

PART IX. PILGRIMAGES

A Pilgrimage is a path of conversion. An interior preparation for renewal of the heart.



9.1 Jubilee Year 2000 Pilgrimage

The Great Jubilee in 2000 was a major event in the Roman Catholic Church, held from Christmas Eve (December 24) 1999 to Epiphany (January 6) 2001. Like other previous Jubilee years, it was a celebration of the mercy of God and forgiveness of sins.

Entrance to a Holy Door

A Holy Door is traditionally an entrance portal located within the Papal major basilicas in Rome. The doors are normally sealed by mortar and cement from the inside so that they cannot be opened. Holy Doors at Rome, Italy open only for the jubilee year. We twins entered the Holy Door at Saint Peter's Basilica on November 3, 2000.



St. Peter's Basilica Holy Door

Jesus' Birthplace

With the heightened on-going war in Jerusalem, Nila was hesitant to proceed with our Jubilee Pilgrimage, but Luz was determined. A few days later, Luz and the reluctant twin Nila completed a personal pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, a silver star with 14 undulating rays marks the location traditionally claimed to be that of Jesus' birth.

The Star of Bethlehem, or Christmas Star, appears in the nativity story of the Gospel of Matthew where "wise men from the East" (Magi) are inspired by the star to travel to Jerusalem. There, they meet King Herod of Judea, and ask him: Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him. The star leads them to Jesus' home in the town, where they worship him and give him gifts. The wise men are then given a divine warning not to return to Herod, so they return home by a different route. The only way one can touch the star over which Jesus was born and over which a light is burning is by humbling oneself and going down on one's knees.



Luz touches while Nila kisses the Silver Star at the Church of the Nativity

9.2 2002 Marian Pilgrimage

Luz was awakened at midnight. In the morning she was inspired to go to Fatima, Portugal. Her husband Danny and then daughter Maridi refused to go with her and so Nila was her companion.

Sister Maria Celine, the mother prioress at the Carmel of Coimbra, Portugal welcomed us in the monastery where Sr. Lucia lives. Although we were not able to see Sr. Lucia, we gave our two gifts, statuettes of God the Father made of Pinatubo ash and fiberglass.

The Feast of the Our Lady of Loreto and the Holy House – 10 December 2020

The Story of the Holy House of Loreto

One of the holiest and most popular pilgrimage destinations in Italy is Loreto. Written at the door of the Basilica della Santa Casa (Basilica of the Holy House) are these words: "The whole world has no place more sacred... For here was the Word made Flesh and here was born the Virgin Mother..." On entering the basilica, one finds beneath the central dome and just behind the high altar, a rectangular edifice of white marble, richly adorned with statues. The white marble, however, forms only a protective crust. The contrast between the exterior richness and the poverty of the interior is startling. Inside are the plain, rough walls of a cottage of great antiquity, thirty feet long by fifteen feet wide and about fifteen feet high. In the centre of the House of Our Lady, there is a replica of a wooden statue of the Madonna. The original one, made of cedar of Lebanon, arrived at Loreto together with the house but has since been destroyed.

According to tradition, this is the house where our Blessed Mother was conceived and born, grew up, and where the angel Gabriel asked her to become the Mother of God. This is also believed to be the house where the Holy Family lived; where Jesus grew up and worked until he left to reveal Himself to mankind. The Holy House of Loreto was carried by angels from Nazareth to the Italian hillside town of Loreto the night of Dec. 9-10 in 1294 after making a three-year stop in Croatia.

December 10 of 2019 is the first time that Our Lady of Loreto is celebrated in the General Roman Calendar. On October 7 the decree was pronounced by Pope Francis (although it was published on October 31) to be a reoccurring Optional Memorial for the Universal Church.

When we twins attended mass at the Carmel of the Holy Family Monastery Chapel at Pindangan, City of San Fernando, La Union, the priest was in white vestments. May this celebration help us all, to imitate the virtues of the perfect disciple of the Gospel, the Virgin Mother.



Tour mates group picture: In front of the Basilica of the Holy House



Marble encasement enclosing the Holy House



Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

9.3 2004 Gregorian University Study Break

In our Mid-Course Break at the Gregorian University, we twins were supposed to go to Avila, Spain to see the first Carmelite monastery founded by St. Teresa of Avila. On May 28 we went to the train station to buy our tickets for Spain but we were told that we can only buy tickets up to Nice, France.

The virtue of Humility

Arriving at Nice, France on June 1, we immediately went to buy our tickets for Spain. We had another dilemma. Contrary to the cost of ticket we knew, it turned out that our money is just enough for a round-trip ticket to Spain for one. When I told Luz that we go back to Rome for I was afraid that she would get lost, she said, "It's like you have pierced my heart with a dagger". I know I had to let her go; it was my twin's obsession to see the place.

After buying her ticket, we went out of the station and started walking when I saw the signage 'Caritas'. I told Luz they might be able to help me. We asked where we can find a Filipino community or a Filipino priest, and we were told us to go to the Basilica. There a foreigner priest looked at the directory and gave us the address of a Missionary House.

At a computer shop, Luz called the number and indeed a Filipino priest was on the other line. Here was the conversation that transpired: Luz: Fr. we are Ortega twins from the Philippines. We were supposed to go to Avila, Spain, but we don't have enough money. Fr., can my sister stay with you while I go to Spain? Fr. Yes, but where are you calling from? Luz asked the location from the computer shop owner who informed the priest. Luz: Fr. Really? Even the food? Fr. Yes, but you have to come here, for my place is far where you are. We took the bus and reached the place. Seeing a fortress nearby, Luz climbed while I waited down to look after our baggage. Then we reached the place of Fr. Clavero Guerrero, a Filipino priest based at the Mission Philippines, Nice, France.

Fr. mentioned that there is a church at the market place and he promised that he will bring me to the bus station to see the Laghet Sanctuary. In the morning, Fr. handed me a leaflet about the Sanctuary and he brought me to the bus station, explaining that he couldn't accompany me because he had many things to do. As I was reading, Fr. came back and reminded me, "Tell the bus driver where you are going." I was so overjoyed when I reached the place.

What could be the reason why God wanted us to go into different destinations? Not wanting me to feel so sorry for not proceeding to Spain, I was informed that at Nice there is a wax body of St. Teresa of Avila and there is also a Carmelite monastery at Carros Village.

Meanwhile, Luz was so happy having seen Avila, Spain. With the inspiring Saint Teresa's Bookmark — 'Let nothing trouble you, Let nothing frighten you. All things are passing; Only God is changeless. Patience gains all things. Who has God wants nothing,' Luz is ever ready to serve God better and had a life-size statue of St. Teresa of Avila made out of tin.



Luz climbs the walls of Avila, Spain and have a souvenir photo holding the lamp post and the Cathedral as background.

9.4 Pilgrimage to Mexico

Twins at Mexico City. Our tour guide brought us to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe and National shrine of Mexico which houses the cloak containing the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Nila and I are to go to Guadalajara as suggested by Archbishop Abaya the following day.

At the bus station I, Luz accidentally saw a postcard with the Tepeyac Hill. The 1709 shrine was built near the hill of Tepeyac, where the Virgin Mary is believed to have appeared to Saint Juan



Finally, twins meet each other at Mexico airport.



The Metropolitan Cathedral of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven is the seat of the Catholic Archdiocese of Mexico. It is situated atop the former Aztec sacred precinct near the Templo Mayor on the northern side of the Plaza de la Constitución in Downtown Mexico City.



We proceeded to Guadalajara. Guadalajara is a city in western Mexico. It's known for tequila and mariachi music, both born in Jalisco, the state of which Guadalajara is the capital.



A cathedral with twin gold spires is a beautiful house of God.

To make our Mexico pilgrimage complete, upon arriving from Guadalajara we took a taxi and proceeded to the Tepeyac Hill, taking our souvenir photos from the local photographers. On our way to the airport we dropped by the Embassy where our cousin Justo O. Orros, former Ambassador used to work.



SEA AND SKY HOTEL & RESTAURANT
Pagdaraan, San Fernando City, La Union

November 29, 2006

FROM: RESIDENT MANAGER
FOR: ALL DEPARTMENT
RE: AS STATED

Orders of Mrs. Luz O. Bolong must be with the
consensus of the undersigned.

For your guidance.

DANIEL T. BOLONG, JR.
President

MARIE DIANE O. BOLONG
Resident Manager

DANIEL O. BOLONG
DIRECTOR

Received by:

9.5 Carmel Hue, Vietnam Centennial Celebration

Ortega Twins at Carmel Hue from July 14 - 17, 2009
 Warm welcome by Mother Prioress Mother Marie Ange and sisters.
 Greeted with the body of St. Teresa of Avila (smaller size than what Nila saw at Laghet Sanctuary, Nice, France) in 2006
 Luz hands our gift of God the Father statuette.
 Toured the Apparition site of Our Lady of LaVang, the Benedictine Monastery
 Informed the Mother superior that we want a brown Vietnamese dress made.

Received text message from Bishop Rillera
 Thankful for the prayer sent through text at 3:01:13 a.m. by Bishop Rillera. "May Our Lady of Mt. Carmel obtain for you and d people plenty of grace. As you go around, pray that d Spirit of d Mission be accepted by Church."



Inside the church with sister Emily Ortega



God has made us rays of the sun, and murmur with the trickle two leaves in this branch of the tree of life. Two leaves, that dance with the beam of the es of rain.



Reception for 100 Years



Apparition site of Our Lady of La Vang.



Twins dressed up with St. Elijah Scapular



9.6 Twins' five visit to Rome



I  Rome

THE ETERNAL CITY

1977



2000



2004



2002



2015



9.7 God is Working with Us

In fulfilling the Lord's commission, we can say with much conviction that God is working with us. The spiritual journey in our life chronicles our experiences of faith, hope and charity (or love). Why do we say so?

Jubilee Year 2000 pilgrimage — His Eminence Jose T. Cardinal Sanchez whom we saw at Rome said that it was the worst time to go to Jerusalem because the warfare have significantly heightened. But with God's grace we were able to see Bethlehem in Jerusalem and kissed the silver star in a grotto under the Church of the Nativity.

2002 Marian Pilgrimage — Sister Maria Celine, the mother prioress welcomed us in the Coimbra monastery where Sr. Lucia lives. Although we were not able to see Sr. Lucia, we gave our two gifts, statuettes of God the Father made of Pinatubo ash and fiberglass.

2004 Gregorian University Study—Luz greeted Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency, Antonio Franco "Happy Birthday". He asked immediately, "what do you want?" "Study at Rome," Luz responded. The support granted by the nuncio led to the granting of our visa by the Italian Embassy.

2006 Mexico — After a visit to the Basilica of Guadalupe, our tour guide told us it is the end of our tour. At the bus station enroute to Guadalajara Luz saw a postcard at the souvenir shop the apparition site where the Our Lady appeared to St. Juan Diego. We took a taxi back to the Basilica and climbed the Tepeyac Hill for our pilgrimage would be incomplete if we missed it.

2009 Carmel Hue Vietnam Centennial Jubilee celebration — In our letter to the mother prioress prior departure, we expressed our desire to visit all the four Carmelite Nun Monasteries in Vietnam when we attend the Jubilee Celebration at Carmel Hue. After the occasion, Mother Prioress surprised us twins. She gave us a traveling companion. We visited the Basilica of Our Lady of La Vang, the sanctuary built to honor an apparition of Mary in 1798. Then we visited Carmel Saigon, Binh Trieu and Nga Trang.

2015 Fifth Anniversary of St. Teresa of Avila — Arriving at Avila, Spain, we went inside the San Jose Monastery Chapel. A lady from Barcelona who was at Avila for a visit and who knew we were looking for a place to stay for the night offered her help. "You are taking the taxi, aren't you", she asked? "Yes", we replied. "I am going to the La Encarnacion. I could bring you to CITEs (Centro Internacional de Avila), but we have to leave in 10 minutes". She helped us at the Front Desk. When the lady left she remarked, "I am your angel".

2017 Miracle of the Sun 100th Anniversary cum 84 Days Around the World — Twin Luz owns the Sea and Sky Hotel and Restaurant and Sky and Sky College with husband Daniel Bolong, Jr. However our pilgrimage was without family consent. It is not surprising that we encounter obstacles/problems of every kind, but divine help comes at the right time.

The Sto. Domingo Rural Bank in Ilocos Sur was managed by my husband. In 1994, he opened a credit line at PNB which was meant to support the bank. My husband used our personal properties as collaterals. Despite our efforts to maintain the bank, it was put under receivership with the Philippine Deposit Insurance Company in 1997. On January 1998, we wrote Philippine National Bank telling that we are selling properties to settle our account. After sometime, we received a letter informing us that our house was for foreclosure in a specified time. The timely sale of our 1,500 square meters lot at Baroro, Bacnotan, La Union in 1999 saved our home.

When it was evident that twin Luz cannot expect financial support from her family, I have to solve the problem of "show money" to get travel visas. A proof that God approves of our travel/pilgrimage was the timely sale of our lot along the national highway at Sto. Domingo, Ilocos Sur. A bank certificate was issued for my "show money". One day Luz asked me, "Can we borrow from the Nueva Segovia Consortium of Cooperatives?" Twin Luz is an optimistic person. She thinks the best possible thing will happen. In trying to see the bright side of any dark situation, *she* generates amazing funds for her projects



Nila gives personal check to Adams Travel for our pilgrimage expenses.



Dr. Divina C. Quemi, CEO of NSCC grants the twins loan.

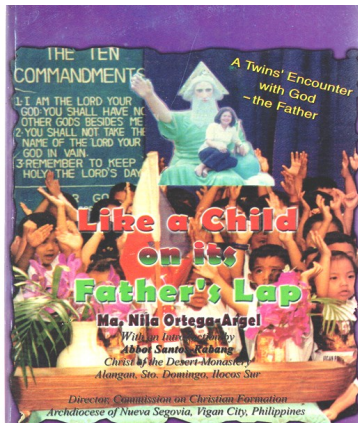


Nila turns over her ATM CARD where her GSIS monthly pension is placed to pay her loan to NSCC. Luz issued postdated checks.

PART X. SPIRITUAL BOOKS

10.1 Lists of Books

1) God the Father — Like a Child on its Father's Lap



Archbishop Abaya requested Ambassador Henrietta De Villa for Ortega twins to be participants in the 4th World Meeting of Families.



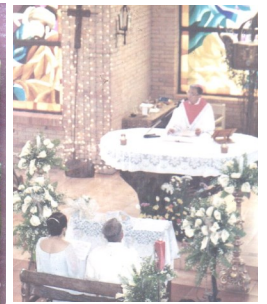
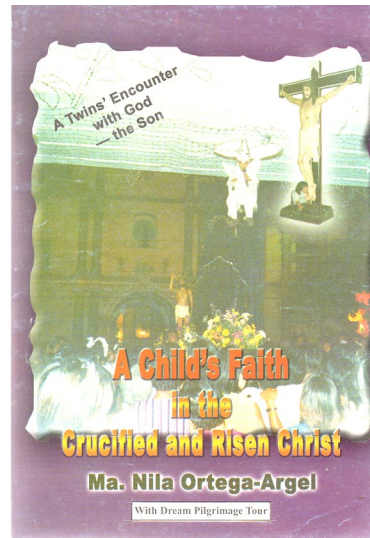
Imprimatur:

Edmundo M. Abaya, D.D.
Edmundo M. Abaya, D.D.
Archbishop of Nueva Segovia

Fourth World Meeting of Families
January 2003

January 3, Ortega twins distributed their booklet at PICC.

2) God the Son — A Child's Faith in the Crucified and Risen Christ

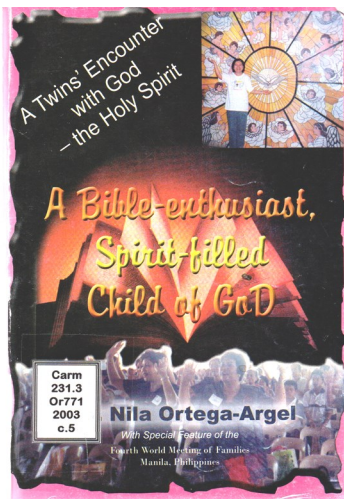


Nihil obstat:

Thaddeus F. Mercado, S.T.D.
Msgr. Thaddeus F. Mercado, S.T.D.
Vicar General
Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia

Danny and Luz' Silver Wedding Anniversary
September 2003
Antonio R. Tobias, D.D.
+Bishop of La Union
Officiating Prelate

3) God the Holy Spirit — A Bible-enthusiast, Spirit-filled Child of God

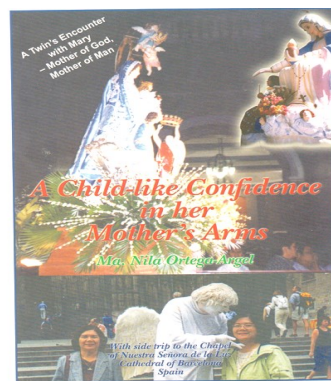


Imprimatur:

Artemio L. Rillera, SVD, D.D.
+ Artemio L. Rillera, SVD, D.D.
Bishop, Diocese of Bangue
Northern Luzon Regional Catechetical Council, Bishop-In-Charge

January 16, 2004
Luz and Nila 50th Birthday

4) Blessed Mother — A Child-like Confidence in her Mother's Arms

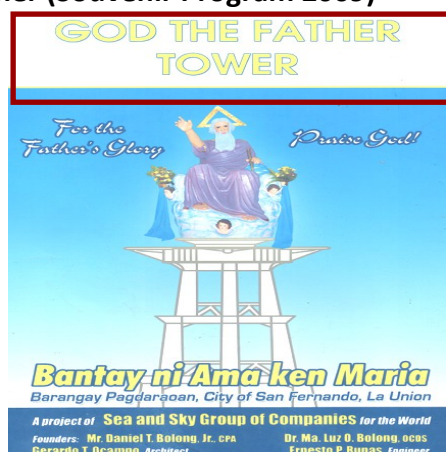
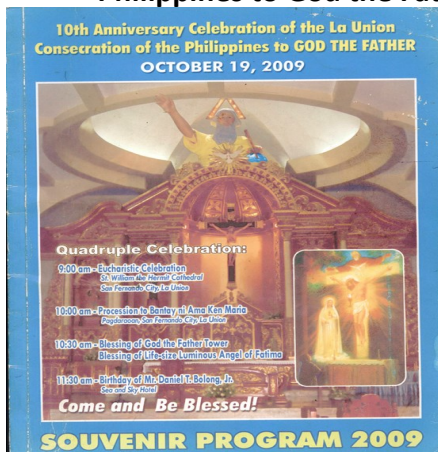


Imprimatur:

Most Rev. Epifanio Sagrado, D.D.
+ Most Rev. Epifanio Sagrado, D.D.
Bishop of Laoag

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel T. Bolong, Jr. and family
Hermana Mayor
December 8, 2004
150th Proclamation Anniversary of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception

5) 10th Anniversary Celebration of the La Union Consecration of the Philippines to God the Father (Souvenir Program 2009)

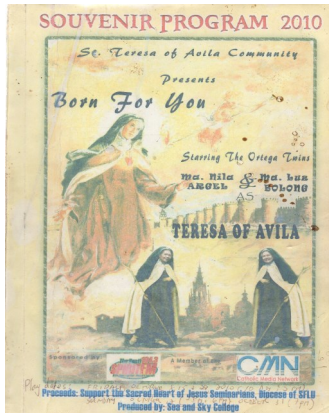


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Archbishop Emeritus
Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia

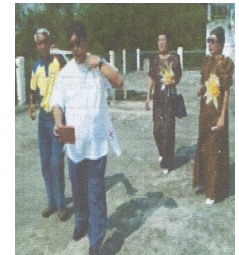
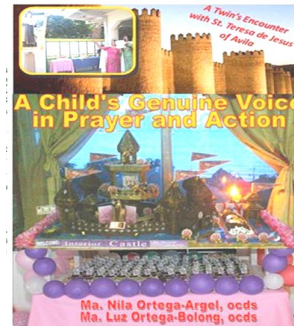
October 19, 2009
10th Anniversary of the La Union Consecration of the Philippines to God the Father

6) Born For You _ The Life of St. Teresa of Avila (Souvenir Program 2010)



Imprimatur:
Edmundo M. Abaya, D.D.
Archbishop Edmundo M. Abaya, D.D.
 Archbishop Emeritus
 Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia

7) St. Teresa of Avila —A Child's Genuine Voice in Prayer and Action



Blessing of Sea and Sky College 4th floor and roof deck by Bishop Roldan.

Imprimatur:
Rodolfo F. Beltran
Most Rev. Rodolfo Beltran, DD
 The OCDS Quincentennial Special for the
 St. Teresa of Avila 5th Birth Centenary
 Avila, Spain
 March 28, 2015

8) Avila 2015 Pilgrimage



Imprimatur:
Rodolfo F. Beltran
Most Rev. Rodolfo Beltran, DD
December 8, 2015
 Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

9) Around the World: Teresa Forever!



Imprimatur:
Rodolfo F. Beltran
Most Rev. Rodolfo F. Beltran, D.D.
 Bishop of La Union
 Diocese of San Fernando de La Union
 Diocesan Building, SFC, La Union

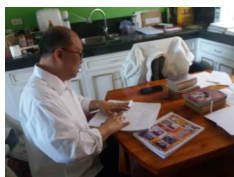
February 18, 2017
 St. Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem, Martyr



10) Fatima 100 Pilgrimage 84 Days Around the World_ Teresa Forever!



Argel, Maria Nila, ocds
 84 Days Around the World
 Fatima 100 Pilgrimage
 TERESA FOREVER!
 January 16, 2018



Imprimatur:
Victor B. Bendico
Bishop Victor B. Bendico, D.D.
 Administrator
 Diocese of San Fernando of La Union

11) Footsteps: 84 days around the World

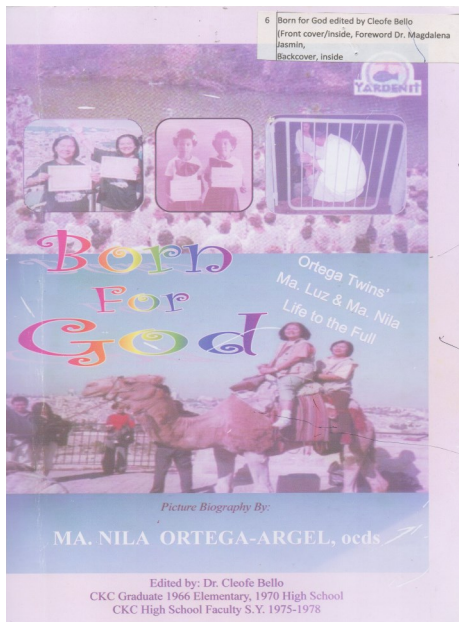


Imprimatur
Daniel O. Presto
Most Rev. Daniel O. Presto, D.D.
 Bishop
 Diocese of San Fernando de La Union
 July 16, 2019
 Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity



Foreword

1) Born for God



FOREWORD

"The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it" ...
William James



In the pages of this book, you will meet the Ortega Twins: Ma. Luz and Ma. Nila, as they share their "life to the full". Refreshing and inspiring _ they have written the evidences that "nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account..."

Yes, it is no accident that the Ortega twins were born. By their life as accounted for in this book, printed for generations to read, the reason of their birth, is clear _ they were born to God! For Ma. Luz, I am a witness to her travails: from a College Teacher at St. Louis College in San Fernando, La Union she accepted teaching loads in the field of business education and then she planted the seed that was to grow with fondest caring now known as the Sea and Sky College. Interspersed by joint undertakings with her twin, Ma. Nila, Ma. Luz pursued a dream...education for life! Now, a landmark in the City of San Fernando, students are given the opportunity to study and prepare themselves for a future like the Ortega Twins, they too, will realize that their Sea and Sky College is an instrument to a successful life on earth.!

Let us read this book and get inspired. As Bishop Carlito Censon of the Apostolic Vicariate of Baguio, Benguet wrote:

Exempla trahunt (Examples draw)
Verba Movent (Words move)
Scripta Manent (What is written remains)



McJasmin

Dr. Magdalena Cardinez-Jasmin, CESO III
Director IV – Retired, Commission on Higher Education
Regions 1, 3 and CAR

Bishop Censon _ Concelebrant October 19, 2009 of 10th Anniversary of La Union Consecration of the Philippines to God the Father.

1) MARY JANE C. ORTEGA

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**Former Mayor
City of San Fernando**



**Founding Chairman
La Union Vibrant Women, Inc.**



MESSAGE

By Mary Jane C. Ortega

The Ortega Twin sisters are my soul sisters. We have the love for travel, to see every nook and cranny of the Philippines and other parts of the world. The difference is their travel is geared to know better their "Plan de Vida" and to reinforce their commitment to love God through Santa Teresa de Avila and St. Therese of Lisieux. They have been called to be integral members, metamorphosing as officers of The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites of the City of San Fernando, La Union.

I have been invited to speak in various parts of the world on multiple topics, and one day, I was at the Angin Convent in Naguilian and I asked the saintly Mother Alexis, "If God wants me to be a speaker, why does He give me a problem with my throat?" I was invited to deliver a speech on Peace at the International Women's Conference held in Beijing in 1995 but I was suffering from a severe case of sore throat. Mother Alexis said, "Do not worry about your throat. We will pray that it will improve. What you should include in your speech is that Peace is not an abstract idea. It has been personified in Jesus Christ and we should emulate Him."

Ma. Luz and Ma. Nila are peace personified, following the footsteps of our Saviour. They have been able to balance family life and their religious vocation as lay persons. To some they are misunderstood for their zeal in following the footsteps of San Teresa de Avila, going to the various continents of the world, living in Carmelite convents and through serendipity discover the existence of St. John de Ortega of Burgos; but many others look at them with wonder and admiration, feeling the love they have for God the Father, God the Holy Spirit and God the Son, our Savior. In turn, their friends wish they could be as blessed as the twins, to discover the serenity of the religious places of the world, to be transported back in time and re-live the lives of Christ and His Saints.

In their bucket list of religious places to visit and be in again is at Fatima, 707 days before October 13, 2017 to meditate on that 1917 Great Miracle of the Sun, on the message of Our Lady of Fatima as we pray for PEACE, PEACE to be in our hearts and having it, say, PEACE BE WITH YOU and may PEACE BE ON OUR LAND.

Thank you Ortega twins for the virtual tour of your religious adventures.

2) Abbot Santos Rabang

PILGRIM PEOPLE

Several years back, Ma. Nila O. Argel enrolled in my modular courses in Religious Education in St. Paul College of Ilocos Sur along St. Paul avenue in Bayubay, San Vicente, Ilocos Sur, RP. As part of the requirement of finishing a modular course, each of my students writes a synthesis of the subject matter, in his/her own words, style, and creativity of presentation. I was always impressed how Nila presented her synthesis, done masterfully and creatively, with accompanying photos to stress points of the faith she studied in my course.



I had always encouraged Nila to write about the Catholic Faith and Tradition. Nila's initial reaction was an adamant "No". Although she is a mass communication graduate, she thought she was not competent enough as a thinker and a writer on matters of faith and morals. But once she successfully published her first short book, upon my persistent persuasion, she wrote other books, one after the other.

At this juncture, I remember a UP Conservatory of Music pre-war graduate who majored in voice and in piano. When I first heard her sing in Church during one of my masses, I told her, "You are a singing Nightingale! Why sing other composers' music? Why not compose your own?" Her reply was, "I had only one semester in composition. My major is voice and piano." But I retorted, "But music permeates your soul. Its melody flows through your veins. Let it be expressed through your compositions." I gave her a copy of my poem "Fireflies." she set it so beautifully into music. Then, one composition followed another, and on and on.

When I related this to Nila, she was mystified. Her first slim volume came. It was followed by several others. And now comes "Around the World: Teresa Forever." Read it. And you will travel around the Philippines and the world with the Ortega twins, Luz and Mila. Above all, you will journey with the great Mystic and Doctor of Prayer, St. Teresa of Jesus. It is a journey of faith. It is a pilgrimage to sacred places. It is not a tour for pleasure, sightseeing, lectures, and performances. Rather, it is a pilgrimage of faith, with St. Teresa of Jesus as the guide.

"*Lumen Gentium*" (Light of the Nations), Vatican II's dogmatic document of the Church, teaches that life is a pilgrimage. We are pilgrims. Our destination is the *Kingdom of God* in its final fulfillment when Christ will come again. In the course of the pilgrimage, we *reject* the classic idolatry of worshipping the status quo, a prime obstacle to a pure worship of God. We *keep on moving* in faith, in hope, and in love leading us to the final kingdom. We *separate* ourselves physically from worldly values and entanglements. We *flee* from contentment with and attachment to the *present*, insofar as it is linked to the familiar, comfortable, convenient, and pragmatic moment where people are tempted to imprison God and where God's plan dies for lack of clear vision, courageous mission, and single-minded-hearted commitment. We keep on moving to the *future* where we search for the Triune God. In this pilgrimage, the faith, hope and love of people are tested, purified, disciplines, and perfected.

2017 is the centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady to the three children of Fatima. To go to Fatima for a pilgrimage is expensive. Only the moneyed people can make the pilgrimage to Fatima. To go to Fatima for a pilgrimage is expensive. Only the moneyed people can make the pilgrimage to Fatima. For those who cannot make the pilgrimage, as well as for those who go, these are the questions we must answer:

1. Do we know what Fatima is all about?
2. How can we live out the message of Fatima?
3. Shall we be contented with simple remembering and celebrating Fatima with the whole world, together with Pope Francis, from May to October 2017?
4. What can we actually do about Fatima and its message?

Sr. Lucia, the last of the children to finish her pilgrimage on earth, was a daughter of St. Teresa of Jesus. She was a Carmelite nun. Together with her and St. Teresa of Jesus, let us join Luz and Mila in the pilgrimage of faith, hope, and love towards the Kingdom of God, whose concretization we strive to realize in the here and now, or in the words of Nila "to dedicate more time to prayer and evangelization."


Abbot Santos Rabang

3) Blanche R. Aricheta



For the Ortega Twins

“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” - Isaiah 40:29-31

The prophet Isaiah put into words the spirit of the Ortega Twins. Their zest for life, including the pursuit of their dreams, is one-of-a-kind. Their tandem in itself is unique and remarkable. It resembles the pattern set by our Lord Jesus for his apostles, sending them out two by two. This duo is called with divine favor, indeed!

Despite being over 60, retired from their respective professions and with grandchildren, it appears that old age has not yet arrived. Their bravado does not reveal any trace of slowing down in following Jesus. Their steadfast faith in God is clearly their anchor to be strong and courageous, fearless and inspired, and confident that the Lord will be with them wherever they go (Joshua 1:9).

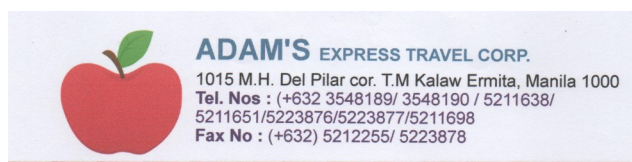
The Lord desires that we should grow all our lives. I am certain that the Ortega Twins understand this divine requirement fully. And so they carry on, growing in grace together. Like each one of us, they, too, are laden with challenges. I believe that these are their catalysts that stir up God’s gifts within them. They are blessed with travels as well, their means of inspiration to their calling. Their trips are not intended to collect destinations, but to create moments with the Lord at His appointed sites.

I am excited for the fruits that the Twins bring home from their Fatima 100 Pilgrimage. No, not the centennial souvenirs, but the essential gifts - their renewed and contagious vigor to love our Lord and to progress in becoming more like Him. I know that this will not be the Twins’ last travel together.

And yes, they have found the fountain of youth.

Thank you for being a blessing to others! - B

4) Mamerth Banatin President, Adams Express Travel



To Tita Luz and Nila,

As soon as it arrived, I read right away your booklet memoir. I am writing now as it gave so much impact on me-the small miracles and fascinating stories behind your pilgrimage the most interesting vignettes our office learn about. I felt I was reading the bible. It was a treasure trove

More people should be inspired as I feel upon reading the memoir. For one thing, I plan to mention it in all our briefings of pilgrimage tours. September to November, for example we had 20 group departures for the Holy Land and Marian. That’s almost six to seven a month. I am sure they will all be touched and take the fruits of a pilgrimage journey to heart.

You are a remarkable two. Not in my whole life have I heard persons of courage, dedication, wisdom, persistence, single mindedness, self-sacrifice and piety undertake such a journey as you have done. God’s grace I am sure guided you along.

Thank you so much for being part of my history and life. May God always bless you with more strength and good health to carry on touching other people.

in Christ,

Mamerth Banatin
ADAM'S EXPRESS TRAVEL CORP.
President



10.3 Feedback _A Child's Genuine Voice in Prayer and Action



DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS
Carmelite Monastery
68 Retreat Road
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**Jesus of Teresa is truly risen!
He is in our midst today, Alleluia!**

The sudden arrival of the Ortega twins, Maria Luz and Maria Nila in our Carmel of St. Joseph in Cape Town, South Africa on Easter Sunday, heralded the Good News of the resurrection after their pilgrimage to the 17 Carmelite foundations of our holy mother St. Teresa of Jesus in Spain.

Their resurrection experiences shared with exuberant joy revealed to us the presence of the living Christ of Teresa who appeared to his disciples after His resurrection. Filled with overflowing joy they spread abroad the wonders of what they had seen and heard. It is the same joy which empowers us to do greater things for His glory, come what may.

For the Ortega twins, the necessary nights and crosses of their journey through life made them enter deeply into the heart of Christ's Paschal Mystery to be open and allow the transforming action of the Holy Spirit to happen, and share the foretaste of our holy mother St. Teresa's great experience of God through Prayer and Contemplation-the gift, she had handed over to all her Sons and Daughters in Carmel, we claim to be our own. The light of Christ must shine brightly through the lives of the Carmelites, to become beacons of light, sowers of the joy of the Gospel', humble servants of love and harbingers of peace in our violence-stricken world in dire need of God's healing and mercy.

Our missionary journey to become JESUS in the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit has long since begun with the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph in baptism confirming our dignity as children of God. Consequently, the Holy Innocents of the Church in the past and in the present in their martyrdom testifies to this.

Retracing the footsteps of our holy foundress is not a burdened 'determine determination' to do, 'but a joy in giving birth to good works' and with impassioned desire to do great things. It is without doubt that the providential pilgrimage of the Ortega twins, marked by the resurrection joy, in flying colors, has a significant urgent message to convey to our Carmelite family and to all Consecrated Persons in our celebrations both of the quincentennial birthday of the first woman doctor of the Church and the Year of Consecrated Life proclaimed by our Holy Father Pope Francis who addressed us, "Wherever consecrated people are, there is joy".

The voices of 'Jesus of Teresa' and 'Teresa of Jesus' combined blend into one song of love inspiring us, their friends, with urgency to make a new beginning in our Teresian Carmelite way of living as our Lord promised, "Behold I make all things new", and also "Ask and you shall received,\ that your joy may be full."

Are we really aware of our call to witness?... by being missionary contemplatives and contemplative missionaries?

After his 27 years of silent suffering and communion with God in his exile in Robben Island, South Africa hero Nelson Mandela himself resonates with Jesus and Teresa as he said, "We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us, it is in everyone."

Let us sing over and over again the words of, 'Teresa Bookmark' to realized fully that God alone suffices.

Congratulations, our dear Maria Luz and Maria Nila for your new, Spirit-inspired book and we, you Sisters in Cape Town Carmel are in communion with you in singing God's mercies forever, celebrating in deep gratitude this year of grace with joy.



2) Around the World: Teresa Forever!



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FOREWORD

Upon the request of the "Ortega Twins," for which moniker they are known in La Union, this project book has been reviewed.

Dedicated to their patroness Sta. Teresa de Avila, this coffee table book is informational as it is intended to be inspirational. It sketches the many venues, pilgrim places and countries which the Twins have toured in pursuit of understanding the breadth of the cultural heritage of the Catholic Church all over the globe. May this book, they pray, be a source of inspiration, too, for those who want to seek God in all things and places.

May the friends and relatives, and anyone who chances upon this coffee table book of Mesdames Luz and Nila find joy in browsing through these pages and be inspired by their devotion to and love for Sta. Teresa.

"Sólo amor es el que da valor a todas las cosas."


Rev. Fr. Victor V. de Guzman
Private Secretary to the Bishop
Diocese of San Fernando of La Union
Philippines

