profession in Divine Master Community in Antipolo on 25 March 1966. She fulfilled her mission in various SSP houses, as local superior on several occasions and, in these last years, in the workshop, in the tailoring department

In a spirit of great availability, she served the Congregation abroad: from 1981 to 1988 she was in Italy, in the houses directly dependent to the General Government namely, St. Peter's Souvenir Shop and in Camaldoli; from 1994 to 1998, she was in Boston (USA). She would write: *"I have resumed missionary life again here in USA after my mother has gone to heaven. I was warmly welcomed by the Superior and sisters. Since I have been used to an international community, I immediately felt at home. This is God's will that I be in this mission, and I am willing to give the best of myself in this missionary experience with generosity. I trust in the Lord and I ask him the grace to be steadfast in faith, hope and love. (to M. M. Lucia R., 3.3.1994).* Upon her return to the Philippines, her dedication was not diminished. *"I am grateful for your encouragement, remembrance and prayers for me. In the grace of God, I am happy and in good health, although growing old. In joy, I offer to God all that I can in order to do his will. (to Sr. M. Paola M., 13.9. 2002).*

Three years ago, she was operated and was diagnosed with cervical cancer. In October this year, it advanced and metastasized in the bones. Notwithstanding the discomfort and pain, Sr. M. Paul has continued to give a hand in the sewing department and to participate in community life. The sisters appreciated her serene and edifying attitude. In the presence of the community, she received the last sacraments yesterday, 29th December. Then came an unexpected massive gastro-intestinal haemorrhage which eventually led to her death.

Sr. M. Gemma Victorino, Vicar general, Filipina, affirms: *"The celebration of the 50th year of Foundation of the Philippine-Taiwan-Hongkong province was 'opened' in January this year with the departure for eternal life of two sisters. Today, the Lord also calls Sr. M. Paul Ladesma, seemingly 'to close' this Jubilee Year. Sr. M. Paul was a very dear sister, generous, full of life. As a young professed, I've always admired her as a "first class missionary": she would give herself completely wherever she was sent. Every time she would return to the Philippines for her vacation, she would give us a taste of the new recipes she learned and share with us the new 'discoveries' in the apostolate. She has always maintained her love for the youth and for children. Lately, apart from other apostolic assignments, she was also engaged in teaching catechism to the children in Antipolo. In a very recent telephone conversation with Sr. M. Francis, Provincial Superior, I was told that Sr. M. Paul wanted to "die while still in full activity." The Lord seems to have heard her prayer!"* We remain united to our dear sisters in the Philippines and we offer our prayers for Sr. M. Paul while we also ask her to intercede for new vocations with missionary hearts.

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