



*St. Teresa de Jesús Jornet e Ibars*



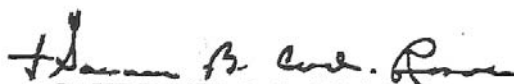
The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila  
 121 Arzobispo Street, Intramuros  
 P.O. Box 132  
 Manila, Philippines

## PERMISSION

Acting upon the recommendation of the Episcopal Vicar for Religious of the Archdiocese of Manila, taking into account the good standing of the **LITTLE SISTERS OF THE ABANDONED ELDERLY** in the Catholic Church, it is our pleasure to grant the said religious institute, of Pontifical right, permission to establish a community within our ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the Archdiocese of Manila according to the universal laws of the Church and approved Archdiocesan statutes.

All rights and privileges are granted to the community as stated in the Code of Canon Law and the Synod of Manila of 1979.

Given in Manila, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July 2006.

  
 + GAUDENCIO B. CARDINAL ROSALES, D.D.  
 Archbishop of Manila

Attested by:

  
 MSGR. ROBERTO C. CANLAS  
 Chancellor

M. EUGENIA PIETROMARCHI O.S.B.

St. Teresa de Jesús Jornet e Ibars

FOUNDRESS OF THE  
CONGREGATION OF THE LITTLE SISTERS  
OF THE ABANDONED ELDERLY



SANTA TERESA JORNET "HOME"  
San Juan City Philippines

Santa Teresa de Jesús Jornet e Ibars

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*\*Note:*  
*We have tried our best to retain the style and form of the original text*  
*Which was written in very old poetic Spanish. However we had to present it*  
*In a form more readable and understandable to the readers.*

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## **INFANCY AND YOUTH**

**J**anuary 9, 1843, Aytona, Cataluña. As the parish church bells ring for the midday Angelus, a baby girl is born in Barnueta street. Her birth causes just a little change in the small community's statistics. Her baptism the following day brings about the same change in the statistics of the Church and heaven above.

*The crib rocks rhythmically. By her side are her father and mother, her grandparents, uncles and aunts, and her cousins. In one single moment, the whole heavenly constellation of family stars gather to meet the newborn baby girl. Will she be a shining star, or a dark planet? Will she be -- don't even say it, my God! -- a speedy meteorite? In her silence, the crib presents this load of important unknowns. The crib could say that, in time, she could become a star. But for now, only God can read the future. In the meantime, the Baptismal grace is silently working on the baby's soul like a divine ferment.*

*The days pass by and the life of the family returns to normal. But to the hymn of that home, because a hymn to the Creator is the entire Christian family, has been added the shining voice of the new born baby girl Teresa, the first-born of Francisco Jornet and Antonia Ibars.*

*The Jornet and the Ibars families are trustworthy and of true faith. They are devout Catholics. They are enthusiastic hard-working farmers, whose toil and sweat, together with an austere and ordered life, have brought them certain affluence. Their home abounds with love and faith. The hand --the spirit of Father Francisco Palau-- carries the responsibility of keeping the flame burning. (Father Francisco Palau, brother of Teresa's maternal grandmother, today is Beato). When Teresa was born, Father Francisco was a young discalced Carmelite, removed from his convent because of the impiety of the sectarians. Without meaning to, or despite what they did to him, Father Francisco is hallowed with the splendor of martyrdom. Sad times ruled Spain; the church is persecuted. The nation wakes up every morning at war. Father Palau goes to the front line alternating his apostolic works with contemplative retreats. In the circle of this mega star are his brother Father Juan, his sister Rosa, and a niece also named Rosa. They are the chosen body of contemplatives and apostles who are always at the service of His Divine Will, which is made manifest in the projects of Father Francisco. Through the veins of Teresa runs the blood of the Palaus. And the voice of the blood does not lie.*

### **THE LITTLE GIRL**

*The little girl grows up in an ambiance of uprightness designed by her parents who are austere and hard working, just as their ancestors before them. As time passes by, the family grows. Little by little Teresa begins to share in the household chores. After her, two sisters and a brother were born. Teresa would become their angel, with her good example and with a sweet and gentle hand to protect them at play, and with practical lessons on charity, in the manner she is accustomed to welcoming the poor who knock at the door asking for alms for the sake of the love of God. In this family, it is traditional to show kindness and generosity to the helpless. Teresa is hooked on this*

*line, and she surpasses it. Not being content by just helping the poor who come to the threshold of their home, she goes out into the streets, looks for a beggar and takes him home with her.*

*But this peaceful and relaxed way of Teresa's life will be short-lived. Her uncles, the Palaus, have noticed her wit and her keen awareness. They ask, "why not make her study and follow the regular course?" The initiative was also attractive to the parents of Teresa. And so she goes to Lerida accompanied by her aunt Rosa.*

*The piety of the girl unfolds by the side of her aunt and she acquires an Eucharistic character from that moment on.*

*Her studies are not really too difficult. She is intelligent and diligent and if this was not enough, she does not ignore that her education entails many sacrifices on her parents, and this encourages her to do even more.*

*After finishing her studies in Lerida, and when Teresa could very well be happy with the idea of returning home to Aytona, she realizes that she is being sent by others to Fraga to continue her cultural studies there. This is the first time that Teresa lives without the warmth and protection of her relatives. Everything is new-- the surroundings, the experiences, the broader horizons. But the path that Teresa takes does not have any detours. Today she is the valiant and tenacious student of yesterday, a woman of few words, simple, serene and helpful. In her gaze always shines the unmistakable sparkle of purity.*

*During the summer vacation she returns to Aytona. With joy and simplicity, she goes back to being the "young lady of the home" and the village girl. She does not have the airs of the girl who is schooled and who is conceited in front of her companions, because she is more educated. She has become a star that has started to radiate light. Even without her being aware of it. Precisely because she comes from the city and everyone knows that she is studying, everyone her age, beginning with her sisters, focus their attention on Teresa and get guidance from her.*

*Teresa knows best how to use her influence to her advantage. With her hand she guides everyone to church. She organizes excursions that many times end up as little pilgrimages, taking them away from other forms of less prudent entertainment. The apostolate of Teresa is discreet yet very effective. Even in her youth she already displays her talent for organization and her aptitude for being the "superior" in the future.*

## THE TEACHER

*In Argenzola, province of Barcelona, there is a new teacher. She is young and it is obvious that this is the first school entrusted to her. The girls now leave their classrooms and the conversation in their homes centers on the young teacher. The girls talk a lot about her. The parents of the young girls look at each other in satisfaction because they understand that the young teacher is serious and very capable.*



*The Saint walks 20 Kms every week to make her confession*

*This young teacher is Teresa Jornet Ibars. When she finishes her studies she decides to practice immediately to somehow compensate the many sacrifices of her parents for her sake. On the other hand, this satisfies her dearest wishes. She has brought her sister Maria, nine years younger, with her. As she accompanies her, Maria will learn from the elder sister the lessons of her knowledge and of her lofty example.*

*The people, as always, pry on the lives of the two young sisters and end up admiring them because they know that the teacher goes to the town of Igualada for confession every week, despite it being a good 20 km back and forth. The people are also aware that the young teacher receives communion very often and that she treats all her students very well and that she prefers the poorest. And in a town as this, a handful of virtues is enough to place the teacher in the heights of the stars.*

*They would have done anything to keep Teresa always with them! But Teresa allows her imagination to run to other goals. Teaching just isn't enough. It is a noble and a very holy mission, but it just doesn't satisfy the longings of her soul. God is calling her to the religious life, no doubt about it. However, the problem is the choice of path. Teresa does not know which direction to take.*

*Things being as they are, Father Palau invites Teresa to help him with the institute he is putting up. His work is made up of a male and a female branch. Father Palau has found a way of balancing contemplative way of life and apostolic action. The latter focuses mainly on teaching and other works of charity. And all that Father Palau can offer is an abundance of risks, something so normal for all the institutes that emerge in times of persecution. But this fruit is attractive to the young, and Teresa accepts it on a trial basis.*

*Everyone is happy with Teresa except herself. She feels lost, dissatisfied. Inside her stirs strongly, a demand for the religious life, cut off from the world and characterized by silence and prayer. The sectarian government meanwhile does not stop inflicting blows on the works of Father Palau. Could this be the divine answer to the constant prayer for guidance and direction that Teresa raises to the throne of God's majesty?*

## THE YOUNG NOVICE

*In the early part of July 1868, Teresa and her sister Josefa leave their paternal home. Teresa, takes the path that leads to the convent of the Clarissas in Briviesca, in the vicinity of Burgos. Josefa goes to the Home of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in Lerida. God has fondly focused His eyes on the home of the Jornets and has chosen the two eldest daughters.*

*Those were stormy times for all the cloisters in Spain. It is good that the Clarissas of Briviesca have been able to manage on their own. Inside their convent walls they have been able to put up a school for girls. On the other hand, Castilla remains relatively calm. And Teresa dreams of seeing her aspirations satisfied in the peace of these Franciscan cloisters.*

*The months of postulancy and noviciate pass rapidly. And Teresa's soul is soaked with the joy of the approaching day of her profession, when she will at last be united with God. The community is proud to have Teresa in their ranks. The schoolgirls admire and praise her. Everything is going well without problems when suddenly that bright path darkens. The revolution triggered by the revolt of Cadiz, and the Royal Family's escape to France in September 1868 plunges Spain into real chaos. There are those who continue to support the monarchy, while others clamor for a change to a republic. They do not seem to agree on anything except to persecute the Church and, with the pretext of defending the freedom of the citizens, to prohibit the profession of the religious vows.*

*In Briviesca a young Clarissa novice is sewing the last stitches on her black veil which she will wear on her profession, when she receives the news that the government is not allowing the profession of vows. But how could this issue be of any interest to the government? Nevertheless it is so. The novice cannot take her vows. She will just have to wait for this storm to pass. But to wait in the convent at the foot of the cannon, as they say. The Clarissas are gladdened by this determination of Teresa. And as a sign of protest against the wicked law of the government, and as a reward for the faithfulness of the novice, even without taking her vows, they change her white veil to the black veil she has just sewn.*

*However, God has other plans. His designs are not so easy to interpret. And Teresa, who has not bowed to the oppression of men, now has to retreat because of illness. One fine day, on her forehead appears a scab, resisting all treatment. This alarms the nuns. And the doctors make some grave pronouncements. "Perhaps this scab could be malignant, or even contagious." And so the voice of prudence advises them to let her leave the convent.*

*Teresa obeys. The orders come from her superiors and she has never questioned them before. She returns to Aytona. It feels like a metal slab pressing against her heart. The pleasant memories and their sincere affection for her in Briviesca will always remain memories and love that, after many years, will still bloom in the expression of the Clarissas, "Teresa was truly a saint."*

## THE TRANSITION PERIOD

*Once more her uncle, Father Francisco, tries to recruit her to his little army of Terciaries in the Carmelite order. Teresa doubts. She feels that that way of life does not satisfy her longings adequately. She does not see clearly what God wants of her. But better than staying home, she decides to accept an apostolic work that Father Francisco offers her among the Terciaries.*

*Without making a commitment, Teresa starts working with ardor and wisdom. She does nothing half baked. Father Palau has appointed her superintendent of the schools which he establishes in the peninsula and in the Balears Islands. It is a position entrusted to her and one that demands prudence and tact. Father Francisco knows too well what Teresa can accomplish, that is why he entrusts to her the responsibility of his centers of learning. What followed for many years are constant struggles, demanding obligations, and dangers at every corner. The peace in Spain has not yet settled. The government would take every opportunity no matter how small, to sow hostilities against the Church. In the midst of so much difficulty, and just when the presence and the encouragement of the founder is needed most, God signals the end of Fr. Francisco's life. It is March 20, 1872, Father Francisco has just died at 61. He has gone from this world when his work is barely outlined.*

*Towards the month of April, Teresa is once more in the company of her family, but spiritually finds herself immersed in profound solitude and uncertainty of the future. "Lord, what is it you want me to do?" Her desire to work for "the work of God" expands her soul. But with this total surrender to the Divine Will, she follows an impenetrable obscurity about the concrete way God wants to be served by her. To those who know her, Teresa is a transparent creature of light and peace. Her activity is always orderly, precise and serene. Of her spiritual battles, nothing transcends to the outside. Her soul reveals itself only to God and only from the Almighty does she wait for help.*

*And help will come. But in God's own time. It will come sealed with the character of the works of grace: without meditation it will come as a sudden inspiration, and it will be efficacious. Now the yarn of the drama is already woven, and God who has in*

*His hands the strings of all existence, only has to braid the steps of the different players.*

## **THE BEGINNING OF THE WORK FOR THE ABANDONED ELDERLY**

**A** group of priests from Huesca and Barbastro, led by the Master Chaplain of the Cathedral of Huesca, Don Saturnino Lopez Novoa, is laying the foundations of an institute for women devoted exclusively for helping the poor, abandoned elderly. In all honesty the idea is not original. In France, land of lengthy beginnings, there has existed an institute with the same objectives for many years now. But Don Saturnino, who was in contact with this work, is convinced that for the elderly of his land, the Spanish Sisters would do a better job. And since, at the moment, it does not exist in Spain the only remedy left is to establish one.

*His friends receive this project with enthusiasm. To establish an institution like this, there couldn't be a more favorable time than now, precisely because it is full of difficulties. The spiritual and material crises debated in Spain pile up evil upon evil. The religious sentiment is now dried up. Charity towards the brother weakens, and the links of filial love are now failing. Everyone desires so much his liberty that it feels like an unbearable yoke this having to take care of the elderly. "What is their worth? They are a burden! A useless bundle. In the name of liberty it is more convenient... to get rid of them!"*

*That is why this is the most fitting moment to bring to life a charitable institution so that all might know that the Church, the Holy Mother Church, never forgets her children, especially the abandoned.*

*Don Saturnino gives to the Work all of himself and all he has. But now it is necessary to go and look for the laborers of God. Each one of his friends will strive to look for a person with a good heart, who desires to consecrate herself to the Work. A new religious organization in the Church, consecrated to the good of humanity, is about to be born.*

*June 1872. Teresa goes to Barbastro on a short trip. She is with her mother, who is not too well. By pure luck she meets a local priest, friend of the deceased Father Palau. They start to chat about the unforgettable apostle. This priest has a name convenient to remember: Father Pedro Llacera. And after his name, a modifier, "friend of Father Saturnino". He is a believer of the projects that Father Saturnino endorses.*

*During their chat, Don Pedro watches Teresa intently. He gets a very good impression and asks probing questions. From her answers, he senses her desire to consecrate herself to God in a religious life. And suddenly he starts talking about what this priestly group of Father Saturnino is planning. To dedicate their life to the abandoned elderly. This program is light, brilliant light, for Teresa. Her inner struggles have ended. Her doubts and uncertainties fall apart over the vocation that God is calling her to.*

*Teresa accepts the plan that Don Pedro proposes to her. But she still ignores the part God wants her to play in this budding institution. Father Pedro sees beyond her gaze and he is aware that he has just found something much more than a collaborator. That is why he insists that she go to Huesca to see the founder, Father Saturnino, in person.*

*This is all Teresa could dream of at this moment. The understanding between the two of them is complete. Nevertheless, she goes back home, for the moment. There is a waiting rhythm. The beginning of the new work is set for early October.*

*Everything now is easy. Without doubts, without uncertainties, without the darkness of the soul... God works without obstacles and His hand is sketching the blueprint of this budding Institution.*

*Teresa has returned to Aytona with the bells ringing fully in her heart. It is impossible that this ringing is not heard by her. It is similar to the time (in the Bible) when Philip ran to bring the great news to his friend Nathaniel, "We have found the Messiah!" That's how Teresa hastens to tell Maria, her sister and confidant, that at last, she has found what she has long been searching for. Then she invites her sister to join her, in caring for the old. But Maria feels she is too young, (life still smiles at her) and so she breaks out laughing. "Come on, leave me, please! I, care for the elderly? Impossible!" This response looks logical indeed, coming from a young girl and her circumstances. Why... she is only 18, cheerful, wholehearted. "How could she even think of becoming a nurse for the elderly?" And what's interesting is that Teresa knows what she is saying and what she is suggesting. She has an assured look. She won't be making a mistake. In the end, Maria will go with Teresa and with them, also Mercedes Calzada, a country maid and a friend to both of them. She is frail, but her kindness and her devotion compensate for her frailty.*

*From today on, they will be one, in loving and supporting the abandoned elderly.*

## THE HOME FOR THE ELDERLY STARTS

*Father Saturnino would open his first house in Barbastro and not in Huesca. There he practiced for many years his priestly ministry. Besides, Barbastro is smaller, quieter, a better place to start something with the risk of failing, lest someone with bad designs discovers the failure of an institution of the church. Let's not forget the anti-religious sentiment that runs through Spain.*

*The chosen location is called, "Pueyo". It consists of an old building of inferior conditions, but which offers many advantages for the new goals. Twelve young ladies from the ages 18 to 30 come from nearby to stay. They are lacking in material wealth but they are abounding in enthusiasm and good will. Well, it is understood that life in Pueyo is a life of poverty and humility. But isn't this the start of a bright future for the works of the Lord?*

*Among the twelve are Teresa and her two conquests. From the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of October the house gets filled up. They have been able to borrow some essential furniture. And their communal life begins. Who will bring this new community forward?*

*No one but Teresa could be the head of that group. Since they met her, Father Saturnino, just as Father Pedro and all the other collaborators were sure that she was best suited for the position. Teresa was the natural superior of that community.*

*However, her thoughts were very different from their opinion. And that was how she said it and how she showed it repeatedly. The only response she got was that, in religious life to obey was important. And Teresa, bending up at what was being ordered of her, keeps quiet and keeps quiet for always.*

*And Teresa will remain Superior until her death. That would be 25 years of leadership. It was God, not man, who decided the election.*

*There is only one serious difficulty in this. "Superior" is a title that, for us, seems very bureaucratic when we refer it to Teresa. It does not suit her. That is why, from now on Teresa will be Mother Teresa. Even better, "The Mother"; just like that, because her mission will be fully maternal. "The Work" is still an embryo, hardly sketched. It is necessary to bring it to light by starting to convert those young ladies -- who today only know how to laugh and to sing little songs devoted to Baby Jesus -- into real religious, rich in love, enduring in the face of sacrifice, powerful in front of pain and even death. The mission which they will be devoted to is more laborious and tougher than they can now imagine.*



*The Saint in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament*

*The help to the elderly, the kind of elderly that they decide to welcome, is not something one can just improvise. It demands an adequate, technical and spiritual preparation. And this training can only be given by The Mother.*

*Moreover, the poor elderly who come to the "home" of the Institute to finish their earthly journey, need the heart of a Mother who will shelter them, since old age is a second childhood, and what the child needs most is maternal affection.*

*With this historical moment brought to light, one can understand why things happened the way they did. Today we understand completely why God brought Teresa by that path that looked like a labyrinth and a dead end street. Today we understand why Providence led Teresa to Argenzola, and later to Briviesca, and still much later, to Third Order of the Carmelites. It looked like wasted time. Nevertheless it was the time for training. Teresa experiences in those years what religious life is. In this manner she will be capable of giving formation to her companions. And she knows the world. She suffers darkness, doubts, abandonment, uncertainties, loneliness of the heart... Without this extensive "Way of the Cross", she would not have been prepared to understand the elderly nor to give them assistance and protection.*

*With her temperament and education, Teresa had the proper discernment for responsibility. She was serious. But the characteristic quality that she imprints on the religious family is one of simple kindness, a serene and spontaneous humility, and of charity that is totally penetrating in the spirit of sacrifice. To love does not mean just to give, but to give of oneself. And to give of oneself without stopping, without letting anybody know what is being sacrificed, not even to oneself.*

*That is how The Mother loved. And by imitating her, the Little Sisters would learn to love like her. Her surrender was complete and extremely simple.*

## ***THE "LITTLE SISTERS"***

**T***heir first name would be that of "Little Sisters of the Helpless Poor. And to avoid being mistaken for the French Institute with the same name, they will be called "Little Sisters of the poor, abandoned elderly". Little Sisters! Not Mothers, but rather Little Sisters, because they occupy the lowest step in the familial ladder. Like the youngest son in the family who is always willing to comply with the wishes of the elder brother or the old.*

*With the name, the habit. How this small apostolic college longs for the day of the imposition of the habit! And Teresa took charge of organizing it. She wanted it simple, austere and practical as it was suited for the way of life they were going to consecrate themselves to.*

*January 27, 1873. Barbastro is getting dressed for the feast. They will proceed with the imposition of the habit of the Little Sisters. The whole town comes together to the chapel of the Conciliar Seminary. For lack of a more appropriate church, the Little Sisters will receive the sacred habit in the church of the seminarians. Still, the ceremony was very solemn.*



*Fr. Saturnino presents to Mother Teresa the Book of the Constitutions of the Congregation*

*Because the times are bad, some among them, no less than Father Pedro, and perhaps even Father Saturnino, advise the Little Sisters to use this habit only when they are in Pueyo, and, when they go out into the streets, to put on their civilian clothes. This was the voice of prudence, but the spirit of the sisters resisted paying attention to it. Remove the sacred habit? Why? Because of fear? For the new novices this reason was not enough. For the honor of wearing the sacred habit, they could have paid even with their own blood. Respectful but honestly airing their protest and intentions, they asked the required permission to wear it all the time. At last it was granted to them. The people started to know them, and there was no room for disrespect, nor contempt. On the contrary, they were given so much honor and attention, that they would return from their walks, pretty confused.*

*But they were not to remain in Barbastro. The clock of God is pointing to a new time. Looking at the future of the Institute, Father Saturnino was hoping to transfer the Mother House to a more important city.*

*And what might the designs of God be? In those days, in Valencia, there is a group of Catholics joint together in an Association, proposing to combat evil with works of charity. Among their many endeavors, one fine day, the project to care for the poor abandoned elderly in a Christian manner is set.*

*The said project supposes the entrusting of the care of the sheltered elderly to some religious group. With this aim, the valiant Catholics from Valencia, get in touch with the French Institute of the Little Sisters of the Poor. They come to an agreement right away. But when everything seemed to have been dealt with and finalized, Valencia receives a letter saying that the French Congregation sees it best to abandon the projects of the Foundation in the city of Turia.*

*It is useless to ask the "why" of all this. God has other plans. And that's enough.*

*God Himself, through unthinkable ways, brings together the members of the Association of Valencia with Father Saturnino. When they find out that there exists a Spanish Institute, even though just starting, whose goal is precisely the care of the abandoned elderly, they receive them with enthusiasm.*

*They bring together their projects and they come to a mutual agreement. The Little Sisters will be transferring to Valencia, the city of life, of the sun and the sea. This could probably be the point of departure for many, many sisters, whose destiny is to bring a smile in the midst of the pain of the abandoned, and a ray of hope in the solitude of the poor, and much love in the loneliness of the old.*

*Goodbye Barbastro, goodbye Pueyo, goodbye cradle of the Institute! The Little sisters will move away but will never forget you. You will live in their memory surrounded by legends, cradled between sweetness, just like the places where we lived the years of our infancy, live in our hearts. And though hardly possible, the Little Sisters will return to you, and they will come not just to give life to the elderly but to offer you their own life: your fields, where one day sprouted this little plant of the Institute, will be bathed with their blood.*

*(Sister Cristina del Espiritu Santo and Sister Pascuala de la Asuncion, were killed in Barbastro by men without God, during the Spanish Civil War.)*

## THE LITTLE SISTERS IN DIFFICULT VALENCIA

*#4 Plaza de Almoyna, Valencia. This address is important. Here is located a little house without terraces, without patios, without any garden. A small house reclining like a child, or like the poor, reclining against the shadow of the great sanctuary of the Most Blessed Virgin of the Abandoned. This is the address of the Little Sisters in Valencia. Humble and poor is the building. Isn't this the best suited for them, humble and poor also? But the best thing is that the house is closely watched by the Virgin of the Abandoned. Under such avocation the Little Sisters carry out their works of charity to the elderly. No one doubts, much less Mother Teresa, that the Blessed Virgin herself called them to Valencia. That is why, from now on, the Virgin of the Abandoned shall be the heavenly Patroness of the Institute and all the "homes for the elderly" of the Little Sisters shall always be followed by the tender look of the Mother of the Abandoned.*

*But let's not hasten the events. For the moment Little Sisters are only in Valencia. They have arrived in the city on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May. It is the eve of the feast of the Virgin and the entire city is in confusion with the coming of the Little Sisters.*

*Two days later, a day not to be forgotten, the institute welcomes her first elderly lady. A paralytic of 99. They have started well.*

*They continue to be twelve. The Mother smiles and organizes the life of the small family. Father Saturnino, Father Pedro, and the other priests who have helped them in the beginning are now far away. In Valencia, they can count on the paternal protection of the Archbishop, Father Mariano Barrio, much later, becoming Cardinal. And with the unconditional help of the Secretary of His Excellency, Father Francisco Garcia Lopez, later on becoming Bishop. Although for the Little Sisters, he will always be just Father Francisco, considered Co-Founder of the Institute.*

*But this belongs to the future. When they reach Valencia, The Mother finds herself practically alone. In this way, her virtues as an exceptional organizer are made more evident. From her, the institute and each one of the Little Sisters, will receive the characteristics that mark in the world, the work of the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly.*

*Teresa's work is intense but orderly and serene. She displays an enlightened and precise discernment and a tenacious will for her endeavors, always the master of her own person. These are human talents which divine grace makes supernatural and even more powerful still. She lives under the watchful eye of God, always listening to the divine voice, quick in complying with the will of God. Nothing and nobody is capable of blocking her steps, once she has understood that, in that path, God loves her. Mother Teresa firmly brings forward her inflexibility, however her life does not know hardships or harshness. In imitating Christ, she knows to accompany the yoke of duty with gentleness, although without lessening its demands a bit. She sweetens the religious life of the Little Sisters, but without taking the least away from the demands of a life consecrated to God through poverty, chastity and obedience.*

*And, the Mother is able to convince her daughters of the truth that the religious life demands more than sacrifice and renouncements, a deliverance of the soul and spirit. The Mother herself offers her hand to help them enter this way, and the Little Sisters walk, all smiling and happy. That is why in Valencia and in Barbastro, the trait of that community is the joy and delight that touches the sheltered elderly. After a month, they become eleven. And a little after, they reach nineteen.*

*Once more Spain is at war; this time, the regions revolt for independence.*

*Valencia declares war against the government of Madrid. And a little later is assailed and bombarded. The people flee. The Little Sisters remain by their Elderly. Only when there is no one left in the city and with the danger of the bombings and of dying of hunger, do the Little Sisters who live on Christian charity, decide to seek refuge in Alboraya. Five dilapidated cars escorted by armed volunteers transfer the old, now twenty, and twelve Little Sisters. It is a sad procession of misery and generosity at a time.*

*After some time, peace begins to bloom once more in this fertile Valencian vegetable garden. Happy and cheerful they start the journey back, which they had undertaken in tears. This trial has bound together the elderly with the Little Sisters who, in their faithfulness of duty and sacrifice, have matured for higher undertakings.*

*But trials are the daily bread of the religious foundations. Sister Mercedes falls sick. It was Mother Teresa, together with her sister Maria, who brought Sister Mercedes to their "Work". At that time, she was already weak. But today she looks dreadful. It appears that Sister Mercedes has tuberculosis. The pain of watching her wear out little by little, day after day, hour by hour, adds to the Mother's fear of contamination: the Little Sisters are all very young and, in the very small and reduced room they share it is no longer possible to continue. The heat is suffocating and with one sick among them... To make room for the elderly, The Little Sisters have to squeeze themselves into an incredibly small space.*

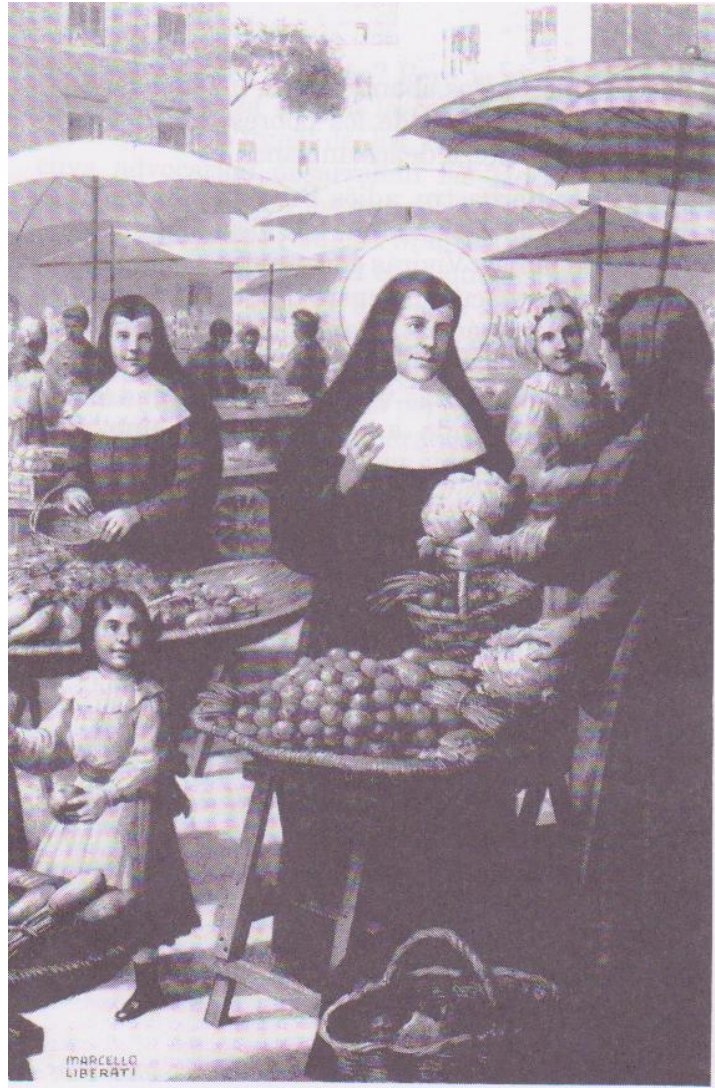
*Months of deep worries transformed into prayer. Months of learning, in which pain is the teacher...*

*March 8, 1874. Sister Mercedes dies. She is twenty-seven years old. She has taken her religious vows in her death bed. She is the first among the Little Sisters to make the profession.*

## MAY 1874: THE MOTHER IN ZARAGOZA

*Teresa finds herself in Zaragoza. They have repeatedly asked her to open a "home" to take in the poor, abandoned elderly, and the Mother has not known how to resist the impulse of her heart.*

*The first visit the Mother makes in the city of Ebro, is to the Virgin of the Pillar in her historic sanctuary. It is exactly one year ago, when she arrives with her Little Sisters in Valencia. In Valencia, the first visit was also to the Virgin. And so, Mother Teresa set the Institute under the tutelage of the "Mother of the Abandoned", and the Virgin has not ceased to protect their "inmates" from then on.*



*The Saint in the market asking for alms for the poor elderly*

*Zaragoza has prepared a triumphant welcome for the Little Sisters. The house is modest, and already there are three elderly ready to register in the new "home." As the Little Sisters begin their begging around the market place and the homes, the generosity of the noble people of Aragon did honor to the Christian tradition that they are famous for. With such a good start, the Mother can now go back to Valencia in peace, confident of the future of this Foundation.*

## THE HOME, THE WORK SHE LOVES

*With each passing year, the "homes" multiply at an impressive pace. Mother Teresa wants it called "home", not just shelter, because the term shelter is cold and humiliating. "Homes" where the elderly can find the warmth and affection of a Mother and some Little Sisters, who give themselves totally to the service of the poor. The abandoned elderly are the owners of these "homes". The Little Sisters are just their helpers. This was the conviction and the teaching of the Mother, and her life showed that all her "walking" was guided by the light of this belief.*

*Poor and self-deprived, she herself wanted the elderly to have not just the basic necessities but a little something more. Didn't she show her wonderful ability to find, in the moment of great scarcity, some money to buy tobacco for an old man so accustomed to smoking? Mother Teresa would hasten to justify that for that old gentleman it wasn't just a matter of a whim. The elderly can't be considered soldiers of duty. Each one is his own person, with his own personal afflictions, with his own needs, and his own history. In fact it is always a history of sacrifice and tears, and suffering. It is therefore necessary to have the insight of the poor, like the psalm says: to understand him and because of it, to love him with the heart of a mother.*

*That is how she loves them. Day and night the elderly are her preoccupation, her sweet torment, the children of her own flesh and blood, her grown up children whose trust she wants to gain, to bring them closer to God and to help them become more serene at the hour of death. This is the most beautiful and blessed element of the mission of the Little Sisters: "Care for their bodies so as to save their souls." This was the constant maxim from the lips of the Saint, and her great faith, made her see the figure of Christ in the poor abandoned elderly. Her entire conviction was to free them of the scum of sin, to recover the grace if they had lost it, and with the grace the dignity of the children of God.*

*How many prayers and sacrifices until the conversion of a hardened heart is achieved. How much gentleness, so as not to deaden, with the outburst, the zeal of the encounter with the work of God in one's soul! How many nights of vigil beside the bed of the dying, to assist them until the last moment and present them, serene and purified, in God's hands.*

## MOVING ON FROM VALENCIA

*November 21, 1874. All of Valencia has knocked at the door of the "Capilla Real" where the Virgin of the Abandoned is enshrined. It is a restless, nervous crowd, anxiously waiting for a spectacular scene. Suddenly, a thundering applause breaks out in the air. It is an uncontrollable salute, and seems as though it will never end. In the*

porch of the church, the Little Sisters make their entrance accompanied by their elderly.

*They have come to the feet of the Virgin to bid her goodbye. No, not that they will be leaving Valencia for another city, but yes, they will be moving further away from the "Mother's" lap. They are going to the other side of Turia, to the old, former convent of Sta. Monica. They could no longer continue in Plaza Aytona. There was no room left, not even for one more. Everyday, additional elderly with trembling hands would come knocking at the door of the home. There was a need to say that there was no room left, that they just had to wait for someone inside to die. This broke the heart of the Mother to pieces. They need to find a solution to this distressing situation immediately.*

*On the other hand vocations increased beyond their dreams. No one could explain it. Everyone agreed that the mission of the Little Sisters was nothing attractive nor flattering to the young and yet there were more and more young ladies who desired to consecrate their lives to helping the poor elderly for the love of God.*

*It is evident that through this God wanted to show His trust and satisfaction in this new Institution.*

*Yes, but in the meantime where could they put the novices and postulants? There was no other solution but to let the new candidates join the Little Sisters who have already professed. And all of them always near the elderly. This situation prejudiced the formative period of the Novitiate.*

*There was no other solution than to look for a bigger house. And so they prayed without stopping. And here is Mother Teresa who insists, today with this friend, tomorrow with another benefactor, and still another day with all those who have the future of the elderly nailed to their hearts. Everyone answers to the initiatives of the Mother with kind words and good intentions, until the end is reached.*

*And the end comes. They have found the house. Big, airy, with land all around, with possibilities for expansion if such need should arise one day. Everyone, rich and poor, has contributed to its acquisition. The offerings of the latter move the Mother even more and induces her to a more profound gratitude. But everyone will be remembered in their prayers to the Father. Acknowledgement and gratitude are traits of the charity of Mother Teresa.*

*The Saint has a special ability for communicating to others the fire of her love. God has stirred a big bonfire in the heart of the Saint, and it is no longer possible to speak with the Mother without one's heart being touched by this fire.*

*If all of Valencia has gathered here today, Mother Teresa is to blame, though she, sheltered in her God, does not realize it. The aristocracy of Valencia has put at the disposal of the Little Sisters and their elderly the elegant horse-driven coaches that cried out with luxury the radiance of the noble "escudos" of their owners. Everyone vied for the honor of giving these coaches to the "Betrothed" and the suffering members of Christ. In each one of them sat a Little Sister with two or more elderly. When the people noticed that the last coach of the retinue was that belonging to the Cardinal, and that on it was Mother Teresa with the most ailing of the elderly, one totally paralyzed, everyone's heart was crushed with anguish. No one knew if it was time to cry or to applaud.*

*The Saint appeared oblivious and distant from all these. Her heart was ringing out with glory, but not because of the clamor and victories that surrounded her but because, as she would much later confess with her innocence, "in the new house, it would no longer be necessary to reject admission to any of the old who came for help."*

*In fact her first preoccupation in the new dwelling was to increase the number of her elderly. They increased to 40 right away, then to 60, then... one cannot put a limit. In the works of charity, there is always an "after" even more beautiful than the "before". The elderly continued increasing. Today they are 420, and the place is left open for an "after" that would very soon change this statistics. Let's think of the 420 elderly, male and female. A real paradise of the old age that, translated into Christian language, means oasis of charity.*

*The novitiate in Sta. Monica, developed an appropriate system, at least for the moment. All the novitiates as well as the nuns received from Mother Teresa her seal of influence, sweet and strong.*

*She preferred to teach by the example of her life than with the words from her mouth. She was a woman of few words. And precisely because of this, whatever she said remained engraved in the minds and hearts of her daughters. Even today her words enlighten the path of the Little Sisters.*

*The mother put in 7 words the line of conduct that they should follow at the moment of accepting the old: "The more poor elderly, the more benefactors." From this emerges the incomprehensible financial genius of the Little Sisters. When the monetary balance is dwindling, they do not think of reducing the number of the old, rather, they do everything possible to increase their number.*

*The Saint also determines with measured words the interior physiognomy that should characterize the Little Sisters: "God in the heart, eternity in the mind, and the world beneath the feet". Bulging manuals of asceticism are summarized in this phrase, and perhaps would be more practical than the manuals.*

*Regarding what is told to the aspirants about religious life, the Saint was not concerned about numbers, rather the opposite. "I prefer eight strong pillars than many swaying reeds," she often repeated. If at some time, there was among the pillars a reed that would bend wherever the wind blew, the hand of the Mother, with tenderness but at the same time inflexible, didn't stop until she was able to move this one away from the community. The ones who remained faithful to their initial intention received from the Mother painstaking and constant care. Her yearning was that the Little Sisters answer the call of God with absolute faithfulness.*

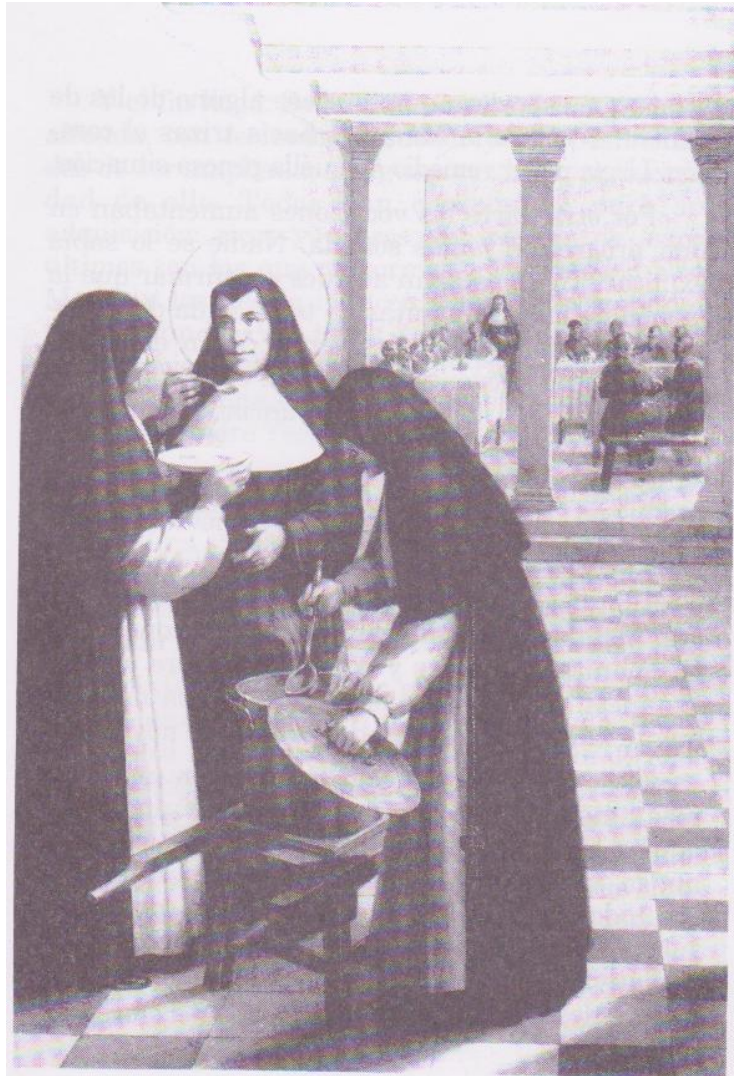
*An intense Eucharistic life, a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, a total faithfulness to the rule of the Congregation, supernatural fraternal charity among the Little Sisters, continuous and prompt care of the abandoned elderly... These are the traits that design the spiritual physiognomy of the Little Sisters. They have learned it from the exemplary life of the Mother.*

## ***EXPANSION OF THE APOSTOLATE***

**T**o those whom God has called to the life of the Little Sisters, it is beautiful to spend one's whole life like this, like a consoling angel among the elderly. The Saint would have enjoyed this way of life forever, but the role she was given was different. It is because not only the old abandoned of Valencia, but also those from all over and beyond Spain needed a home for the elderly and Little Sisters to care for them. And the Lord shows Mother Teresa this purpose, great and transcendental but which deprives her of the consolation of being an angel of charity among the elderly.

And the Mother starts to cover some paths, cities, towns. She travels throughout the vastness of Spain, and if we want to follow her in her travels through the map, we'd have to climb and descend continuously from north to south, and cross country from Valencia to Extremadura, so that we could go through the same a thousand and one times more. On the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the institute, their homes for the elderly are by now 33. Ten years later, they increase to 81. Five more years pass and when the hour has come for the Saint to complete her earthly task, the "homes" of the Little Sisters have reached this marvelous number -- 103.

How much sweat and hardships have these foundations caused The Mother! How much she have to travel, and with the means of transportation in Spain a century ago! If there were trains, by train. But in those days, those trains and their narrow tracks always threatened to derail at any moment. If the train is unavailable, and this was often, then they had to drive the horse-driven coaches, or carriages driven by beast of burden. And to think that the routes were not asphalt roads, but dusty roads. The most part of which, deserve to be called, "short cuts". The Mother traveled back and forth through the peninsula. She did not even have time to replace the handkerchief, with which she wiped her sweat from the sun of Andalusia, and now she had to fight the cold and blizzard of the heights of Teruel.



*The Mother tasting the food before it is served to the elderly.*

*It's not enough to just establish. Establishing an institution brings along with it a host of concerns and responsibilities, fatigue and mishaps. No, it's not enough to just establish. Just as it is not enough to dig a hole in the ground and put a plant in it. The "homes" for the elderly need the continued assistance of The Mother. She visits them officially every three years. But in an unofficial manner, not as Superior General but as Mother, a most loving mother. She visits them whenever she can. All the Little Sisters have been welcomed to the institute by her. Under her watchful eye, they have been formed into the religious life. Now obedience has sent them to all points of the "rose of the winds". Notwithstanding the distance, all these Little Sisters always look back in search of The Mother; they go back to her when they are in pain, or when their hearts are ringing with joy. The Mother is present everywhere. When she can't visit them personally she writes to them. This is the other great hardship of the Mother, -- her enormous correspondence, and always with her heart, her care and her prayer.*

## THE "HOME" CROSSES THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

*In 1885 the institute crosses the Atlantic Ocean. The Little Sisters have been called to Santiago de Cuba and to Havana. They depart happily and their joy multiplies as the number of the homes grow rapidly. For the first time, the Little Sisters go and establish without The Mother. She would like to accompany them but now she is an invalid.*

*Abusing ones' strength can't go unpunished. And she has done so without measure. She is barely 42 but her health suffers profoundly. She should have retired to a more quiet way of life years ago, to a restful life without hardships and ill treatment. And Mother Teresa has done precisely all the opposite.*

*What does it matter if her life comes to an end, if her terrible pains pierce her like a knife, even if she can hardly feed herself? Thousands of elderly have found a hand to help them reach the last step of their existence in this world and it is a hand full of love. This is all that really matters. What is important to The Mother is not to live long, but to live faithfully, always doing the mission that God has entrusted to her and in the way and manner He would have wanted it.*

*However, the time has not yet come to depart. It is necessary that the institute, her "Work," be consolidated securely. In 1876, she has already received the "decree of praise" from Rome. It is the first step to the Institute's definite approval. And this comes in 1887. The Mother knows now that the Holy Church has accepted the institute under her guardianship. Rome considers it useful and approves of it, and blesses it. Now there is nothing to worry about and though she would no longer be around, another Mother, "and what a Mother!" will take charge of keeping the vigil over the life of her "Work."*

## TERESA CONTINUES TO WORK

*She continues to work. She continues to wear herself out without giving herself a day of rest. She stays humble, meek as always, oblivious to distinctions, denying herself any privileges. Poor in her clothing, poor in her cell, poor in everything pertaining to herself. She continues to live the common life just like any other. Her faithfulness to the Constitution of the Institute impresses the other Little Sisters. It could be said that, at the rate that her physical health declines, her moral qualities become even more transparent. She is always at peace, never getting upset. She is her own person and above all she is faithful. With order, precision and true dignity she maintains in her hand the rudder of the Institute. Her prayer life and mortification intensify even more. She feels that she will have to give up her position and prays that God releases a windfall of blessings upon her "Work" so that the holiness of the Little Sisters will greatly increase with each day, to make more fruitful this difficult apostolate with the elderly.*

*By April 1896, the General Chapter is celebrated. The Saint pleads with the Little Sisters to free her of the burden of her position as Superior General. Her body can no longer take the long trips. She can no longer attend to the community services regularly. "The interest of the Institute," The Mother insists, "requires that another nun presides over the course of her work." But this time no one pays attention to her. Her daughters deny her request. She is "The Mother," only her and none other.*

*The Saint can't do anything else but to carry the cross once more upon her weak shoulders. She does it out of obedience. That is why her manner will always be as she*

*was just yesterday: simple. The false opinions, mysticisms, the faces of victim, she has never been able to endure. A young novice who used to tell the mother that she wanted to be a saint, used to go around with her head tilted to one side. The Saint replied that it was indeed the obligation of the Little Sisters to be saints. But... that head so twisted! The Mother took a pin and took the edge of the novice's veil between her fingers and secured it behind with the pin so she could do nothing else but carry her head high.*

*The Mother shook off, with a right phrase, all laziness disguised as piety: "zealous yes, but not like those who leave their work behind for others to do." Until the end of her strength but with her natural charm and humility, the Saint will always be the prudent virgin that remains solicitous. And with the flame of her lamp burning, waits for the Divine Spouse.*

*In the summer, she goes to Palencia for the inauguration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> novitiate. It was the great dream of her heart. Heat, fatigue and emotions... The day of the inauguration The Mother has to remain in bed, exhausted and in terrible pain. This she offers for the Novitiates of tomorrow. After a while, she would get better then have a relapse, and again the same monotonous song of recoveries and relapses. She stays this way for two months. At last she can make a trip to Valencia.*

## ***THE MOTHER'S LAST DAYS***

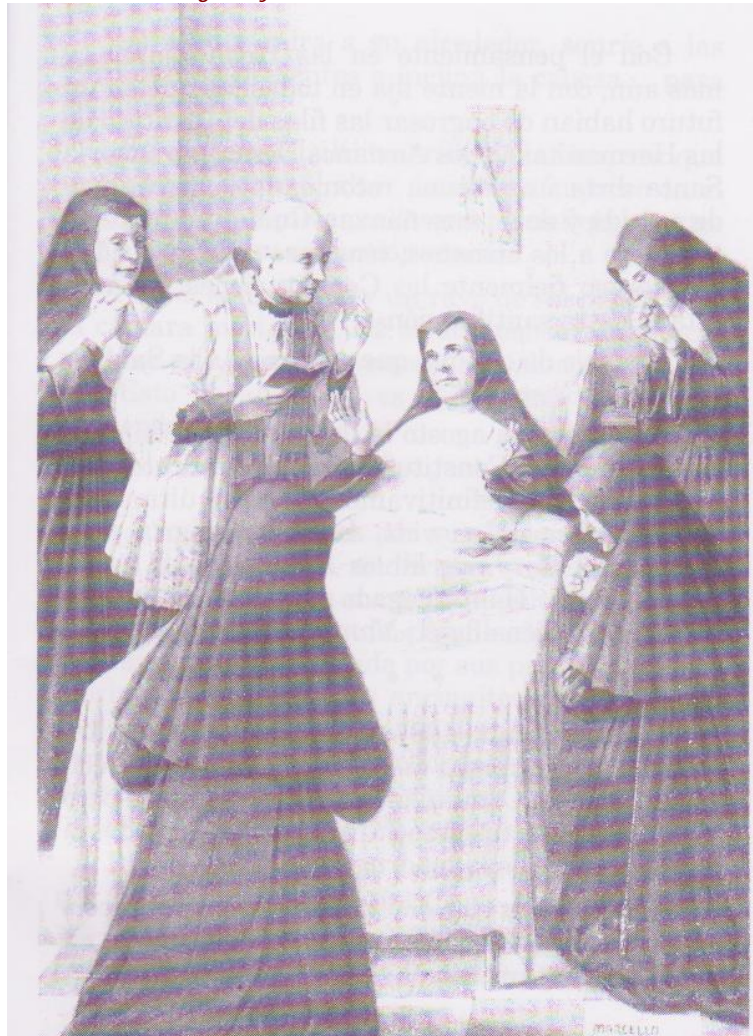
*During winter, the health of The Mother looks a little better. Spring time finds her gravely ill again. The doctors advise her to transfer to the "home" in Masarrochos in the middle of some fields. There were times that her stay there did her so much good. Perhaps this time she would also get better. And she does but only for a while. Her bleeding expectorations, vomiting, cough, unbearable headaches and insomnia return. Her digestive tract is ulcerated and the doctors suspect intestinal tuberculosis or a tumor or both.*

*The Mother foresees that the end is near. She stays calm and serene. She has lived just as she has taught: With God in her heart, eternity in her mind, and the world beneath her feet. She has remained in the world but has not belonged to the world. Why would she break down now?*

*The doctors want to try once more and ask that she be transferred to the town of Liria. They believe that the climate there would do her good. She agrees. She has known how to give orders, yet she knows how to obey. And though she does not hide it, she is thinking that Liria would be the last chapter. Most probably it hurts her to die away from her Valencia, but she does not say anything. She smiles and allows the others to decide for her.*

*She prays much and for all. She has always been a woman of prayer. In the midst of the racket of her many activities, The Mother has always found a way to stay united with God. Today, she does nothing but pray and remain with Him. In the "homes" they also pray. The daughters, who cannot resign themselves to losing their Mother pray. Her elderly pray. They profess a filial cult for The Mother. They are proud to call her "Mother" and they cry like little children at the thought that she could soon die.*

*More than 70 superiors and countless Little Sisters line up in Liria to receive the last blessings and the last words of The Mother. She continues to give herself, consoling the pain of her daughters, forgetting herself, burnt by a fire of an ardor that nothing could appease. On July 12, Father Francisco brings to her the last Holy Viaticum and two weeks later administers to her the Extreme Unction with the assistance of the co-founder, Don Saturnino. The dying mother follows the sacred rite with attention. Her soul entones the Magnificat of gratitude to God. Later, her condition stabilizes. Time passes and all who have gathered around her death bed need to take leave. The visits end, a few remain: her sister Maria, the Assistant to Mother General, and the usual nurses. Slowly like the candles in the altar, The Mother is consumed. It is a real Purgatory in life.*



*The Santa at the deathbed*

*With her thoughts on her daughters so far away, and even more so with her mind fixed on all the young ladies who will enter in the future the Institute of the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly, the Saint dictates her last recommendations, a summary of her life and her teachings: "Care for the elderly with interest and concern, have a lot of charity and be faithful to the Constitution of the Institute. In this lies our sanctification."*

*This is the message of charity that outlives the Saint and gives life to her "Work."*

*In August, she receives news from Rome that the Constitution of the Institute has been finally approved. This was the last stamp on the work of her life. She cries with joy in acknowledgement and her lips sing the "Te Deum". The time has come for her to also say "Nunc dimittis."*

*August 26, 1897. A sleepless night. Several times the "patient" has repeated her desire to receive Holy Communion. She receives it daily, but why does she insist so much on receiving it tonight, when it is not even 3 a.m.?*

*At the break of dawn the priest comes. He hears the Confession of the Saint, then leaves to get the Holy Host. The Mother looks around her, she smiles at the Little Sisters present, then inclines her head... forever. Her smile, like the last glow of the lamp that is dying over the altar, remains on her face. It can be said that that smile reflects outwardly the joy of her eternal communion.*

*Outside, the day begins and a ray of sunlight penetrates the funeral chamber. It is wrong to think of the sunset. One must open the windows to the dawn of an endless day. This is not the end, it is the beginning of life.*

*Her daughters carry her on their shoulders, like one victorious over death. They are taking her to the church for one last time, amongst the towns people of all social classes, guarded by unending queues of Little Sisters preceded by her favorites -- her glory and her crown - the elderly of the nearby "homes". They have come to cry over the remains of their Mother, and benefactress. The coffin dominates all that ocean of heads and seems to direct the path to the church, and through the church, to God.*

*She was 54 years and 7 months old. Thousands of elderly and more than a thousand Little Sisters, 103 "homes." All this make up her rich bundles of ears of wheat, for the barns in heaven.*

*She was laid to rest in Liria until 1904, the year when she was solemnly transferred to the Mother House in Valencia. She had suggested that if in the Institute there would one day be saints, they should not spend a single centavo trying to get their canonization; that money would be better spent on helping the elderly. The Little Sisters obeyed humbly and joyfully this request of The Mother. They only preoccupied themselves with prolonging her "Work," multiplying the homes for the elderly all over Spain and throughout South America.*

*A new star shines in the sky of the Church. All over the world, 215 Homes for the Poor Abandoned Elderly have created this shining star.*

## ***AFTER A HUNDRED YEARS***



*On April 27, 1958, in an explosion of lights and songs, Mother Teresa de Jesus Jornet e Ibars was proclaimed "blessed" in the solemn rite that was celebrated according to the traditional ceremonial of the Church. There was a big crowd-- numerous religious groups, the devout people coming in great numbers from Spain and the Americas. Particularly moving was the good representation of the elderly men and women coming from the various "homes" of the Institute, the living word of the poem on love, from the heart of the New Blessed.*

*It was a big celebration for her daughters, the Little Sisters, who for years have waited for this day. And the elderly, who were proud to call themselves "her children", and almost rejuvenated by this event, would stand up like the children of the strong woman in the Holy Scriptures, to proclaim her Blessed.*

*The beatification of the foundress has called the attention of the prelates and the civil authorities on her work which had been better understood for its social usefulness and, even more, its necessity. And as a consequence, the requests for new foundations flowed in.*

*The extraordinary favors, all kinds of blessings, which were attributed to the Blessed, contributed to the growth of the cause. They became so numerous from the year following the beatification that the ecclesiastic authorities were prompted to resume the cause. And to Cardinal Cayetano Cicognani, as prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Rites went the responsibility of submitting the petition to the Holy Father John XXIII and to publish on November 25, 1959, the Decree appointing the Commission in charge of resuming the cause of Canonization. It was a delicate stroke of Divine providence, which wanted to reserve, for the great believer of Mother Teresa Jornet and the Cardinal protector of her Congregation, this joy of preparing the triumph that he would not see on this earth.*

*On Feb. 5, 1962, while he was attending to the preparation of the Council with intense devotion and hard work, the Lord suddenly called His faithful and prudent Servant.*

*For the Church, and particularly for the Little Sisters, this was a great mourning.*

*"He died as a consequence of heart failure, because he made it work too hard", a newspaper wrote, and the Little Sisters agreed. It is true that no one like the Little Sisters had known the greatness of "that heart". They were losing the Cardinal, their protector on earth, but they firmly believed that they had a powerful intercessor in heaven.*

*And what for many years has been awaited became a reality in a little more than two months, because "God works in an hour".*

*Midnight, June 27, 1966. In the Charity Hospital of Caravaca, where the Little Sisters offer their services, an emergency operation is being done on a strangulated hernia in the groin on Mr. Elias Elun Vives. He is 65 years old and for 20 years now he has had the little hernia without much trouble. All of a sudden the hernia has hardened, causing him to be delirious in pain. The patient is in the operating table feeling totally helpless. Anesthesia is administered to him and the procedure starts.*

*When they remove the hernia, they discover a long stretch of the intestine that looks gangrenous. They try to revive it, but in vain. Everything is useless, and they decide to remove it under general anesthesia. The surgeon continues his work, while the anesthesiologist controls the condition of the patient minute by minute. Suddenly, the anesthesiologist orders everything stopped: The patient's vital signs are deteriorating. They have to hurry and forego the removal of the gangrenous part of the intestine if they did not want him to die on the operating table. The surgeon hurries to put back the intestines in the abdomen just as it is, and sews-up the incision, while the anesthesiologist administers artificial respiration; he succeeds in preventing the total deterioration of the patient. The operation ends like that, melancholic; it's almost 3:30 and everyone is convinced that the patient has little life left.*

*It is not a case of hiding the truth from the relatives who wait outside the operating room, full of anguish. "He is very serious, only God...", the surgeon whispers to the daughter of the patient, and he is not able to say the words. They call the chaplain who administers the sacrament of Extreme Unction on the patient. Men have already finished with their work ; now it is the time for the saints, and Mother Cristina, Superior of the Little Sisters, lays upon the patient a relic and a medal of the "Blessed Teresa" and asks the family and the Little Sisters to pray before the picture of the Mother Foundress.*

*The night passes in prayer. Once in a while the surgeon or the anesthesiologist or the assistants call up to ask if the patient has already died. "No.", they answer, "it looks like he is sleeping under the effect of the anesthesia". The following day, he wakes up and assures them that he is feeling perfectly well. The recovery proceeds rapidly, amidst the admiration of the doctors, who don't hesitate to say, "This is the work of God."*

*In the same period more or less, another humanly unexplainable cure was happening in Liria, the city where the "Blessed Teresa" had concluded her earthly journey.*

*The favored one this time is a blacksmith of about 50 years old, Manuel Torres Esteve. For 20 years he has been suffering from stomach ulcers, which he can only take care of once in a while due to his heavy work. On the morning of May 19, 1966, Ascension Day, after drinking a glass of milk, he experiences a violent stomach pain. The doctor is called in, and later diagnoses it as a gastric perforation and orders him to be hospitalized at once. He is brought right away to Valencia but because of problems of bureaucracy, he cannot be operated on before five in the afternoon.*

*This is a case of gastric perforation, but upon opening up his abdomen, they also discover the existence of a hardened prominent portion, suspected to be a malignant tumor. A portion is taken from this for biopsy and soon after, they hurry to stitch him up. A few days after, the patient is permitted to go home but he gets weaker each day. His condition gets critical, because according to the analysis, this is a tumor that has to be operated on, at the soonest possible time.*

*In the afternoon of July 5, Manuel Torres is admitted back to the hospital. That same night, they operate on him. While he lays in his narrow bed waiting to be wheeled into the operating room, a brother of his, Miguel, takes from around his neck a little chain with the medal and a relic of Mother Teresa, a gift from the little Sisters from Liria, and he puts it around the neck of his brother Manuel. In the evening of the first operation, Miguel had already put in between the sheets, an image of the Blessed Teresa and in the intermission between the two operations, without Manuel being aware of it. All the family members pray for his cure through the intercession of the Blessed, and the Community of Liria has joined them in prayer.*

*In fact, a miracle is needed, because the surgeon has found under the liver, a tumor as big as an orange, with hemorrhaging in the pancreas and in the biliary duct. It is impossible to remove it. The brother of Manuel is made to enter the operating room so that he may know that there is nothing that can be done, and at once they proceed to close the incision. "How much time does he have left?" "Well...", the doctors just shrug their shoulders and say, at the most, 15 days to 4 months, not a day more".*

*But the Little Sisters pray to Blessed Teresa, and the relatives of Manuel also pray intently and confidently. The patient is seen to be getting better each day. The*

doctors shake their heads, "Don't keep your hopes too high, he has very little time left." But Manuel continues to get better.

On July 12, he can already be released from the hospital. He goes back to Liria. With so much devotion, he visits the Home of the Little Sisters and just as the other sick people do, he also requests that he be permitted to lie on the bed on which she died, while the relatives, around the bed, and on their knees, pray. A month later, Manuel has already resumed his work as blacksmith and continues to this day. There is no trace of his tumor left even today.

The two cures that occurred in 1966 offered all the character traits of a miracle, so now it could be hoped that the cause of the Blessed would reach its desired end.

And so God places in the limelight His humble and great daughter, Teresa Jornet, so that her good works will be seen and will glorify the Father who is in heaven; that the Church be rejoiced, the world strengthened in faith; and the souls (especially those thirsting for ideals), may understand the value and the beauty of surrendering oneself to God.

In 1974, at the closing of the first Centennial of the Congregation, there was the grand finale: the solemn canonization of Mother Teresa. (The cause for the beautification of Dn. Saturnino is still in process). The entire Congregation could do nothing but thank the Lord for the many gifts received, and to continue with the new boost in the performance of their work of charity, working for the expansion of the Congregation.

At the beginning of the Second Centennial, the Congregation had as its goal the opening of other

"Homes" in other continents: Africa, Asia and the Pacific. "Homes" continue to open in other countries in the Americas and at last in the 90's the mission of the Little Sisters was extended to Africa. The Little Sisters opened their doors to receive the many homeless elderly who were the recipient of their attention and concern. The Little Sisters like angels, are quick to go where a poor or sick elderly requires their presence.

Soon enough the Little Sisters set their gaze upon Asia and the dream that has nestled in the hearts for many years became a reality in November 2006 when five religious Sisters arrived in Manila filled with the hope and the desire to share with the Filipino people their Charism and their mission, which implies, sharing their lives.

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Through this pages, we tried to summarize the biography of Santa Teresa Jornet Ibars, foundress of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly.

We have presented the different profiles of her personality, rich in color and exuberant in deed, accentuating her preferred love for the poor and her insistence on faithfulness to the plan of God for her. The best fruit of her faithfulness to the Holy Spirit is her presence and her collaboration with Dn. Saturnino in establishing the Congregation of the Little Sisters. Mother Teresa took the lead in the projects that Dn. Saturnino presented and she promoted them with great responsibility.

*The Charism of service that Mother Teresa and Dn. Saturnino handed down as the inheritance of the Little Sisters surpasses even the best welfare programs for the elderly.*