



The Provincial Superior of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts in Peru and the Community of Belen , recommend to your prayers the soul of our dear Sister:

MARÍA BERNARDA BALLÓN-LANDA ARRISUEÑO SS.CC.
1921 - 2008

"The Lord has done great things for me, Holy is his Name!" Lc. 1,49)

Saturday, September 20, 2008, day of the Virgin Mary, our beloved Bernardita went to heaven ... She departed to the Father, where she is probably resting already after her long and painful illness. She went off as a little candle ... sweet and gentle, full of peace and love, as her exemplary life. Until the end, from her extreme weakness and impotence, she proclaimed the God of peace, goodness and love that was always the center of her life.

Maria del Carmen Guillermina Ballon-Landa Arrisueño (Maria Bernarda), received the gift of life in Arequipa (Peru), August 15, 1921, within an exemplary and deeply Christian family. Her family and her homeland make marked her a thousand ways and from them she inherited her artistic, dreamy, poetic spirit, and at the same time rebellious, fearless, and risky.



She does all her studies from Kindergarten to Senior High School at our College of the Sacred Hearts of Arequipa, where she distinguishes herself already, as a student identified with our Spirituality, which will guide her to surrender herself to the Lord in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts. She entered the Novitiate in Chosica (Lima) and made there her First Vows on August 09, 1947 and her Final Vows on February 2, 1952.

In her first years of religious life she receives her obedience for the College SS.CC. Belen where she teaches the smallest girls. Bernardita is distinguished by her deep prayer life, her restless spirit and her great righteousness. Perhaps she saw in her the promise of a good Formator and was sent to Paris (France) for a year. Returning to Peru in 1959, she is in charge of the formation of the Sisters of Temporary Vows and those who prepare themselves for perpetual vows later on, she will assume the mission of Mistress of Novices. Years later in 1967 she traveled to Rome to be part of the preparation of the Special General Chapter to be held in 1968 in which she participates as a delegate of the Province of Peru. This chapter opens up new horizons for our Congregation and in Peru it will have deep implications.

In 1969, Bernadette was sent to Ayaviri (Puno) to work at the Rural Institute for Women's Education. With great joy she lived the love of God in the midst of the poorest in Morón, in Chaclacayo, in Ayaviri, living her life next to them, to follow with them and from there Jesus poor and humble. She searched the radicalism of the Gospel and her experience of poverty had no half measures, she remained deeply humane and simple.

Throughout her life she held different positions of responsibility: she served as Coordinator of Community several times and also as Provincial Counselor, Provincial Archivist, Provincial Secretary, She worked in the General Archives in Rome from 1986 to 1994. The eight years she stayed in Rome to organize the archives of the General House of the Sisters helped her to enjoy the internationality of the

Congregation and the unity with the Brothers ss.cc., an aspect of our vocation and mission very important in her life. Upon her return to Peru in 1994, she takes up among other services, the Provincial Archives, work to which he dedicated all her experience, enthusiasm, thoroughness and professionalism.

Being in this service, the disease that plagued her years before reappeared and she had to be hospitalized on January 5, 2007. After several surgeries and sufferings without any hope, doctors allowed her to return to her beloved community because there was nothing more to do ... Since then our beloved Bernardita can not rise anymore. She has some moments of a small recovery, but she is gradually consumed without a complaint, until the Lord came to relieve her from her suffering and no doubt welcomed her to the Kingdom. Her big heart so identified with the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary stopped beating leaving the indelible memory of her great goodness.

Her funeral, was beautiful and full of meaning, she that so loved the Congregation was accompanied by the two Superiors Generals present in Lima, by many Brothers SS.CC. Sisters SS.CC. of several Latin American countries gathered in their assemblies, by us, Sisters and Brothers of Peru, by members of the SS.CC. Secular Branch to whom she dedicated a few years of her life, by friends, and by her family ...

Amid the great pity that we feel for her absence, we thank the Lord for all she has meant and means to us. We have benefited from her deep faith, from the richness of her personality, her art and her countless attentions ... she has left us the best inheritance, a meaning-laden message of her great heart.



Bernardita, rest in the peace of your Lord ...!

Testimonials

SYMPHONY OF REMEMBRANCE

Marcela de Taboada SS.CC.

A few days ago our beloved Bernardita left us to go to meet her Lord ... She left us a large void and the feeling that with her, many years of the life of our Province are gone. Personally, Bernardita was someone that marked my life since my youth... I have shared with her important moments, we have fought together and dreamed of a religious life when we dreamed something different, more authentic and less formal. I always felt a great affinity with her as best we understood each other very well, as good "Arequipeñas", loving our homeland with the fire of the Misti in our hearts. Some times fanatical and dreamy, with burning desires to fight for a more just and more human world ... We both had received the precious heritage of deeply Christian and united families that marked us ... Both had studied in the College of the Sacred Hearts of Arequipa, with the same solid Christian formation and perhaps the same "hype" in our customs and traditions.

The year before my final vows, I was lucky enough to have as a Formator, she prepared us for perpetual profession. It was a key year in my life and I thank the Lord for everything I got through her: the example of her life, her simple wisdom, her evangelical deepness, her great love for the Congregation, her art, her culture, her guitar, her creativity, her joy. Later I was able to enjoy Bernardita, not as a Formator, but as a Sister ... When I arrived in Belen, with fear and trembling, she was teaching the smaller children and I loved to see her surrounded by them handled so well. She took them to the chapel to pray, the singing was beautiful, she achieved incredible things with them. She always shared how difficult it was for her to teach! ... in community, Bernardita was a discreet sister, very humble and simple, she was never noticed, gentle, sensitive to the extreme. She went completely unnoticed, but left her footprints without even realizing it. Her heart was deeply fraternal. In the great events of the Church of those times, the spiritual vitality of the Church in Latin America, poured on us and we lived together the wealth of the renewal of religious life, with all its implications and consequences. They were years of intense changes. In the congregation we also felt also the healthy effects of the Council, as well as the pangs of anything that brought change and renewal.

Bernardita, lucid and courageous allowed dialogue and search, and we, the group of young sisters of that time grouped around her based on her vision, her strength of spirit and her deep love for the Congregation. In our meetings she always encouraged us to proceed, despite the difficulties we had with the authorities of that time. She always put the

deep note, the evangelical base, the constant reference to Jesus and His Kingdom. She was always at our side in our quest and the struggles we went through. Thanks to her we achieved many things in the Province that seemed impossible years ago. She knew how to look through the eyes of the heart to the reality surrounded her, and that never left her indifferent. She assumed with radicalism the option for the poor, but her personal demands never made her hard on others nor did they des-humanized her, in contrast she was always very feminine, sensitive, romantic, sensitive and very delicate in her dealings with all.

When I was in Rome in the service of the General Government, the Lord allowed us to be back together. Bernardita was appointed by Maria Pia, our Superior General, to be in charge of the Archives of the General House of the Sisters. Those were years of great spiritual wealth for us as we could exchange a lot at another level, we experienced and enjoyed the internationality and the unity and cooperation with our brothers SS.CC. In the midst of the arts and religion of the Vatican, and the culture of the first world, the two nostalgic Arequipenians celebrated our feasts, singing and crying in our exile, remembering our own culture, from that corner of Via Aurelia.

Upon returning to Peru, we continued together in the provincial house, where Bernardita was still active in the Secretariat and Provincial Archives, she spent long hours with her beloved music, putting her knowledge and her heart in every piece of paper ... In the mornings the birds and the pigeons came to be fed by her, with the crumbs of bread she gave them, often from her own hands.

Later the Lord led us through different ways but close to each other ... At any moment I could see her, visit her, talk to her about my concerns and projects ... She was getting weaker gradually until falling seriously ill in January 2007 when we had to run to the clinic ... she began her long and painful process of erosion, until the end ... she suffered so much and so quietly ... and so her life went out little by little...

It is not easy to accept that she is not here anymore... the emptiness that leaves us in is immense ... But in the depths of our hearts, the memories of the beautiful symphony of her life will last forever.

Dearest Bernardita, your departure leaves us filled with grief and with the feeling that much of our lives left with you ... but now you rest with the Good God and that is always Good News, we know that from there you will always be our guardian angel ... Thank you!

Testimonials

FULL OF ZEAL SS.CC.

Juan Luis Schuester, SS.CC.

Since several years ago, our congregation invites us to share our charism and mission as brothers and sisters. Since my arrival to the formation house of Ramon Zavala (Lima-Peru), I had the opportunity to know and meet with our sisters. Throughout these years I have been knowing, discovering and some times appreciating the testimony of my sisters. Some have left footprints in my life for their testimony of service to the poorest, because of their openness to social reality and their sense of congregational fraternity.. I think that Bernarda is one of them.

I remember when she was saying good-by to travel to Rome and work in the archives of the congregation. By chance I was in Belen. I was surprised by her enthusiasm despite her advanced age for a service in another country. But is at her return to Peru, that I had the opportunity to know her a little better. I think what has brought us more near is our common pleasure and love for the archives and the history of our congregation. I called "my advisor" because I often consulted her expertise in the archives and knowledge of our history, both globally and at the level of Peruvian history, with her knowledge and experience of our charism. She was truly a SS.CC. sister This has enabled us to know and appreciate each other better.

Many things caught my attention on the witness of her life. I name only but a few that I appreciated more. First of all, she was a religious woman, a woman of prayer and adoration. This went over her relationship with the others. How

such a fragile body so much enthusiasm and dynamism could fit! You could see her animating the celebrations of the community with her guitar. The amount of work done every day despite her advanced age, a quiet and silent work of an ant in her Archives, detailed and well organized. A quiet woman of peace that did not rise to anger. In spite of being "Arequipeña" and proud of it, (born the same day that the feast of Arequipa is celebrated) I never saw her affected by the "nevada". (strong electricity in the air that affects the people negatively). She transmitted serenity around Her. I thank God for having been able to walk a bit of road with Bernarda and I appreciate her testimony over these years.