

OBITUARY OF SR. MARIA LEONOR LORENZO, OSB

June 12, 1920 - October 31, 2011



Maria Leonor was the only child of Aquiles y Leonor Lorenzo, both natives of Uruguay. She was born in Concordia, Argentina on June 12, 1920. She did not grow up in a catholic ambience. Her father left the Catholic faith to become the secretary general of the Socialist Party . Her father was a lawyer. He was known for his generosity especially to the poor who could not pay to defend their cases. Her mother was a teacher. She was also known for her kindness. Whenever the helpers got sick she was the one who brought them food. Maria Leonor inherited these traits of generosity and kindness from her parents.

At the age of five, her parents gave her a private tutor to study English. At the age of fifteen she was again given other private tutors so that she could learn French and Italian. At the age of 19 she asked to be baptized as a Catholic and received her first communion. Her father was Catholic convert before his death. Upon the death of her father, she used the house to gather ladies interested in knowing more about the faith.

Ma. Leonor held a doctorate degree in Philosophy and a licenciante degree in Theology. Her field of concentration was the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. She taught Philosophy and Theology in Latin and Spanish at the Catholic University of Argentina and the Jesuit-run Catholic University of Salvador.

In 1946, Maria Leonor Lorenzo made a private consecration to God so that she could dedicate the rest of her life to pious activities. She became a postulant for nine months at the Congregation of the Divine Master but left the order to initiate the foundation of a Pious Union. In 1956 she founded the **BENEDICTINAS DE LA EPIFANIA** in the city of Sta. Fe, Argentina and became its head for 31 years. In 1961 she decided to move to Buenos Aires for further contacts with young ladies and to be nearer the abbey of the Benedictine monks for the spiritual formation of the sisters. Vocations began to flourish. The sisters were engaged in evangelization , adult catechesis and pastoral work. They also offered courses on

Liturgy, Gregorian Chant and Sacred Scriptures. The Pious Union became a diocesan right in 1981.

Sr. Maria Leonor found time to further her studies like earning some units in Canon Law. She attended the annual *Semana Tomista*, a one week seminar on the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. She also participated in the course of the Rule of St. Benedict conducted by Fr. Adalbert de Vogüé and Sr. Aquinata Böckmann, OSB in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1980. At this time she was already scouting for a Benedictine congregation where she could integrate the Pious Union that she founded.

In 1993 only five sisters were left in the Pious Union. The then Abbot of the Benedictine Monks of Lujan Martin de Elizalde, OSB suggested that they be integrated with a more stable congregation. He mentioned to them the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing as the more possible congregation nearest to their charism. The sisters wrote Mother Edeltrud Weist, OSB in 1994 for the integration. M. Edeltrud forwarded the petition to Mother Irene Dabalus, OSB, who was just elected Prioress General that same year. The petition of integration was brought up during the General Chapter in Rome in 1994.

Sr. Ma. Leonor and the other four sisters were officially integrated to the congregation on January 6, 1995. All the sisters became novices of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing for one canonical year and made their final profession in 1998.

Her health started to fail in the last five years. In June 2011 she was diagnosed with cancer of the skin. Ten doctors declared that operation would be fatal should she undergo one. From June till October she received the last sacrament three times. She was present in all community exercises except lauds. On October 29 the sisters rushed her to the hospital for difficulty in breathing. The doctors diagnosed that she was also having problems with her kidney. Her vital organs began to fail one by one. She died at the Rivadavia hospital, Buenos Aires on October 31, an appropriate day to be counted among the saints in heaven.



Sister Lumen Gloria Dungca, OSB

Region of Argentina