



TESTIMONIES

SISTER OTILIA SALAS DE LIRA, HGS

“Have confidence Sister and God will not fail you”.
(Br. Juanito)

I am Sister Otilia Salas de Lira, HGS, I belong to the Institute of the Guadalupana de La Salle Sisters, founded in Mexico on September 8, 1946.

I was born on August 10, 1962, in the state of Aguascalientes, Mexico. I decided to join the Institute in 1977 at the age of 14 (one year after the pontifical approval). I am the fifth of 14 members. (two are deceased). I expressed to my parents my desire to serve God in the consecrated life because the only thing I want is “TO BE HAPPY FOLLOWING JESUS”. They instilled in me a love for the Blessed Virgin of Guadalupe and St. Joseph.

When I first met our Founder, Venerable Brother Juan Fromental Cayroche, FSC, I was struck by his silence, watching him going over the rosary beads.

A great Brother of prayer. His blue eyes, with a serene gaze. I asked the Sister who welcomed me who he was. She answered: “He is our Founder”. I did not understand what those words meant.

I got to know the way of life of the Guadalupana de La Salle Sisters. I liked their way of praying, their discipline in formation, their hospitality. I discovered, soon after joining the congregation, the fraternal joy between young and experienced Sisters. I felt at home. It is difficult to leave everything but prayer keeps





hope alive, trusting in God, which favours perseverance. I am convinced that everything is possible when you love. “Not to do anything but in view of God”. (SJBDLS)

Little by little I discovered the mystery of the call in formation. My vocational experience was and is one of living to the full “from commitment to commitment”. I am passionate about everything I do. Discovering Christ present in people, in events, loving and serving

During the stages of formation, I came to know and deepen my knowledge of the life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the Lasallian spirituality inherited in the person of the Venerable Brother Founder Juan Fromental Cayroche, the “human and Christian education of children and young people, especially the poorest”. I thank God for the Lasallian vocation I have received with a sense of belonging.

Tell us briefly about your vocational experience as a Guadalupana de La Salle Sister.

I have chosen, freely and with conviction, a way of life that has led me to give myself fully as a Guadalupana de La Salle Sister. Taking perpetual vows was a profound experience of following Christ, always going forward, without turning back. My daily life is founded on the Gospel, on a desire to come closer to and know Jesus more deeply, from intimacy, spending my time in this way of life.

In your years of religious life, what would you highlight as your most significant experiences?

41 years in the Institute. I would like to highlight the moment of my perpetual vows in 1980. I responded to the call to consecrate myself to God forever by living the Lasallian charism. To know, to listen and to discover the passing on of the missionary spirit of our Founder. In 1989 I was sent to the Philippines following the footsteps of the Master.

The CIL experience helped me to share part of my life with several De La Salle Brothers. It was a great opportunity for my own growth. So was the opportunity to find myself at the birthplace of St. John Baptist de La Salle in Reims, and of Venerable Brother Jean-Jacques Fromental in Chauvets, Lozere, in the South of France.

In Rome I met His Holiness John Paul II, whom I asked to pray for an increase in Lasallian vocations. It is a gift to be able to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Congregation. The motto: Instruments of God educating new worlds with Faith, Courage and Joy continually motivates me to give the best of myself towards a commitment that is vital to strengthen identity, charism and mission.

What has helped you to live your vocation as a Sister joyfully and faithfully?

Keep the fire burning with prayer, love, passion to discover, day by day, what the Lord wants from me, the presence of God in the community, building fraternal relationships with those who collaborate in the mission, with a positive mind and letting Jesus speak.

I am also helped by the Lasallian spirit, despite the difficulties at this time of COVID-19, which allows me to face challenges with hope. Responding to new scenarios with creativity, unlearning what does not help me and learning what is new, overcoming fear. The management of technology will favour the success of the mission.

Connecting from the heart, so that my language be different, not merely human but from God, without judging. The great personal and community challenge: creative accompaniment, young women who want to get to know this lifestyle of a Gualalupana de La Salle Sister. To let myself be accompanied.

How do you see the Lasallian Family today?

An open group, ready to build with passion, to truly form a family, maintaining communication, listening to each other, valuing each other, accepting the great richness in each one, discovering the gifts received, sharing them together in order to face the challenges that are present in the mission today. Every day I am struck by the immense richness of the Lasallian charism which is alive when I make it present. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit; it cannot be kept but I receive it in order to share it.

When I have the opportunity to communicate with the De La Salle Brothers, it makes me feel that we are part of this large family; this family have supported me as well as the lay people of the Signum Fidei Fraternities. Among those Brothers I remember, for example Brother Emilio Mazariegos (may he rest in peace), Brother Léon Lauraire, who have contributed to writing the biography



of our Founder, as well as so many other Brothers such as Brother Victor Franco, who invited us to collaborate in the mission in Asia, Brother Rafael Donato, Provincial at that time, and currently Brother Armin Luistro.

What message would you give to young people today?

I tell them to live united to the vine, to experience Jesus personally. It is worthwhile to get out of the “comfort zone” and to give your life forever to the service of the Gospel.

Let them not be afraid. Pope Francis invites us to leave everything in order to follow Jesus briskly. Let them venture to love without measure the unknown, the uncomfortable, and let them trust, let them wait for God’s moment.

I invite them to discover God’s presence in the events of life and, with passion, to respond to the invitation to follow him despite the difficulties we encounter in each day.

In the Year of St. Joseph, to what extent has the person of St. Joseph been important in your life?

Saint Joseph was and is a great example of courage, tenderness, simplicity, compassion, determination. I admire his great faith which led him to trust and abandon himself into the hands of the Father. He was able to form from the secret of the heart. He touched the mind and heart of Jesus.

What would you highlight from the life of Saint Joseph?

His protection, his chastity, consecrating his whole being. His innumerable virtues. A man of faith, hope, prudence, courage; who knew how to face difficult situations with patience and fortitude. Saint Joseph invites me to follow his example, in my daily life, so that his example may be reflected in my attitudes in life and in the mission entrusted to me.

In what ways do you think St Joseph can help us live our faith today?

He is the Patron of the Institute. He intercedes for the families. In difficult situations he is our great mediator. His example helps us to trust in God and to abandon ourselves to His will in all that He asks, without judging, accepting my limitations and those of others; valuing the gifts we have received, which are many.

Sister Otilia Salas de Lira, HGS

“I congratulate you on your excellent religious spirit, I offer my poor prayers and sacrifices so that God our Lord may preserve and increase it, as I wish that your beloved religious family may increase and produce all the good that the Holy Church expects”.
Br Juanito.

