



Sister Margarita Alovera, OSB

February 22, 1913 - July 29, 2005

On July 28, while I was giving a conference to the Westgrove community, Sr. Lumen called me to say that Sr. Margarita was in a serious condition. After my talk, I went straight to MCM and soon after the Sisters of the Priory House and of the Manila Community came and prayed with and for her. While in the hospital, she expressed that the use of life-prolonging procedures which would only artificially postpone her dying process be withheld and withdrawn so that she could fulfill what she had ardently desired: to join her Creator the soonest possible time. On the eight day of her hospitalization she was brought back to St. Benedict's Home, Marikina where God lovingly took her to his heavenly abode.

Ninety-two years ago on the feast of St. Margaret of Cortona a baby girl was born in Capiz to Margarita Soriano and Ricardo Alovera. To the Alovera household this joyous birth was tinged with a certain sadness, because the infant was a posthumous child. Ricardo, her father, had died at the age of 27 while she was three months in her mother's womb. If the child were a boy, the mother had planned to name him Ricardo, after the father. Since the child turned out to be a girl, she was baptized Ricarda.

Candang, as she was fondly called, was a bright and cute little girl who went to school at a very early age, a year earlier than the required age. This made her even smaller in size than her classmates with the automatic privilege of always leading the line of students and having the front seat in the classroom. Little Candang did not only lead the line but led her class in such subjects as Math and Physics during her high school days.

Several years later, in May 1927, Mrs. Alovera boarded the ship SS Negros for Manila to enroll her son Jose, 17, at UP as a college sophomore and Florencia, 15, at UP as a college freshman. Candang, 14, still a high school student in Capiz had to stay behind. As the ship headed for Manila, news was flashed that a storm was brewing. The captain decided to make an abrupt turn and the ship got off-balance and slowly began to sink. The young Jose was able to jump overboard but drowned just the same. Mrs. Alovera and daughter Florencia were trapped in a cabin, and sank down with the ship.

After her high school studies and after the tragedy that befell her family, Candang proceeded to St. Scholastica's College in Manila where she graduated Bachelor of Science in Education, cum laude. She was an athlete despite her size and seemingly frail body, a nimble dancer in many stage musicals, the prefect of the Sodality which at that time was regarded as the highest post a student could have and a leading stage actress. She was also fond of mechanics as well as sewing and music. She was a lover of mathematics, English, astronomy and physics.

After teaching at La Consolacion College in Bacolod, Ricarda entered the Missionary Benedictine Sisters together with Leonor Barrion who later became Sister Caridad. Ricarda was named Sr. Margarita, her mother's name.

All through her life as a Missionary Benedictine, sister accepted every assignment with joy and openness, whether it be a teacher, treasurer, principal, directress and superior.

One of the biggest challenges which she had to face was in 1970 when she became the FIRST FILIPINA Prioress. The 70s were times of unrest in the country: martial law, killer flood in Central Luzon, student rallies and demonstrations. One with the other major superiors in 1973 she dared sign the first public statement, prudent and pointed against martial law. Though Sr. Margarita was an academician she was a consistent and quietly vocal supporter of the sisters engaged in socio-pastoral apostolate. After her stint as Prioress, Sr. Margarita still continued to work in the school of the Lord's service. Age caught up with her until she was brought to St. Benedict's Home for retirement.

To her nephews and nieces, Sr. Margarita was Tita. To her grandnephews and grandnieces she was Lola Tita. To her loyal class 54 of Assumption Academy now St. Scholastica's Academy, San Fernando, she was a teacher, a mother and a friend. To us sisters, she was a paragon of a constant, steadfast and humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord. She was faithfulness personified.

THANK YOU DEAR SR. MARGARITA FOR SHOWING US NOT TO TIRE IN SEEKING GOD

in a life of ORA et LABORA.