



*"Faith in the resurrection  
opens us to fraternal communion  
beyond the threshold of faith ..."*  
(RoL 24)



Today 14 September 2018 at 12.55 p.m.

At St. Luke's Hospital in Quezon City, Philippines,

**CRISTINA Sr MARIA GESUALDA JUSTO**

Returns to the Father's house.

She was 87 years old and 54 years of religious life.

While the Church celebrates the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Father calls our sister Cristina to eternal the banquet, while we proclaim with the Psalmist: "*Do not forget the works of the Lord*", thanking the marvelous work that the Lord accomplished in this our first Filipina Pastorella Sister.

Cristina, the third of eight siblings, was born in Manila on 13 March 1931 and was baptized in a Manila hospital six days after her birth. In 1949 she completed her Bachelors' Degree in Education at the Philippines Normal College; and from 1953 to 1954 she attended the catechetical training school at the Institute of Catechetics Sta. Isabel College.

In 1958, from an advertisement of the Homelife magazine of the Society of St. Paul, Cristina learned of our Congregation and expressed her interest for the Pastorelle to an SSP the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Sorrows. After a vocational journey, she entered the Congregation on August 22, 1961 in Carlton – Melbourne (Australia), had her vestition on December 8, 1962 and left for Italy. She entered the Novitiate on September 2, 1963, in Albano Laziale - Mother House. Sr Cristina made her first profession on 3 September 1964 in Albano Laziale - Mother House, taking the name of Sr. Maria Gesualda. After the first profession, she remained in the Mother House for few months and returned to the Philippines, On May 15, 1965, she was part of the three sisters who established our presence in the Philippines at Imus - Cavite.

In her request for admission to the First Profession, Sr. Cristina expressed: "*With the grace of God, I propose to fulfill with much generosity, love and great zeal the duties of my apostolate, which you, Rev. Mother, will entrust to me in the future, all for the glory of God, my sanctification and the salvation of souls*".

Sr. Cristina is described by her formators as a person who loves the Congregation and gives herself generously. An upright person, delicate, precise, sincere, industrious, reflective, docile, silent, capable of sacrifice, reserved, of much prayer and deep inner life.

In her 54 years of religious life, she carried out with great love and dedication very important ministries: the service of authority, Regional superior for two terms (1986-1994), Delegation and Regional Councilor; Principal of the Jesus Good Shepherd School of Imus for many years (1967-1976; 1983-1986; 1998-2001); Regional and Provincial treasurer (1983-1986; 2006-2017). For three years (1995-1998) she was in the apostolic community of Parañaque where she carried out pastoral services. Sr. Cristina was a member of the Preparatory Commission of the 6th General Chapter.

The Filipina sisters remember her as a mother for everyone: sisters, students, teachers, parents and lay people. A firm but gentle and delicate presence with whom the sisters felt free to share their journey. Sr. Cristina loved the Congregation, the pastoral charism and she lived it faithfully, transmitting it to all generations of Pastorelle of the Philippines reminded them of teachings of our Founder. She left her footprint as a Pastorella entirely given to the Lord, simple and essential, sober, transparent, upright and generous towards others, she did not ask anything for herself. She also had a good sense of humor.

Sr Cristina passed away in the silence and serenity of a life fully given for the Lord and for his people. After having received the anointing of the sick, she left in a delicate and silent manner, leaving to the sisters who were around her, a word of the Gospel pronounced with insistence: "*Love one another*". Sr. Cristina, who was admitted in the Intensive care unit on September 12, had not stopped thanking the sisters for every little gesture of care toward her, thus living her Miserere and her Magnificat.

We thank the Good Shepherd for the life and vocation of Sr. Cristina. We entrust to her intercession the intentions of Pope Francis, in this moment of particular trial for the Church, and the journey of the Filipina sisters and of our entire Religious Family.

*Sr. Aminta Sarmiento Puentes*  
superior general

Bogotá, 14 September 2018  
Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross