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A LITTLE GIRL WHO DEVOTED HERSELF TO GOD

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It was morning, 6 April 1939. In the Spanish city San Sebastian a little girl called Maria del Carmen with her grandmother and brother was going to the divine service of the Great Thursday to the parish of a Good Shepherd. The Easter retreats, which she had already had at school, prepared her to experience the ceremonies of the Paschal Triduum in an exceptional way. In her heart there was pulsing love to Jesus who had given his life for our salvation and she felt a strong desire to respond to his love with devoting herself till complete devoting her life.

On that Good Thursday the little girl was going in deep reflection. After all, it was a day on which Lord Jesus, establishing the Eucharist, gave himself to us completely and irrevocably. Quite unexpectedly, before the entrance to the church, Maria del Carmen asked: 'Grandma, can I devote myself to God?' – the grandma answered: 'Yes, you can', and asked the little girl and her brother – Julia, if they wanted to go to confession. Julio took the advantage of this suggestion and Maria del Carmen did not need a confession at that moment. In a short time, they came up closer to the altar in order to kneel and receive the Holy Communion. Next they returned to their bench. The little girl was so concentrated and spiritualized that it seemed to her grandmother that she was being carried by angels. She was kneeling with her head in her hands, expressing her thanksgiving. The grandmother thought then: 'This little girl could be another Little Saint Theresa'. When they were leaving the church, the joyful appearance of the little girl showed something supernatural, but the grandmother did not dare to ask about anything, because the little girl was so concentrated. Maria del Carmen asked: 'Grandma, what does it mean to devote oneself?'. The grandma explained: 'Devoting oneself is completely devoting one's life to God and belong to Him completely'. Later the little girl never talked with anyone about devoting oneself.

On the same day, after the act of the extraordinary religiousness of the child, there was another surprising deed which seemed to be incompatible with this fervor. The little girl said joyfully and with simplicity: 'Grandma, let's buy biscuits for everyone'. They were just passing by a confectionary shop. The grandma thought: 'Well, it is only a little kid, she is neither an angel nor Saint Theresa'.

Soon Maria del Carmen fell ill, she was suffering much and soon after she died with a smile on her face. After her death, 'things of conscience' were taken out which she had hidden in her school bag. In her diary – one exceptional pages was found....It was her deepest secret: 'I devoted myself to the parish of the Good Shepherd, on 6 April 1939'. In the Spanish original words she wrote 'Me entregue'; in fact she wrote: 'Me entreege', with the childish spelling mistake. It is the only testimony, but of unusual meaning, in whose light one should see the whole mystery of the beautiful and short life of Maria del Carmen Gonzalez-Valerio y Saenz de Heredia, called with the diminutive name in her family of Maria Carmen.

Before her birth....

Like the life of every man, also the life of Maria del Carmen started at the moment of conception. However, it is visible in her case in a special way. For, her mum, being pregnant, had a feeling from the beginning, that her conceived baby was a girl. On 16 July 1929, that is, eight months before the birth of the girl, at the feet of the altar of Our Lady from the Carmel Hill in Palavea, she asked this best Mother to take care of her little girl both at that moment, before her birth and during her whole further life on the earth. Entrusting her to the Queen of Heaven, she was begging Her to give her little daughter not treasures of this world, but heavenly treasures, not success in this life, talents or beauty, but, first of all, grace of excellent chastity, so that she would never stain her baptismal innocence with a sin.

Full of the Holy Spirit

Maria del Carmen was born on 14 March 1930 in Madrid (Spain), as the second child of her five siblings. Because of a danger of losing her life, she was baptized a few hours after her birth. She was named Maria del Carmen del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus Sofia Matilde (Mary of the Carmel Hill of the Holiest Heart of Jesus Zofia Matylda). Through the baptism Lord Jesus gave himself to her, wanting to be for her and with her. It was the first time he had given her the Holy Spirit, as well as the richness of this gift – although only in the beginning extent at that moment. The Holy Spirit poured the fulness of his gift onto the little girl not earlier than in the Sacrament of Confirmation which she received at the age of two, on 16 April 1932. In this sacrament she received the grace of Pentecost - the fulness of the Holy Spirit. So, a priest said about Maria del Carmen after a few years, after giving confession to all students during a retreat at school: 'This little girl is full of the Holy Spirit'. In this sentence he included recognition not only for the little girl but also for wonderful works done by the Holy Spirit in her life.

Heroism of chastity

It seems, probably right, that these wonderful action of the Holy Spirit in the life of Maria del Carmen are the aftermath of her mum's prayers, who had entrusted her to Mary before her birth. Among the noblest features which distinguished the little girl, was her loving the virtue of chastity and modesty in wearing clothes. Here it is worth noting that her mum did not always agree with her little daughter as far as the modesty of clothes was concerned. After return from one of journeys she gave her a sunbathing suit which seemed modest enough for a five-year-old girl. It consisted of a blouse without sleeves and loose ankle-length trousers. Mum dressed her daughter with this suit and put her in front of a mirror, saying: 'You see, Maria Carmen, you are beautiful!'. But she, looking at herself, said: 'Maybe but I am not going to go to the beach, anyway'. Surprised, mum asked: 'Why not? You look good in it!'. The little girl answered definitely: 'Mum, the trousers are only for boys, and girls should not wear them'. Only a skirt covering knees could be added to the trousers and a waistcoat with long sleeves. It was not important that she could not play on the beach, being dressed so. She, as the little girl, wanted to maintain modesty where many people lose it. She went to the beach even despite her will and did not stop crying. Her suffering was caused by seeing half-naked people. Therefore, her grandma decided that she would never go to the beach with her again. When her siblings were playing on the beach, she stayed at home alone and watched pictures of the saints.

Love one another

The whole life of Maria del Carmen can be summarized with these words said by her to her relatives just before she died: 'Amaos los unos a los otros!' – 'Love one another!'. The last three months of her life became a particular song of love – love especially to enemies. For, love was the second extremely important feature characterizing her life. She practiced it not only towards her relatives but also to people not from her family, and, first of all, devoting herself as a complete gift to God for saving those who had killed her father during the Spanish civil war taking place at that time. She prayed mainly for religious conversion of the president of the Republic – a mason

Manuel Azana, whom she identified with the source of all evil in Spain during her life. Her prayer made him return to faith, as he converted at the moment of his death.

As it has been mentioned, God accepted her sacrifice of her life on the Good Thursday on 6 April 1939. In enormous suffering caused by a bad lethal illness, she showed her great patience and magnanimity. She died on 17 July 1939, after a few months of the worst suffering. She was 9 years old and she had already had supernatural life.

To the glory of altars

Her beatification process started in Madrid on 11 July 1961. On 12 January 1996 the Holy Father John Paul II proclaimed Maria del Carmen a venerable servant of God, approving heroism of her virtues canonically. Now, in order to be beatified, only a proving miracle obtained through her intercession is needed.

Through the intercession of the servant of God, Maria del Carmen Gonzales-Valerio y Saenz de Heredia, we ask for good conditions for children brought up in Polish families, so that they would maintain chastity, faith and love to the Christian heroism.

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