

Sister Brigida (Aurelia) Caesar, OSB

January 16, 1913 - November 27, 2009

A TRIBUTE TO SISTER BRIGIDA-- Our German Filipino Sister

Was she a German? Or was she a Filipina?

Sister Brigida Cesar, OSB was born in Theilheim, Unterfranken, Germany on January 16, 1913. She came to the Philippines in May, 1932 as a postulant. She pronounced her vows as a Missionary Benedictine Sister on May 3, 1934. Since her arrival in the Philippines in 1932, she



had gone to Germany only once, in 1971. Thus, of her 96 years on this earth, she spent 19 years in her homeland and 77 years in her missionland. So, what was she? – German or Filipina? I believe that if we had asked her, she would have said, she was both - German and Filipina.

Postulants for the Philippines in 1932 with S. Consuelo Relova, a Filipina who made her profession in the Motherhouse. Sister Brigida is at extreme left.

Sister Brigida has a blood sister – a few years younger than herself – who is also a Missionary Benedictine Sister, and also in the missions – in South Korea - where she has been

almost her entire religious life too. The two Sisters have been given the chance to visit one another – Sister Bertwina to the Philippines, and Sister Brigida once to Korea. Years back, the two blood sisters had an aunt here in the Manila priory – again, a Benedictine Sister like themselves: Sister Galla Cesar, OSB, who, for many years, had guided the formandae in the Manila novitiate as their formation directress.

The Manila Priory in 1932 was just a few months older than 25 years. In those years, it opened and ran schools in different places in the country, including Boac, Tacloban, Guinobatan, Legazpi, Taal and Bacolor. After her religious profession in 1934 Sister Brigida taught in these schools after spending some years with the poor children in the Free School of St. Scholastica's College in Manila. Where there were working students, she usually took charge of them besides.

Her out-of-school engagements included sewing – at which she was very good – and taking care of guests who came to the convent as well as caring for the “room of the Lord”, the sacristy.

After 42 years of guiding young – and maybe , also old – Filipinos closer to God in the different schools and convents where she had been assigned, Sister Brigida was transferred to St. Scholastica’s Convent in Baguio in 1976. Here her special attention and efforts were concentrated on the special place of the Lord - the sacristy and the sanctuary – the sewing room and the parlor where she received with welcoming love and her ever-present smile, the poor as well the not-so-poor, in the name of the Lord. She had the gratifying assignment for many years of sending out donations of benefactors from here and abroad, especially Germany, in the form of stipends for Holy Mass to be celebrated by poor missionaries in the Mountain Province as well as elsewhere in the country. This was something she did religiously and with great love and joy.

It is doubtful if any of the Sisters had ever seen Sister Brigida angry or in a bad mood. Her face seemed to be always ready to break into a smile – perhaps reflecting the joy she has at being so “close” to her dear God and Lord much of the time as she worked in the sacristy and the altar, and whom she treasured in her heart. The love and the joy in her heart poured out to those around her. Especially noted was her dedication to Sister Magdalen, a fellow postulant who came to the Philippines together with her. Sister Magdalen was stricken with blindness while still relatively young. An incurable blindness – which she bore with heroic patience but surely with great suffering. Sister Brigida read to her *every day* – not only spiritual reading, but the news likewise as both of them kept up with the happenings in the world which they brought before God in their prayerful moments. Surely a sight that must have delighted both heaven and earth!



Sister Brigida at age 95 with M. Mary John, prioress

Not long ago we celebrated Sister Brigida’s wonderful life of 75 years as the Lord’s very own, on her diamond jubilee. Today, as we mortals bid farewell to our dear Sister Brigida, we like to think that when she went home to God early in the morning of the Feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, God, with His Blessed Mother, God received her with gifts more precious than diamonds – which she received with an overflowingly grateful heart and her characteristic smile. We too thank God for the numerous and invaluable blessings He has showered on our country and our people through her, leading Filipinos young and old, closer to Him through her simple but love-filled life.