



## Obituary of

SISTER M. FE JAVIER, OSB

May 13, 1907 - June 16, 2007

A year before World War II came to the Philippines, students at St. Scholastica's College, Manila saw with interest some classmates with a particular "aura" about them. For one, they had braids which went around their head – not "bobbed" hair like the others. They also looked a bit older (just a bit!) and more serious and perhaps more refined than the rest of the group. These were "candidates" – young ladies who had applied to enter the convent. Among these was one who was very interested in – and was good at - mathematics. This was Amparo Javier.

Then December 8, 1941 came – and changed many things at St. Scholastica's College. And the whole Philippines! When next Scholasticans from the provinces came back to Manila, Amparo had professed first vows as a Missionary Benedictine Sister and was then called, *Sister M. Fe, OSB*. She was in the religious habit and had progressed from being a student to being a teacher in Mathematics and in Religion.

Sister Fe was generally a quiet person; very orderly and neat. Her orderliness must have contributed to her exactness in matters mathematical. As a young Sister she was assigned moderator of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, St. Scholastica's College Chapter. It must have been her missionary Benedictine vocation that fired her with zeal for spreading the love for Christ and his Church, for through successive years St. Scholastica's regularly won the "Papal Flag", the distinction given to the school that had the highest performance according to the standards set by the Propagation of the Faith.

After consistently winning the flag for several years, the college was given the honor of keeping the flag permanently. This was work accomplished by the students who were members of the organization; Sister Fe was the moderator who inspired them with love for God and spreading the Faith. Actually, one of the officers of that group was a great "follower" of Sister Fe – and later, herself joined the Missionary Benedictine Sisters. From her early years as a religious, she – Sister Frances Ramirez, OSB - has served in the foreign missions – in Africa, in war-torn Angola, and now is based in the Iberian Priory in Portugal. Another pupil of hers once wrote in an article that Sister Fe was an influence towards her becoming a missionary religious. Sister Christine Tan became a Religious of the Good Shepherd and served God in outstanding ways, especially in her work for and with the poor. She had gone ahead to heaven and it is easy to imagine that she must have joined in a joyful welcome for her beloved former teacher.

Sister Fe's years in the convent brought her to many of our schools where her teaching skills were appreciated. Her orderliness and neatness were surely an "invitation" to administrators to assign her as registrar or librarian besides. Thus, she served in those capacities at SSC and in the other houses of the congregation: in Luzon – besides Manila, San Fernando, Bacolor, Taal, Angeles, Marikina – and in the Visayas – in Ormoc and in Bacolod.

Time flies and energies sag. It was time to go easy. In the early 1990's Sister Fe helped as one of the first members of the Tagaytay community, earlier meant to be an alternative retirement house. (However, terrain proved not conducive for weakening bones – and it developed into a spiritual center instead.) A little housework here and there, and much time for prayer through what we in the convent regard as the "Apostolate of Vigil" claimed the hours and the days of Sister Fe – in the Priory House and with the new millennium, at St. Benedict's Home in Marikina. There she spent hours sitting across the large statue of Our Lady of the Poor in the inner garden – presumably communing with her dear Blessed Mother and her Son.

Last month a number of us, Sisters from the Priory House, went to St. Benedict's Home to greet Sr. Fe on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. She appreciated that, and in her quiet way showed her joy and gratitude for the special attention and greetings.

Last Thursday, the day before the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sister Fe went to confession, as did the other Sisters. Preparing to rest in bed afterwards, the care-giver heard her praying, "Lord, take me now; I am ready." The following Saturday, the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, our dear Lord did grant her prayer: our quiet but feisty Sr. Fe went home to God and his Blessed Mother without a fuss or a flutter. After Holy Mass she had asked permission from the superior, Sr. Baptista Busmente, to go to bed. Not an unusual request for the Sisters at St. Benedict's Home. A little later, when the Sister-nurse, Sr. Monica Nabirye, went to make Sister Fe ready to go to the doctor, she found that Sister had already gone to God. No struggle, no fuss; just a quiet resting in her heavenly Father and Lord.

*May our dear Sister Fe now intercede for us all in her place of eternal joy!*

M. Mary John Mananzan, OSB, Prioress

Manila Priory