

**OBITUARY OF SR. BERNARDITA BERNAS, OSB**  
**August 20, 1941 - February 28, 2011**



“Come blessed of my father, Come my Chosen one...”

Sister Bernardita clearly heard these words of God, when she gave her “yes” and breathed her last on Monday, February 28, 2011 at 10:55 in the evening.

Sister Bernardita (or Sister Bernie, as she was fondly called) was born on August 20, 1941 in Nabua, Camarines Sur. Her parents Dr. Jose Bernas and Amparo Guevara welcomed her as their 8th child. Soon, four more children followed, a total of 12 – six boys and six girls.

Reared by loving and religious parents, Bernardita had a happy childhood. She experienced a solid Christian foundation at home. As a result, the Bernas family gave three children to the church one priest, Father Joaquin SJ and two Missionary Benedictine Sisters, Sister Mary Bellarmine and Sister Bernardita.

After Sister Bernie’s elementary and secondary education in Nabua, she spent her college years at St. Scholastica’s College and earned the degree of AB major in Mathematics. She later taught Math at the College and several of our Sisters were her students.

Very friendly and sociable, she fully enjoyed being with friends and attended parties and other social activities to the full. She surprised every one when she entered the convent on October 30, 1970.

She had her religious formation in the Novitiate house in Marikina and made her first Profession on May 18, 1974. She pronounced her perpetual vows on November 19, 1977.

She was sent for further studies at the Ateneo University and earned the degree of Masters in Educational Management in 1979. She was sent for further professional studies to Bielefeld, Germany from 1984 – 1993. In 2009, she went on Sabbatical and took a three-month course in Sangre De Christo in New Mexico, USA.

As a Missionary Benedictine Sister for 36 years she held various positions of responsibility as Religious Superior, Directress and H.S. Principal in our schools: St. Scholastica’s College, Manila, St. Scholastica’s Academy, San Fernando, St.

Scholastica's Academy Bacolod, St. Scholastica's Academy Marikina, St. Agnes Academy, in Legaspi and lastly St. Peter's College in Ormoc, Leyte.

As a good administrator in the schools, she worked for the training of the faculty, and the improvement of facilities. She did not hesitate to "think out of the box" When she was Principal in Bacolod two graduating students vied for valedictorian. She did, not as some administrators would do scrutinize every grade and test to see to it that only one would be valedictorian. She proclaimed the two as valedictorian and during the graduation exercises she allowed them to make a dialogical valedictory speech.

Being very socially aware, she fully implemented wherever she was assigned the Benedictine school's thrust for justice and social transformation. She was co-founder and some time coordinator of the Education Forum and the Concerned Teachers of the Philippines. She did not hesitate to join farmers and workers in the so-called parliament of the streets.

As spiritual leader of the community, she was caring and had a good sense of humor. She had varied talents which she made good use of for the community and the school such as: painting, candle and card making and producing dramatic and cultural presentations. She had many friends among the students, parents and alumnae, bishops and clergy, not only because of her sociable nature but because of her thoughtfulness.

She faced enormous difficulties in San Fernando when Mount Pinatubo erupted in 1971. She opened the doors of the school, made the gym a shelter for the homeless and the needy. She allowed the students of Don Bosco to use the classrooms so that their students could continue their classes till the end of the school year.

In Legaspi she was again put to the test by typhoon Reming, when torrential waters and mud filled the school buildings. Many school equipments and records were damaged and lost. The school was put in order in no time.

Last December 2010, after giving recollections to the entire high school students of St. Peter's College, Ormoc, she started feeling bad, losing her appetite and accumulating fluid in her body. After having check up in Divine Word Hospital in Tacloban, she traveled to Manila for further medical checkup. She was confined at once at the Medical Center Manila for tests and subsequent operation. She was diagnosed with terminal cancer which had already metastasized. Her family came to visit her almost every day.

After two months of loving care by the convent Infirmarian, Sr. Fely Cabilla, OSB and her two faithful care-givers Mai-mai and Lot-Lot, the Lord finally called her home on the evening of February 28, 2011.

We thank God for the gift of Sister Bernie to our congregation and Priory. We sisters will always remember you, dear Sister Bernie for your dedicated service, friendliness and lively jokes and stories. Now that you are among the blessed in heaven, we say THANK YOU FOR BEING YOU AND PLEASE INTERCEDE TO THE LORD for us and for our country.