



## Obituary

### Sister M. Elisabeth Sarinas, OSB

July 5, 1922 - March 24, 2006

Sister Elisabeth, baptized Lydia, was the eldest child of Dr. Faustino Sarinas and Dr. Isabel Jugo Sarinas. She was followed by two siblings – Faustino, Jr. and Teresita. Both parents, doctors of medicine, were dedicated and selfless practitioners of their demanding profession, and very possibly influenced the ideals forming in the heart and mind of the young Lydia – resulting in her resolve to likewise lead a life for others, not in the medical profession but in the religious life.

During the war, her parents could not practice their medical profession and the siblings had to help in augmenting the family income. Lydia tried her hands in baking and was able to produce delicious puto and bibingka which the younger Faustino delivered to prominent buyers. Lydia was the more serious, diligent and quiet worker while the young Faustino the more gregarious and enterprising type. Young Faustino got a good scolding from Lydia whenever he went home with grades from 75-80. Due to the constant reminders of his sister he was able to prove himself in the end but still not at par with the flat 1s and As of Lydia.

In spite of the raging World War II, Lydia entered the novitiate of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters. Sister Elisabeth was among the most intellectually gifted Sisters of the Manila Priory. Easily, given an IQ test, she would function at the superior level. She finished her college studies summa cum laude in both degree courses, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Education major in Math, Physics and General Science at St. Scholastica's College, Manila. She was also gifted by God with interesting creativity that showed itself in as varied areas as cooking, sewing, knitting and crocheting, gardening, stringing beads into rosaries as well as bracelets and anklets. All these, without any formal study! In the kitchen she could improvise concoctions that tasted great. Her homemade flavored yogurt got the nods of the sisters in Baguio and St. Benedict's Home.

She could also produce dolls out of rags and knit or crochet table ornaments. In her last years, aware of the limitations of her failing health on physical activities, she spent her "work time" in making rosaries – which she sold to our schools for their First Communicants – and devised bracelets and necklaces out of beads which acquaintances and friends – including her fellow patients and staff at the Kidney Clinic where she had her twice-weekly dialysis - ordered from her. Her "earnings" she gave to the superior with the suggestion that they be given for the outreach program of the postulants and novices in the Formation House.

In her more active years in the convent, she had been a teacher in 10 of our schools, a principal in 3 of those schools, and a superior in Baguio during her early retirement years. She had the joy of having been sent to the missions – in Peramiho, East Africa, where she served for 8 years (3 years as headmistress of our school there, and 5 years as first Filipina Prioress abroad). She was a teacher much appreciated and loved by her students

and well remembered till now. Once and again, a number of them would drive out to St. Benedict's Home to visit their former teachers, among them Sister Elisabeth. Sister had a strong personality and would not mince corrections when and where needed. Apparently the students felt the genuine concern and love for them beneath the remonstrations and serious mien that would at times meet them, and so the appreciation and grateful affection would be true and lasting.

Sister Elisabeth was not what one usually calls a "demonstrative person." However, when the news of her death was told, the driver of St. Benedict's Home who regularly drove her twice a week for her dialysis, unashamedly cried. That was eloquent testimony of grateful appreciation.

An hour or so before she left this world, Sister Elisabeth was arranging with the infirmarian for the requirements of her dialysis, saying she would go to Holy Mass the following day, then go for the clinic. She said she did not need a care-giver to go with her, but Sister Fely, the infirmarian, insisted that she should have one as her companion. She likewise arranged with the OIC, Sister Hilda, about car schedules since the latter would join her and move on to her own destination. To the latter too, she mentioned that she would attend Holy Mass the next day (she had been confined to bed the previous couple of days due to a leg infection). Thus, it was that when she left this world later in the evening, it is an understatement to say that all had a shock!

But then, some time earlier, Sister Elisabeth had said to one and the other that she would like to die of heart attack and die suddenly, not be incapacitated for long. It appears that God heard her prayer and took her as she wished at St. Benedict's Home, Marikina on March 24, 2006.

M. Mary John Mananzan, OSB  
Manila Priory