



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



Today, 16 July 2014, at 1.30 a.m. (Brazilian time)

in Pompeia Hospital of Caxias do Sul

ESTHER LUIZA SR MARISTELA MIGOT

has returned to the Father's house

at the age of 80 and 55 years of Religious Life

"I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do." (Mt 11:25-26). Today, the day dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, these words of Jesus addressed to the Father, while He hands over Sr. Maristela, resound particularly significant in our heart as Pastorella Sisters. Let us also join in thanking the Lord for this sister who consumed her entire life as a "little one of the Gospel."

Esther Luiza was born on September 27, 1933 in Montenegro, Rio Grande do Sul - Brazil, in a large Christian family. She is in fact the thirteenth of fourteen children, including Gloria, who is also a Pastorella Sister. She was baptized in Garibaldi - RS on 9 October of the same year and was confirmed in Arroio Canoas - Archdiocese of Porto Alegre - RS on December 4, 1936.

She entered the Congregation on May 12, 1953 in Terceira Léguas and she herself narrated: *"Mother Ignacia Armani - Pastorella, came to prepare the children for their first Communion in my community. I had never thought of religious vocation. Seeing this Pastorella, with the spirit of Jesus Good Shepherd, conversing with children, young people, couples, animating the mission, attracted me and made me think, "I want to be Pastorella." She visited my family and talked with them. Right there, I made the decision to pray three Hail Marys to Our Lady of Fatima, every day for a month. If she will enlighten me, showing me what I should do, then I will go. Arriving at the end of the thirty days, I felt a great desire to go. Immediately I wrote to Mother Eugenia Miana, who received my letter and immediately came to get me."*

So after about four years between study and the apostolate, Esther Luiza entered the Novitiate on September 2, 1957, in Casa Madre of Albano Laziale (RM) and the following year, on September 3, made her first profession taking the name of Sr. Maristela. After profession until 1959, she was sent to the community of Lignano Sabbiadoro (UD), where she devoted herself to the Kindergarten and various pastoral activities.

In 1959, she returned to Brazil and specifically in Terceira Léguas where she remained until 1961 as the Formator of the young. Then she was transferred to Canela as superior of

the community until 1965, devoting herself to the social service ministry and the parish Caritas. Sr Maristela herself recounted this memory: *“A community that made a deep impact on me at the beginning was Canela. When we started working, I was a young woman of only 27 years old, full of life, visiting all the families, especially the poorest and helped them according to the needs of each family. I knew all the families in the community and the entire community participated in the ministry. Returning to the community we shared experiences in the pastoral. This was very good. There were many good things we shared to each other.”*

During this period, she also prepared for perpetual profession which she made on September 3, 1963 in Caxias do Sul. From 1965 to 1966, she was in S Paulo-Jabaquara, for a time of rest and then from 1966 to 1971, was at Bento Gonçalves as superior of the community, devoting herself mainly to family ministry, visiting the sick and the poor.

From 1971 to 1976, she was in Caxias - S. Leopoldo, where, due to her sensitivity and delicacy of mind, as well as the depth and coherence with which she lived her religious life, was asked to dedicate herself to the formation of the Aspirants.

Sr Maristela expressed with joy her love for Jesus Good Shepherd and His Church in the various communities where she carried out the ministry of pastoral care in the years 1976-2013: Cazusa Ferreira, Porto Alegre, Fagundes Varela, Getulio Vargas, Terceira Léguas, Bento Gonçalves, Cascavel, Canela, Caxias-Consolação, and again in Canela and Porto Alegre. She was particularly known by her passion toward the ornamentation of the church, the attention toward the sick and the most needy families and the apostolate of prayer. In some communities she also dedicated herself to the formation of pastoral workers and the organization of basic ecclesial community.

In her testimony last March, Sr. Maristela pointed out: *“Another community that greatly marked me was Cascavel for the poverty and for being with the poor. We had a lot of good experiences with the people and with God. My story makes me happy.”* A pastoral story that does not end even when she was forced to retire in Caxias, in the community of Betania, in 2013 for health problems. Aware of the severity of the cancer in the intestine that had already invaded the liver and pancreas, with lucidity and trust in the Lord, she underwent a risky and delicate surgery, offering her life for the Church, the Congregation and in a special way for vocations.

Thank you, Sr. Maristela, for showing us how the sisters can serve and bring with them the *odour of the sheep* until the end, remembering them in your tireless prayer. Thank you for the words that you left us, in order to sustain us in our journey: *“Faith is my strength, light that makes me feel the good of each thing. Every morning, I surrender myself in His hands and during the day I renew it. I make a continuous offering with Jesus Good Shepherd”*. Thank you for this serene and joyful witness of life!

You lovingly dedicated yourself to the care of the chapel of the community of Betania, decorating it with flowers gathered in the garden and arranged them in front of the Tabernacle, almost like preparing your final encounter with the Bridegroom, Jesus Good Shepherd.

Sr Marta Finotelli
Superiora generale

Rome, 16 July 2014
Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel