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Dearest Sisters,

We received the news that at about 7:00 p.m. today (local time), the Lord visited the Thecla Merlo house of our Queen of Apostles community, Pasay City, Philippines, to call to unending life our sister:

**OCARIZA SR. PORFERIA**  
**born in Matanao Davao del Sur (Digos), Philippines, on 26 February 1957.**

Many sisters will remember the intense expression on Sr. Porferia's face in a photo taken in the midst of the non-violent revolution that took place in 1986 in the Philippines during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. The picture, which flew around the world and became one of the symbols of the "People Power" uprising, shows Sr. Porferia and other sisters, with arms thrown wide and rosaries in hand, challenging the regime's military tanks and soldiers. And it was with the same deep conviction, faith and energy radiating from her face in that picture that Sr. Porferia lived her Pauline vocation.

A member of a beautiful family with strong Christian roots, she and her siblings would gather together every evening to recite the rosary with their parents. Sr. Porferia entered the Congregation in the house of Pasay City on 10 April 1979, after graduating from high school. Her novitiate, made in Lipa, concluded with her first profession on 25 March 1983. She spent her Juniorate in Pasay City, where she studied religious sciences and worked in the technical apostolate. After her perpetual profession in 1988, she dedicated herself to the itinerant apostolate in the communities of Tacloban, Manila, Olongapo, Zamboanga and Baguio. A simple and hard-working person, Sr. Porferia was capable of making big sacrifices in order to carry out in the best way possible the mission entrusted to her. In the community, she was thoughtful and kind, close to each sister, always ready to help out and respond to various needs.

In 1997, she gladly accepted the proposal to go as a missionary to Hong Kong in fulfillment of her yearning to communicate the Gospel to the Chinese people. Although she was there for only two years due to the subsequent illness of her parents, the experience opened her heart to immense China and to the knowledge of new lifestyles. When Sr. Porferia returned to her own country, she continued the diffusion apostolate in Manila, and then for another 10 years in Davao, one of the most important cities in the Philippines, located on the southern island of Mindanao. She visited families and communities there with her characteristic fervor, willing to face without hesitation the difficulties related to travel, accommodations and food, as long as the Word of God could speed forward and reach the most distant places.

In 2009, Sr. Porferia was assigned to the Divine Master community in Pasay City so that she could attend the University of Business there and receive training in administration work. But she was also still needed in the area of outreach and so, from 2012-2018, she lent a helping hand to the itinerant apostolate in the dioceses of Manila and Tuguegarao.

About three years ago, the Lord manifested himself to our sister in an unforeseen way through the diagnosis of breast cancer. She accepted the illness with optimism and an attitude of self-offering, recognizing God's fatherly hand even in this unexpected situation. She continued to dedicate herself, as much as possible, to the administration sector and bindery work in Pasay. And it was in this last stage of her life that Sr. Porferia discovered a new talent: the cultivation of flowers and medicinal plants—a skill she rejoiced in since it was in harmony with the urging of Pope Francis to safeguard our common home, the Earth.

Because his encyclical *Laudato si* made such a deep impact on her, it would not be out of place to quote here a passage that is especially significant today. "At the end [of life]," the Pope reminds us, "we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God, and be able to read with admiration and happiness the mystery of the universe, which will share in unending plenitude with us.... Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place...." (LS 243). May this consoling certainty accompany us as we contemplate the mystery of the call to heaven that the Lord has been extending to so many of our sisters recently.

Affectionately,

Rome, 22 December 2020

  
Anna Maria Parenzan