




THE DOMINICAN
Torch
Special Tribute
from the School
Administration

REQUIESCAT
IN PACE

Sr. Ma. Zenaida Ancheta, OP





Message from the Editor

It is with a very heavy heart that I'm performing my task of Editor of this publication.

The bustle in the Administration building to give it a fresh look for the new school year didn't happen. The building is unusually quiet and the voice we loved to hear, as Sr Zenaida went about her business, is no more. When we returned from our summer vacation, all the things were still where Sr Zenaida put them with her own hands for the WASC accreditation visit during the very busy weekend before the Visiting Committee arrived. When I walked through the building to my office, I saw her presence in every document and display item where she put them. Even now that there has been change, her presence is still felt.

When I am in the gym I know that every curtain and every aspect of the interior design of the gym and the rest of the building are a reminder of her enthusiasm, experience and love for the school.

I feel the great emptiness, because she is no longer making a quick detour into my office on the way from the convent to hers. She often had a quick discussion of innovative ideas, or she voiced concerns. Sometimes she had an amusing anecdote, or shared a photo. I will always remember her wonderful sense of humour and the many laughs we had.

Sr Zenaida had experience and wisdom that helped many teachers and staff when they approached her with a problem. She was courageous and when she had taken a stand, she was strong enough to defend it. However, she also had the humility to change her mind when she saw that there was an alternative solution to a problem.

On the last Friday before she took ill, when Sr Zenaida came through my door right at the end of the work day to share some sad news about the passing away of a dear friend, I could never have imagined that it would be the last conversation I would have with her.

Two months later, we had to confront our grief and sorrow when our beloved Principal and friend had passed away.

Sr Zenaida often shared her personal mantra with me:

*For all that has been...thank you, Lord
For all that will be... yes*

After 50 years of religious life, Sr Zenaida said "yes" when God came to call her home.

- Mercia de Souza



When you are most alone, the memory of love will bring you home

By Ed Solis



“Perhaps love is like a resting place, a shelter from the storm, It exists to give you comfort, It is there to keep you warm, and in those times of trouble When you are most alone, the memory of love will bring you home”.

These came from the song “Perhaps Love”, one of the favorite songs of Sr. Zenaida. Let me change some of the words, and I will use “Zen”.

“Perhaps ZEN is like a resting place, a shelter from the storm, SHE exists to give you comfort, SHE is there to keep you warm, and in those times of trouble When you are most alone, the memory of ZEN will bring you home.”

Truly she was a home for all of us. Home because there is no sadness, no dull moments, full of positivity, kindness and always there to give you comfort and warm affection.

Sr. Zenaida was born Jan. 4, 1952. Take note of 1952 if you add the numbers: 1+9+5+2, it's 17. She died on July 17, 2023. If you add the numbers 2+0+2+3 it's 7. July 17 is 7-17 right, it's reversible. Do you know why there are always number 7? 7 means perfection, because in the Bible God created the universe and on the 7th day He rested, He rested after creation had been perfected. Maybe that's the meaning of the life of Sr. Zenaida. Also, because she is now with the Lord. She was also the 7th child. Her last days in hospital numbered seventy-one.

She is our spiritual companion. Without her we would not have professed being the Dominican Laity: Bros. Ian, Ronaldo, Jofil, Gustl, Erick G, John Erick, Noel, Mervin, Joseph, Jun, Sisters Coney, Mary Grace, Robeth, and Xochilt. Each one of us have a unique memory to share, because she was always there ready to listen, and ready to make us smile.

At DIS, we always talk about the D'TORCH, the values that St. Dominic de Guzman taught us.

T for Truthful – Sr. Zen is a true person inside and out. She decided fairly and prayed before making a final decision. Truth with justice, joy and compassion.

O for Organized – it is very evident how she planned everything, from Our Profession of being Dominican Laity last November, the Foundation Day Celebration last December, to her birthday and Golden Jubilee

celebration last January. A true hands-on person.

R for Reflective – I think it's self-explanatory.

C for Courageous – Sr. Zen was a very strong person, and she never complained about being tired or unwell. From Guam to Taiwan in one week, from Taipei to Kaohsiung. A superwoman, or Supersister.

H for helpful – all of us have experienced of her being helpful.

Please allow me to share: The first time I visited her in her office, I told her “Sor, there is a long holiday break and I won't be missing classes. Please allow me to visit my family”. She asked, “Where are you staying in the Philippines”.

“San Juan City, Metro Manila.”

She said “Okay, you come back a day before you leave, I want you to take a **pasalubong* to Sister Cons and Father Jeff,” I Said “Yes”.

When I came back from the Philippines, I visited her in her office and before I could speak, she said, “Ah I know why you are here, you will go on a vacation again”. I said “Sor Zen no, I'm not going on a vacation, I'm just here to share with you my experience during my visit. Because Sr. Cons gave a *pasalubong* for you”

She then shared her experience visiting her family in the United States and in the Philippines. From then on, we always shared some memories about our families. That was the most important lesson I learned from her, visit your family, be with your family, and love your family. You can have friends here and there, but your family is always there wherever you may be.

I know that each one of us has a story to tell about her, and I am sure you will cherish it. Full of happiness and love. The Lord God gave us Sr. Zenaida, she is a blessing to all of us. With that, she is our HERO.

You will be forever in our hearts, and we will always be grateful. We're not in the military, but please allow me this gesture. I salute you!

**souvenir*

A Life of Dedication

By Joe Schoeman

Sister Maria Zenaida of Blessed Jordan of Saxony Tenderro Ancheta was born in Metro Manila, Philippines, on January 4, 1952.

Sister Zenaida knew from a young age that she wanted to be a nun. She drew inspiration for her vocation from her aunts, Sister Emilia and Sister Nieves, and two first cousins, Sr. Lorna Rosario and Fr. Manuel Gelido. Sister Zenaida told Sister Nieves that she wanted to become one of them at age five. In 1970, at age 18, sister Zenaida joined the Congregation of the Religious Missionaries of St. Dominic, and she professed her first vows in 1973. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1998 in Guam and her Golden Jubilee in 2023 in Taiwan.

Sister Zenaida was a shining example of dedication to her calling, and her life was a testament to the values she held close to her heart.

In her work as an educator, Sister Zenaida touched the lives of countless students and teachers, instilling in them not just knowledge but also the values of integrity and compassion. She taught in the Philippines from 1971 to 1979. She was assigned to Guam in 1980. In Guam, Sister Zenaida answered the call to serve as an educator in a culturally diverse community. With a heart full of love and a passion for nurturing young minds, she dedicated herself to providing quality education to children from all walks of life. Her boundless energy and creativity as a teacher and a leader made learning an enjoyable and enriching experience for her students and colleagues. She was the principal/directress of Dominican Catholic School from 1996 to 2014. She also served as a choir member, choir director, vocation promoter, dietary manager, and local religious superior at various religious institutions in Guam.

Later, Sister Zenaida's journey led her to Taiwan, where she continued her mission as an educator. Adopting a new culture and language, she wholeheartedly embraced students, teachers, and parents, making them feel cherished and valued. She led DIS, Taipei as principal/directress from 2004 to 2008 and from 2014 until today. She was principal/directress at DIS, Kaohsiung, from 2018 until today. From 2015 to 2020, she served on the Board of Blessed Imelda School in Taipei and was the Religious Promoter of the Third Order of Preachers, Laity from 2020.

Sister Zenaida's dedication to the community was unparalleled. She embraced her fellow sisters with love and grace, creating a haven of sisterhood and support. Her presence was a source of strength, offering guidance and wisdom to her fellow nuns, helping them navigate life's challenges with unwavering faith. She was an extraordinary woman who lived her life in service to others and in the loving embrace of her faith. While we mourn her physical absence, we take solace in knowing that her spirit lives on in the hearts of those she touched.

I want to share a story. There was a time when Sr. Zenaida was the principal in DCS in Guam and DIS, Taipei. She traveled between the two schools twice a month. In 2014, a few of us had the opportunity to visit Guam. We arrived at the airport, and it was my turn to speak with the immigration officer. Having heard stories of people having difficulties with immigration officers while entering the US, I was a bit nervous. The immigration officer started asking me questions about my visit, and I nervously tried to answer, but it seemed like my answers were not very convincing. At one point I mentioned Sr. Zenaida's name. The immigration officer immediately stamped my passport and said, "If you know Sr. Zenaida, then you are welcome to enter Guam." It was then that I realized that Sr. Zenaida touched the hearts of everyone she met.

There were many highlights in her life. As an educator, she guided three schools on the journey to WASC Accreditation, and she was an active member of EARCOS, East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools, the American Association of School Administrators, and the Catholic Health Association of the US. She started and mentored the Lay Dominican Chapter of St. Martin de Porres in Taiwan and had a special audience with Holy Father Pope John Paul II in 2001.

Let us remember her with smiles, not tears, as she now rests in the loving arms of her Creator, rewarded for a life well-lived. As we carry on, may we draw strength from her example of love, compassion, and charity, keeping her memory alive through the love we share with one another and the kindness we show to those in need.

A Treasured Life's Journey

By John Erick Moje



The Passage from Philippians 4:13 perfectly encapsulates the life of Sr. Zenaida, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." She generously offered her life to fulfill her mission faithfully and joyfully.

A Visionary and a Spiritual Educational Leader

While it holds true that it takes the whole village in order to secure a holistic education of a child, it also necessitates a visionary leader who will propel the direction of an educational institution to attain its shared mission-vision. I witnessed how DIS flourished with an extraordinary charism of Sr. Zenaida. She was the creator of the D'TORCH. Truly, the flaming TORCH gave all of us a powerful and enlightening impetus to formulate the School-wide Learning Outcomes, in the light of the Dominican Spirituality.

Zealous, Enthusiastic, Noble, Amazing, Indefatigable, Dedicated, and Admirable! The D'TORCH Values were formulated by all the stakeholders. Her driving Spirit was contagious and the joy of working with her was really a learning experience. Sr. Zenaida, thank you for showing us that leadership goes beyond the office, it is how a community moves, by your example, in a common direction with the spirit of joy, faith, hope, love, mutual respect, and dedication aflame!

A Creative Contemplative Servant of the Lord

Sr. Zenaida's beaming smile welcome all of us on the day when she requested some of us to stay and work with to organize the D'TORCH museum, in time for the next day's blessing and Solemnity of St. Dominic de Guzman. Her indefatigable spirit was emanating from her innate creative expression of ideas and reflection of her inner joy. In one of my light conversations with her, she expressed that a creative person could do enormous things, reflecting the beauty and wisdom of God's Love. Because of her, it became vivid to me that servant leadership requires not so much of 'oneself, but more of God's mercy and supportive community, whose dedication springs forth from the desire to honor our Almighty. Sr. Zenaida, thank you for showing us the gift of creativity as an expression of loving God and serving the community!

A Charitable and joyful Spiritual Mother

The proverb says charity begins at home and it extends to the community where God calls us to serve. The proverb expresses how Sr. Zenaida shared the joy of God's love to all members of DIS Learning Community. As spiritual Mother, her wisdom opened our minds and hearts in moments of doubt and confusion. When I asked her at one point regarding the secrets of her effective leadership, she said joyfully, "Relationship, respect, resilience, and rejoice!"

A Charismatic Confidant

Sickness did not defeat the joyful spirit of Sr. Zenaida until her last moment. The last conversation that we had was after her vacation from United States of America. After a joyous celebration of her 50th Anniversary of Religious Life, she recalled how people from different parts of the world came to DIS in order to grace the celebration. That was also a moment of reunion for her and those people whom she worked with in the mission, besides her immediate family members and friends. From the momentous celebration of the Eucharist to the tables of banquet in the hotel, one could see a faithful, joyful, and charismatic servant of the Lord who had nothing but dedication to her vacation. During the ACS WASC Accreditation visit the school exhibited the spirit of collaboration, communication, reflective thinking, and creativity that she instilled in everyone. Truly, a great leader knows the fruits of her labor, when everyone is directed and are functioning efficiently and effectively with or without her physical presence. Her outstanding legacy lives on!

A Caring Spiritual Grandmother to our children

My family is eternally grateful because Sr. Zenaida served also as a living TORCH to us. Fiat Marie and Stella Maris were well-loved by her and so they grew up surrounded with the Dominican sisters who prayed for them even before they were born. The outpouring of God's love was truly felt not only when things are calm but most importantly when the current of life became rough. Sr. Zenaida was there during the most difficult episode of our lives. Her warm embrace and profound prayer filled our lives with new hope---a renewed hope that God has a better plan for us. She candidly told me; "God loves you because He would not give such a difficult problem if you don't have the capacity to handle it.

A Faithful Follower of Christ

The words of St. Paul to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:7), "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Sr. Zenaida continued to offer her life to serve God until the end, even though at times, the road was hard. Her life is a testament that at the end of the day, we cannot bring anything but the love that we shared when we face our Master at the evening of our lives.

Thank you for the life that you received and generously given.

We will continue your legacy, Sr. Zenaida!

50 Years of Religious Life



On January 4th, 2023 Sr Zenaida celebrated 50 years of religious life on her 71st birthday.

This very special occasion called for a big celebration and the planning took several months. Everyone wanted to honor Sr Zenaida for her piety and religious devotion. She was a true spiritual leader for every member of the DIS Family. All the teachers and staff were privileged enough to celebrate this tremendous achievement with her, her family and the many members of the clergy who were in attendance.

One of the most memorable moments during the Holy Mass, was when Sr Zenaida renewed her vows. It was truly moving to be present during these sacred moments that left an unforgettable and lasting memory that will be cherished for as long as she lives in the hearts of everyone who loved her.



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