

Maria Teresa Daza Corva, RSCJ
August 2, 1918-December 18, 2007

Maria Teresa was born in Sutatenza, Colombia and was baptized in the local parish of the diocese of Garagoa. She was the seventh of eight children of Leopoldo Daza and Adelaida Corva and grew up on the family farm. Her father was not only farmer but also the local judge who settled disputes. In winter, they lived in their house in the city so that the children could attend school. Teresa attended the government school until she was thirteen, at which time she was sent to boarding school with the Sisters of the Presentation.

She wanted to enter religious life, but an illness delayed her intended entrance with the Presentation Sisters. Later, she discerned a different call with the Society. After her father died in 1939, her mother encouraged Teresa to follow her vocation. She entered in Bogotá on September 4, 1940. Her Mistress of Novices was Mother Alicia Salazar. Teresa took the habit on March 19, 1941 and made her first vows on May 31, 1944. During her noviceship, her mother died, and of course, she was unable to go home because of cloister.

After first vows, Teresa remained at the house in Bogotá until 1945, working in the sacristy, portry, and children's sewing. From 1945-1949 she was assigned to housework and the infirmary in Medellín until she returned to Bogotá for probation. She was looking forward to more time for prayer during that time, but the infirmarian became ill and she was asked to take her place. Nevertheless, after six months she made her final profession on June 27, 1950.

Three years later, she was asked if she would be willing to answer a call to the United States, to which she generously responded. On September 8, 1953, she arrived at Kenwood. It was only in the next years that she realized the sacrifice. Language was a challenge, especially in a cloistered life with limited possibilities for communication. She knew that this was not temporary, but that she was giving up her own country permanently. At Kenwood she worked in the refectory and laundry, with limited contact with those beyond the community. In 1961, however, she was one of the foundation community of the new school at Nottingham in Buffalo. In 1968 she moved to Manhattanville for one year, then to Kenwood in 1969.

By this time, possibilities for other ministries were opening up and she was instrumental in the beginning of the Spanish Center in Albany, where she did all kinds of pastoral ministry and service. Her large brown eyes and warm smile were special attractions. She also had a serious illness in 1970 that required a long convalescence. It taught her patience, the kindness of her sisters, and deeper dependence on God. She remained at Kenwood until 1982. In 1980, she attended a Renewal in Dublin, and afterwards traveled to Scotland, London, Brussels, Paris, Lourdes, Madrid, and Rome. This was a time of great expansion of mind and heart for her. She spent the year 1983-1984 in San Diego, then began in 1984 a long stretch of time in New York, until 2001. She worked in pastoral care and family services with the Little Sisters of the Assumption, doing pastoral and sacramental outreach. She wrote in 1988: "My ministry is based on home visitation bringing Communion, praying and spending time with the sick and the elderly....It requires a lot of walking, some risks and a good deal of patience—especially with

weather situations. However, people are grateful and happy to share their faith with me. Sometimes I feel blessed with the wonders that God reveals to me through these people.”

Teresa never let her mind be wasted. In 1966, she completed an eight-week English language course in Buffalo, and in 1968 another twelve-week course at Newton College. In 1972 she completed high school equivalency. In 1972-1973 she was doing correspondence courses in CCD for Adults. In 1974 she completed a course in pastoral ministry for Spanish language in San Antonio. A more advanced English language course was done at Catholic University in 1976. She took a series of pastoral courses in Spirituality and Evangelization in Spanish in 1978. She completed a training program at the College of General Studies in Albany in 1979. In 1982-1983 she was resident in St. Louis for the St. Louis University Corporate Ministry Program, including two semesters of Clinical Pastoral Education at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. She became a U.S. citizen in 1996. She was one of the first of a series of Colombian sisters who came to the New York Province and was a mother and mentor to them all. She was the inseparable friend of Ana Ospina, who died almost a year before her.

In 2001, failing health required her move to Kenwood, and in 2006 to Teresian House, where she died with several of her sisters keeping vigil, on December 18, 2007.