

## Sister María del Carmen Avendaño, CSA

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR LIFE, SISTER MARÍA DEL CARMEN.

Trinidad Alejandra Avendaño Sequeira was born in Belén, Rivas, Nicaragua, on July 17, 1929, and was known by her religious name of María del Carmen. She was baptized in the Niño Dios church in her hometown of Belén.

Her parents were Adán Sequeira and Rosa Avendaño.

She entered the Congregation in 1950, made her first profession of vows in 1953, with her final vows in 1959.

She studied education in Managua's Normal School; Public School Administration at the National University of Nicaragua in Managua and became a Nursing Assistant after studying in Managua. She spoke three languages: Spanish, English and Miskito.

Sister Imelda Salazar, CSA, remembers: *"When we lived in Waspam, people came to the house and asked for María del Carmen to care for them because she understood and spoke Miskito so well."*

During her life of service to the people of God, she received a number of honors, including: best teacher, *brigadista* and student. She stood out for the many talents that God gave her and in her life with CSA she loved to sing, cook, knit, read and do many different crafts. More than anything, she loved to tell jokes, particularly for the sisters coming from the United States for the first time – she was truly a daughter of her beloved Nicaraguan culture. The music of Nicaragua was in her blood.

She suffered from some lung issues even as a young woman but was able to serve as a missionary in her own territory of Nicaragua, as she continued the mission of Jesus Christ, embodied in the charism of CSA. She was a great gift to the service of Christ, and was both sun and light for so many people in places like: the Santa Inés School in Waspam; the Niño Jesús School in Puerto Cabezas; the LaSalle Pedagogic Institute in Managua; the Santa Rosa School in Rosita; the Monte Tabor School in Managua; and the Dr. Pedro J. Quintanilla School in Belén, Rivas. She served as a member of the regional advisory council when Sister Marise Meis was the regional coordinator.

From 1993 to 1998, she worked in formation with the novices, along with Sister Miriam Therese Putzer, CSA, in the Altagracia neighborhood of Managua. She moved to the retirement house in 2010.

Sister María del Carmen was a sister of faith and prayer; she never stopped visiting the chapel of her beloved spouse Jesus, even with all her physical ailments.

She was a prophet in her own land, in her birthplace of Belén. On the day of her wake, in her relatives' house, people remembered her as an excellent teacher who taught so many children how to read and write; she was also remembered as a strict teacher who taught English, as well as the founder and coordinator of the associates in Nicaragua.

During the funeral mass, there were many witnesses to her legacy, particularly as it lives on in the associates and in her former students, many of whom are now parents themselves. One of the associates, Tere Corea, offered her gratitude for Sister María del Carmen's work in Belén and noted that, although the sisters are no longer there, their presence continues and the house where the sisters lived will live on in memory and be known as the convent.

During her illness, and her last two weeks in the hospital, she continued to sing songs of the Purísima and pray the rosary, always with great faith in the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her Sisters of St. Agnes were with her in the hospital, accompanying her at every step.



On her day of baptism God called her Trinidad Alejandra, and she became María del Carmen in her vocation with CSA. Today we, your Sisters of St. Agnes, offer thanks for your great legacy of the joy of serving Christ as missionary, teacher, formator, counselor, nurse – for your faith and your prayers, and for nurturing the seed of faith and a pastoral concern for all those whose faith life or human dignity is threatened (*Constitutions, No. 4*).

She was called to God's presence on June 12, 2016, in Santa Inés Center, on the eleventh Sunday of ordinary time. The same land that saw her birth will now receive her body. Just as she wished, she was buried in her family's tomb, where she rests alongside her brother José Ángel Avendaño. Her family and the associates give thanks to the Sisters of St. Agnes for their care of Sister María del Carmen.

As the women accompanied Jesus in proclaiming the Kingdom, so María del Carmen is now accompanying Jesus in Eternal Life, singing songs of the Purísima to Mary, the Immaculate Conception:

*Sweet hymns sung to María, slayer of the fierce dragon,  
we salute the peaceful day of her beautiful and happy Conception.*

Written by: Sister Zorelia Chavarría, CSA