



Sister Inmaculada Leiva, CSA

Carmen de Jesus Leiva Ramírez was born in Managua on July 16, 1930, the daughter of Ignacio Ramírez and María Leiva. Known by the religious name Sister Inmaculada Leiva, she was baptized in St. James Parish in Managua on September 18, 1930, and, as was customary at the time, she was confirmed on the same date. She received her First Communion on December 3, 1940.

She completed her primary studies at Casa Nazaret in Managua. After entering the congregation she had three years of studies in theology. She also took courses in dressmaking in order to instruct women in the rural communities.

She entered the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes on May 3, 1951, in Waspam. In April 1952 she went to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where she completed the candidature and novitiate. She made first profession of vows in Fond du Lac, on August 15, 1955, followed by her first ministry in Puerto Cabezas as a homemaker from 1955-1958. She made perpetual vows in Puerto Cabezas on August 15, 1961, while working in the parish

of San Rafael in Waspam.

Among Sister Inmaculada's other ministries were serving others as a great missionary and serving the sisters humbly at Convento Santa Inés in Puerto Cabezas (1961-1968), Casa Santa Inés in Rosita (1968-1969), and again at Convento Santa Inés in Puerto Cabezas (1969-1971). Between the years 1971-1980 she ministered in Managua at the parish of Monte Tabor, always sharing her gifts along with the CSA charism in the areas of sewing, dispensary, church base communities, and catechetics. Finally in the parish at Belén from 1980-1995, she continued her ministry of sewing, needlework, apostolate to the sick, and the Daughters of Mary.

On her last birthday Sister Inmaculada said: "Thank you for celebrating my birthday; I was always happy in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Agnes." On the last day of the 2014 CSA Days gathering, we celebrated with a good supper and music and, like a good Nicaraguan, on this day Sister Inmaculada danced and danced; she even fell but when the nurses helped her, she got up as if nothing had happened. She enjoyed that night as a grand farewell. Today we understand the reason for the happiness that characterized her. We were preparing to celebrate her 60 years of religious life in January 2015 when everything changed. God and the Virgin wished that we prepare for a different feast, journeying with our Sister Inmaculada who was to celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb.

While it is certain that she suffered much with Alzheimer's, she also overcame much with faith and prayer. Bedridden in her last days, she was always whispering: Jesus~mercy~my Mother~Glory to God in the highest heaven." One day Sister Celia heard her say: "See how beautiful Jesus looks." Sister Inés took the time every day to go to pray and sing all the hymns for Purísima which Sister Inmaculada loved. She was cared for lovingly and everything was done as far as humanly possible to alleviate her suffering. We sisters were witnesses to her sufferings and also to her faith. It was a time of profound reflection. We witnessed this passing from death to life, this passing through suffering. The God of life and history who knows why all this is permitted, united us in prayer, in compassion for our sister; it was the time to tell her: "Here are your sisters~ we love you much~ it is a time of forgiveness."

The employees of Centro Santa Inés, above all the nurses who accompanied her, will remember her as a happy, humble sister and they feel her loss deeply. "She did not want to be alone," said Elisa. The associates from Belén and the Daughters of Mary are left with a great legacy ~ a sister of faith, of humility.

Our sister died on December 6, 2014, during the novena of Purísima; she died in the peace of the Lord which was reflected in the calmness on her face. Mass with her body present was offered on December 7 at Centro Santa Inés. She was surrounded by the sisters, associates and friends on the day when Nicaraguans cry out: ¿Quién causa tanta alegría?" "La Concepción de María." "Who is the cause of such great joy?" "The Conception of Mary." As she would have wished she is with her beloved Most Holy Virgin Mary; the Virgin granted her prayer.

Thank you, Sister Inmaculada, for the legacy you left us Nicaraguan sisters: your faithfulness to God by your vocation, for teaching us by your life the spirit and charism of CSA to go to those places where no one wanted to go, for your life of gratitude, your life as a missionary, joyful and simple, serving others until the day God called you to Life Eternal.

Sister's remains rest in the vault of the Sisters of St. Agnes in the General Cemetery of Managua as she requested to be buried.

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