

OBITUARY
of
Sister Clare Esquivel, OSB

May 18, 1924 – February 26, 2008



Thirty nine years ago, in May 1969, the Missionary Benedictine Sisters, had the rare joy of welcoming to the convent a 44-year old widow, MARIA CLARA ESQUIVEL.

Maria Clara Elvina grew up in Singalong, Manila. Her father, Felipe Elvina, was a Zamboangueno while her mother, Irene Vidal, was a native of Binondo. At the age of 28, she married Jose Esquivel of Tanauan, Batangas. Jose and Clara decided to live in Angeles. They had two children, Joselito and Yolanda. Clara worked at the Army and Air Force Exchange System at the Clark Air Base for twenty years. After 16 years of marriage, Maria Clara lost her husband Jose and her two children in a tragic vehicular accident. Joselito and Yolanda were then grade school students of the Holy Family Academy, Angeles.

This tragedy made her closer to the Sisters of Holy Family Academy, in particular to Sister Concepcion Pellosa, OSB. At this point in her life she felt that the only way to happiness was to serve God. Sister Concepcion advised her to go to Sister Ildephonsa Pineda, OSB for interview. Sister Mary Bernard Lansang, OSB, who was 13 years her junior, became her novice mistress. Her years in the convent started with her novice mistress, Sister Mary Bernard Lansang, OSB, at the Formation House in Marikina and ended also with Sister Mary Bernard, this time her superior in Baguio. She was given the religious name, Sister Clare.

In between her 39 years as a religious, Sister Clare was assigned to the Priory House for secretarial work and to Marikina, San Fernando, Tacloban, Lapu-lapu, Taal, Manila either as canteen supervisor or treasurer.

In speech, Sister Clare was straightforward, frank, honest and sincere. She always spoke from her heart. In preparing the payroll, Sister was very exact computing overtime, night differential and other benefits to the last iota. She was doing all these in keeping with the monastic observance according to St. Benedict. What is so edifying is the fact that Sister Clare succeeded in training a newly perpetually professed sister, Sister Victoria Bulacan, who knew nothing about accounting and bookkeeping to assume the work of a treasurer. And when Sister Clare was getting weak and in need of hospitalization, she entrusted to Sr. Victoria the coffers and everything to the last centavo.

The zeal with which Sister Clare carried on her service can only come from the grace of God. Everyday, after lunch, she would quietly go to the chapel and then stay there alone with God. This quiet communion with God through the years has given her the grace to serenely let go of everything.

Sister Clare was hospitalized in December 3-14, 2007 due to acute pulmonary pneumonia, then on January 7 – February 16, 2008 she was confined at the Intensive Care Unit of St. Louis University Hospital for treatment of aspiration pneumonia and congestive heart failure. She was able to spend her last ten days in the convent. Sister Clare died on February 26 of cardio-pulmonary failure in the company of sisters who prayed around her. She is now with the angels and saints of heaven and those dear to her, Jose, Joselito and Yolanda.

M. Mary John Mananzan, OSB
Manila Priory