



Dear Sisters,

On June 21, 2023, in the Alberione Community of Guadalajara, Jal. (Mexico), at 7:30 AM, local time, the Lord found ready for the eternal wedding feast our sister,

**Sr. M. Teresita – Maria Herminia Lechuga Castañeda
born on July 7, 1935 in Durango, Mexico - Mexico.**

She was baptized on July 28 in the same year. In her family, she is the first-born, followed by four brothers.

Maria Herminia entered the Congregation on October 5, 1958, six years after the arrival of the first Sister Disciples in Mexico, who arrived in 1952. «*On August 4 (1952) four sisters departed from Genoa on the "Vulcania": Sr. Maria Cormariae Brugiolo and Sr. Maria Ignazia Bellagamba were destined for Mexico*» (Divin Maestro, August 1952). The other two sisters went to Canada.

The vocation of Sr. M. Teresita was born from the encounter with the sisters who collaborated in the Liturgical Apostolate. In fact, while visiting the Center in *Pasaje Catedral*, a sister speaking with her invited her to follow Jesus Master as a Sister Disciple. Teresita worked in the Mexican government offices. She was a good typist, a secretary who was well-qualified for her work. She accepted the challenge of the Word of the Lord, recognizing in this invitation the voice of the Divine Master.

On May 30, 1960, in Mexico City, she entered the novitiate and then made her religious profession on May 31, 1961. She made her perpetual profession on May 31, 1966, always in Mexico City.

Following religious profession, she used the gifts she received from the Divine Master in various services for the apostolate. At various times she directed the work in the embroidery workroom, in Mexico City as well as in Guadalajara (1961-1966); in the meantime she also dedicated herself to the study of Sacred Music at the National School of Sacred Music for Religious.

She was one of the first sisters to study music in the Province of Mexico, a gift she developed and shared for many years with the communities in which she lived. She collaborated in the Liturgical Center in Mexico and offered her service also at the Society of St. Paul. She was Novice Mistress from 1972 to 1973 and Regional Councilor from 1973 to 1975.

Her missionary heart led her to make herself available for a Congregational collaboration. She was in Rome from 1978 to 1989. During this time she studied for two years at the *Regina Apostolorum* School, aggregated to the Faculty of Theology of the *Antonianum*, for theological-pastoral formation. Upon completing the program of studies, she offered her service at the Secretariat of AISC (Italian Association of Sacred Music).

Upon her return to Mexico, she fulfilled the service of Local Councilor in the Casa Alberione Community (Guadalajara) and, from 1990 until the present, she worked in the Secretariat for the *Genesis* Program.

She also dedicated herself to writing the history of our Congregation in Mexico: an arduous task that Sr. M. Teresita carried out with much love to entrust the future generations with the testimony of what the Lord has done for us!

In general, her health was stable, but in March of 2021, due to osteoporosis and cartilage problems, she accepted to undergo right knee replacement surgery. In March of 2023, it became necessary to replace the prosthesis, and she finally began to recover, and to be able to put her feet on the ground! She was adequately assisted both in the hospital and in the community.

Surprisingly, on the morning of June 21, the superior of the community visited and spoke with her, she was doing well. While the community celebrated the Eucharist, she had her definitive encounter with the Divine Master at 7:30 AM, caused by an acute heart attack.

The sisters of the Province of Mexico are grateful for the witness of this sister, and they wrote: «She edified us with every gesture, especially in the silence and offering of her life for the healing of the priests that participated in the *Genesis* Program. In this delicate mission beside the priests, she reminded us of Mary at the foot of the Cross, to whom Jesus entrusted his beloved disciple. Her presence was discrete, reserved, contained and she inspired complete trust for the healthcare team and for the priests. They could trust completely in Sr. M. Teresita for her personal qualities and for the apostolic spirit with which she rendered the service entrusted to her».

She wrote to Sr. M. Paola Mancini, Superior General at the time: «*I am happy to be able to offer to Jesus each day my work for priests who continue to seek help in finding new light and strength for their ministry. I invoke the intercession of our sisters who preceded us and who are above in the Father's House*» (March 7, 1999).

From the Chapter Assembly in session, Sr. M. Sara Beatriz Serrano, Provincial Superior of Mexico, wrote: «The Disciples in Mexico give thanks to God for the goodness of the life of Sr. M. Teresita. Together we ask the Divine Master to accept the offering of her life, an offering that took place on the same day in which Sr. M. Bernardita Meraz Sotelo was elected our Superior General. We are certain that, at this moment in the history of the Congregation toward the Centennial, the intercession of the Community in heaven accompanies us to continue to be witnesses to his presence in the world».

We are sure that Sr. M. Teresita will fulfill the task we dare to entrust to her, together with the sisters already present in the Father's House: to continue to be a prayerful presence in Paradise for the sanctification of the Priests, especially for those who participated or are still participating in the *Genesis* Program.

S. H. Paola Mancini