



HFS mourns the loss of Mother Flor
Sr. Delia Labay, SSJ

Holy Family School together with all the communities of Siervas De San Jose Congregation is deeply saddened by the recent passing of one its foundress Sr. Maria Flora Perez, SSJ on July 10, 2017.

Sr. Ma. Flora was born in La Coruña, Spain on 22nd of February 1935 to Jesus Perez (+) and Amalia Perez (+). She is survived by her sister, Benedicta, her nephew Enrique Perez Nuñez, her niece Eva Perez Nuñez and her grand nephew, Orlando. Her Father died during civil war in Spain when she was still at a very tender age. Along with her sister, she received her elementary and secondary education at the boarding school of the *Siervas de San José* (SSJ) for the orphans of military personnel. She earned her college degree, Bachelor of Education, Major in Mathematics, Minor in Physics and Library Science.

She entered the congregation of the SSJ in Cajar, Granada on November 21, 1956 and made her first profession of religious vows on July 2, 1959. She Came to the Philippines in 1962 and was assigned in the Community of Colegio de Sta. Rosa in Intramuros, Manila and then in Holy Family Dormitory in Gov. Forbes (now Lacson Street) where she made her final profession of vows on July 2, 1964. She was eventually appointed Mistress of Novices in the year 1967 and was in-charge of the novitiate formation until 1982.

In 1987, she was assigned to the community of Holy Family Dormitory (now Holy Family Home) in Iloilo City as the Local Superior and Directress of the Dormitory. At that time, the community faced many trials and ventured into endeavors to establish income-generating projects to augment their income and provide livelihood for some women and young girls at risk. After going through many attempts and trials, they started the production of church vestments which consequently started to flourish. Due to the increasing demands coming from Metro Manila and the hassle of transporting the materials from Manila to Iloilo, the Provincial Team (in consultation with the Community) decided to transfer the shop to Quezon City. With the assistance of some

Sisters and three lay workers, the newly relocated shop started its operations on November 6, 1990 at the Holy Family School Compound in Quezon City. Soon, the news about the new shop spread like fire. During the ordination of some priests at the Manila Cathedral in March, 1991, the church vestments, product of harmonized prayer and work by the *Talleres de Nazareth Quezon City* (TDNC), were displayed for the first time.

The *Talleres de Nazaret*, under the management of the Mo. Bonifacia Rodriguez Foundation, Inc., is the concrete response of the *Siervas de San José* to the situation of poor women workers, especially young women at risk, with the objective of helping them recover their dignity as persons and promoting the dignity and sanctifying value of manual work. Such goal was reaffirmed during the 25th anniversary celebration on November 7, 2015. At present, the *Talleres de Nazaret* is established in Mandaluyong City, Cebu City and Silay City.

Holy Family School was also a pioneering endeavor of Sr. Ma. Flora. She was one of the founding members of this educational institution established in 1966 with Mother Carmen Enriquez as the first Superior and Mother Jacinta Salazar as the first Directress. From the time of its foundation up to now, the school had been an effective and efficacious means of fulfilling the vision-mission of the *Siervas de San José* to provide a well-rounded formation to young girls. Sr. Ma. Flora's dream is to see this objective realized and extended to young girls who could not afford a good, Catholic education. She had very well expressed this dream in her last message, documented in Golden Jubilee Souvenir Program of Holy Family School in December , 2016.

Sr. Ma. Flora's other projects include the following:

- The Mother Bonifacia Worker's Credit Cooperative for the Talleres co-workers which is now on its 23rd year;
- The SSJ Heritage Center which showcase the origins and Congregation, its history in the Philippines and the present apostolic tasks;
- The Toddlers' Center which is providing attention and care of the infants and children (up to 4 years old) of the co-workers who at work;
- Translations of the congregational materials from Spanish to English for the perusal of the sisters, especially the formands;
- Her own reflections and writings on the Principles of the "*Taller de Nazaret*" and Christian Industry.

Sr. Ma. Flora is a dynamic person, firm yet gentle and kind, with a very generous and compassionate heart of all. Full of ideas and dreams for the Congregation, the Province, the *Talleres* and most of all, for the co-workers and families. Through her, the dream of the SSJ Founders: Fr. Francisco Butinya, SJ, and St. Bonifacia, is being realized and sustained. A true Sierva de San Jose, she inspired and encouraged her sisters, to be true followers of Jesus, the Worker in Nazareth in the spirit of our Founders.