



### Obituary

## SISTER AMADA O. HALILI, OSB

September 16, 1938 - July 26, 2006

Sister Amada was a twin. Her twin is Sister Imelda. It is perhaps rare – very rare – that twins both enter the religious life. And even rarer that they enter the same religious congregation, and in the case of the Halili twins, the same priory. But that is how it was.

However, the twins did not enter the convent at the same time. Sister Imelda entered first. Sister Amada – then called Editha, and holding a job – told her twin to go in, find out how it (convent life) is and tell her about it. If it is nice and she likes it, she, Editha, might follow. Sister Imelda's report must have been good, for her twin did follow her into the convent a couple of years later.

The twins and a younger sister, Mely, are children of doctors: Dr. Amado Halili (from whom Sister Amada has her name in religion) and Dra. Purificacion Halili. They also had a brother whom God took to Himself very early in life. Their father was killed by the Japanese during World War II, when they were still small children. Their mother, a Scholastican, sent them for their college studies also to St. Scholastica's College –Imelda for a degree in music, Editha for business administration, and Mely for nutrition.

Sister Amada had no premonition of her serious illness. Except for bouts of migraine, she rarely got sick. But one day, she remarked laughing, "How funny! I want to write something on the computer, and something else comes out. And I want to say something, and I say something else!" Sister Fely, the infirmarian, brought her to the doctor for examination, which led to a Gamma-knife operation; she had 17 or so lesions on her brain! Cancer.

Sister Amada spent 37 years of her life in the convent, 34 of them as a professed Sister. During those 34 years, she taught Religion for 2 years in our school in Maasin, Leyte; was superior of the Divine Word Hospital in Tacloban for 6 years; and she was ill during her last 3 years. The other 23 years she was either a treasurer of a school – and usually, also of the community in the case of smaller communities – or the priory procurator. Thus, she spent these years in Manila, Marikina, and the priory house, where she had been the procurator for her last 9 "working" years when she was taken sick.

The Rule of Benedict has quite a number of things to say about the procurator – or cellarer. The Abbot/Abbess or superior should choose a "wise person, of settled habits, temperate and frugal." Then there are qualities that this Sister or monk should not be: "conceited, irritable, resentful, sluggish, wasteful." Rather, this person should be "God-fearing" and, attuned to the will of her superior, would care for the whole community as a parent does for his or her family. . The Rule stipulates that should a member of the community request something unreasonable, the procurator should not "sadden (her) with a cold refusal, but politely and with humility refuse" her "with a kind word." A further advice is given to the one chosen for the office: "not to give

way to avarice, nor be wasteful and a squanderer of the goods of the monastery". It is easy to see that the above qualifiers are hard to find in any one person. But it is amazing that these qualities were found to a large extent in Sr. Amada.

Part of her work as the priory procurator was arranging for the travels of Sisters – both going out of the country as well as foreigners coming in. This too was greatly appreciated by them. One of the Sisters – a Namibian who had come to the Philippines for medical studies and is now working as a doctor in China – sent an e-mail the day after Sister Amada left this life and recalled her own arrival on Philippine soil, Sister Amada waiting to welcome her at the airport and giving her a kind word which she remembers to this day and she says, has helped her through the years!

It is easy to see that the choice of a Sister for such an office is a very tall order indeed. And Sister Amada was the one chosen for it again and yet again! That shows how she was esteemed by the superiors and the communities wherever she was. This esteem was extended to her as well by those she came in contact with – the school and hospital communities, bankers and business people, employees and domestic helpers, the poor, and especially those who worked with her closely.

Sr. Amada is a very clear picture of a Sister of integrity, authenticity and generosity. She truly deserved her name: AMADA – the LOVED ONE.

In his Rule our Holy Father Benedict quotes St. Paul telling Timothy that those who have "ministered well, will gain for themselves a good standing". Sister Amada ministered well to us all in the Manila Priory. She surely is now enjoying her "good standing" with the Lord!

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Prioress, Manila Priory  
July 26, 2006