



OBITUARY of

SISTER M. ILDEPHONSA PINEDA, OSB

April 20, 1923 – July 1, 2007

Caridad Pineda was the elder daughter of Judge Arnulfo Pineda and Mrs. Presentacion Dimson-Pineda. Born on April 20, 1923, she was not yet quite 20 when World War II shattered the Philippines, but in the midst of that turmoil she sought entrance into the convent of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters and was received into the Novitiate on March 7, 1943. She pronounced her religious vows on July 11, 1945. Her collegiate studies were cut with the outbreak of the war, but were resumed in the convent: she graduated with a bachelor's degree in music with a major in piano. Later years saw her being prepared through formal studies for work in theology and school administration.

Apostolate in her convent years engaged her at various times and in diverse places, in teaching piano, organ, music sciences, theology; in serving as moderator of the Sodality of Our Lady, Our Lady's Circle, and the Eucharistic Crusade; moderator of the alumnae association; zelatrix (a position of one of the formators charged with acquainting novitiate members with convent customs and practices); Juniorate Directress; Dean of College; Directress of the school and Superior of the community. Her almost 50 years of active service brought her to different houses in the Philippines besides Manila: San Fernando, Angeles, and Baguio in Luzon, Bacolod and Lapu-Lapu in the Visayas.

Sister Ilde (her long name was affectionately shortened by pupils and alumnae alike) was among the "pioneers" of St. Scholastica's Academy, Bacolod, and she stayed there for 10 years from its foundation in 1958; later she would return for another 6 years. She would serve as superior and directress for 9 of those 16 years. Her love for music and drama found good soil among the students and their parents. Thus, she established a music school and introduced drama into the extra-curricular program of the school. She brought her administrative acumen to Holy Family Academy in Angeles, Pampanga, and St. Alphonsus Catholic School in Lapu-Lapu where she likewise served as superior and directress at other times.

Liturgy was another "love" of Sister Ilde. For this she played and taught the organ – or harmonium in the novitiate and smaller houses – to young sisters and novices. The music in her soul found expression in a number of compositions – hymns that we sing till today.

Sister Ilde had a great love and zest for life – for the gifts of God, chief among them – people: the young, the old, the rich, the poor. Thus, she was an effective alumnae moderator. She was in Bacolod, Negros Occidental – sugar country – long and during years when the social situation of the country was precarious, when the term "sitting at the top of a volcano" was coined. It is safe to say that Sr. Ilde was among those instrumental in making the "haves" be conscious of and concerned for the "have nots". One outcome of those subtle efforts and inspiring moral support of the Sisters, was the establishment of a free school for the poor - the Holy Family Vocational High School in Sum-ag - principally by Scholastic alumnae (true, of St. Scholastica's Manila; SSA Bacolod had only young graduates at the time). She likewise set up at one end of the SSA grounds a building for seminars and similar activities which could be used by outsiders, rich and poor alike – KAUSWAGAN. Farm

workers, starting to waken to their situation and their rights, made good use of the facility at a time when Martial Law posed threats for such gatherings.

When the twilight years started, Sister Ilde was still sprightly enough to be assigned superior of Baguio, the retirement home of our Sisters. There she tried to put new elements into the Oblate program, which she was allowed to do on an "experimental basis" but which she could not pursue since she suffered a stroke in January, 1996 – just a few months after her golden jubilee of profession.

Her "zest for life" soon returned – even in her paralyzed state: no longer able to speak, nor to walk by herself, nor to function with the right side of her body. On visiting her in her room at St. Benedict's Home in Marikina, one is met with soft music which emanates from a recorder and a smile from an obviously contented Sr. Ilde. True, when in pain, she would cry like a child; but a pill or a hot water bag plus the smiling visit of the infirmarian would soon restore the placidity and smile on her face. She loved visits from her family and from friends. On her feastday she expected a Holy Mass with her dear ones, said by a priest friend, and capped with a meal with "lechon" – something not good for her but tolerated a little.

Then God thought it was time for Sr. Ilde to have a complete rest and enjoy everything without restraints. After a little more than a week in the hospital, God took her to Himself. She died of pneumonia and complications of diabetes on July 1, 2007.

*Now, our dear Sister Ildephonsa is enjoying not only the "gifts of God" but GOD HIMSELF!*

M. Mary John Mananzan, OSB, Prioress

Manila Priory