



Obituary of

SISTER HILWARDA WESSINGER, OSB

December 24, 1910 – September 25, 2005

*"You are my sunshine, my only sunshine,
you make me happy when clouds are gray."*

This was Sr. Hilwarda's signature song. She sang it joyfully to everyone who came to visit her. She was sunshine herself who made others happy with her palatable cooking, good and melodious singing voice, the sound of her sitar which she played every now and then and especially during Christmas, with her caring love for household helpers and affection for dogs. This was Sr. Hilwarda, a simple, quiet, humble and very childlike person.

Born to Paul and Maria Wessinger in Kleinaitingen, Bavaria on the eve of Christmas, December 24, 1910, Mathilde grew up in the farm. When her father died during the war, her mother had to depend on her, she being the eldest of 6 girls and 2 boys.

One day she asked for her mother's blessings to enter the convent. Her Mama refused because of Mathilde's role as caregiver to her siblings and caretaker of the farm. Meanwhile, Johanna, her younger sister, asked for the same blessing from her mother. Mama replied, "Yes, Johanna, you may enter the convent." The young Mathilde complained, "Why are you allowing Johanna to go to the convent when I am older than she is?" Mama had a ready excuse for her, "when your brother turns 18 next year you may go as you desire."

Johanna became a Missionary Benedictine in Tutzing. She was given Sr. Lidwigs for her religious name. For as long as Kerschlach existed, Sr. Lidwigs took care of the bees and was responsible for supplying the sisters with honey. She died five years ago, year 2000.

Sr. Eligia Cababat, who was assigned in Baguio as a junior sister, now understands why Sr. Hilwarda begged her once, "Give me money. I want to go to Germany and see my sister Anna." This Anna happens to be her sister Johanna, the late Sr. Lidwigs.

In 1938, Mathilde, then 28, after fulfilling her family obligation, joined her sister as a Missionary Benedictine and was given the name Sr. Hilwarda. She was sent as a novice to the Philippines in 1940 and made her first profession in Manila. Before entrance to the convent, she had training in cooking. Sr. Asuncion quips, When I entered in 1950, she was already in charge of the kitchen. She was a devoted, self-sacrificing, efficient cook."

Sr. Lioba Tiamsom, OSB, who was with Sr. Hilwarda in San Fernando comments, "I never saw Sr. Hilwarda get angry." Also in that same community Sr. Josephine Bosito, OSB recalls, "she had a special fondness for dogs. In fact the two big German Shepherds died when she was transferred to another station."

Sisters who knew Sr. Hilwarda have the same memories of her – quiet, soft-spoken, obliging and very prayerful.

Today, as we bid goodbye to Sr. Hilwarda, we proudly attest that she was indeed sunshine to her family and to the big community of Benedictine Sisters. She made everyone happy when skies were gray.

Sr. Hilwarda, "you never know how much we love you so please do not take our sunshine away."

Sr. Mary John Mananzan, OSB, Prioress, Manila Priory