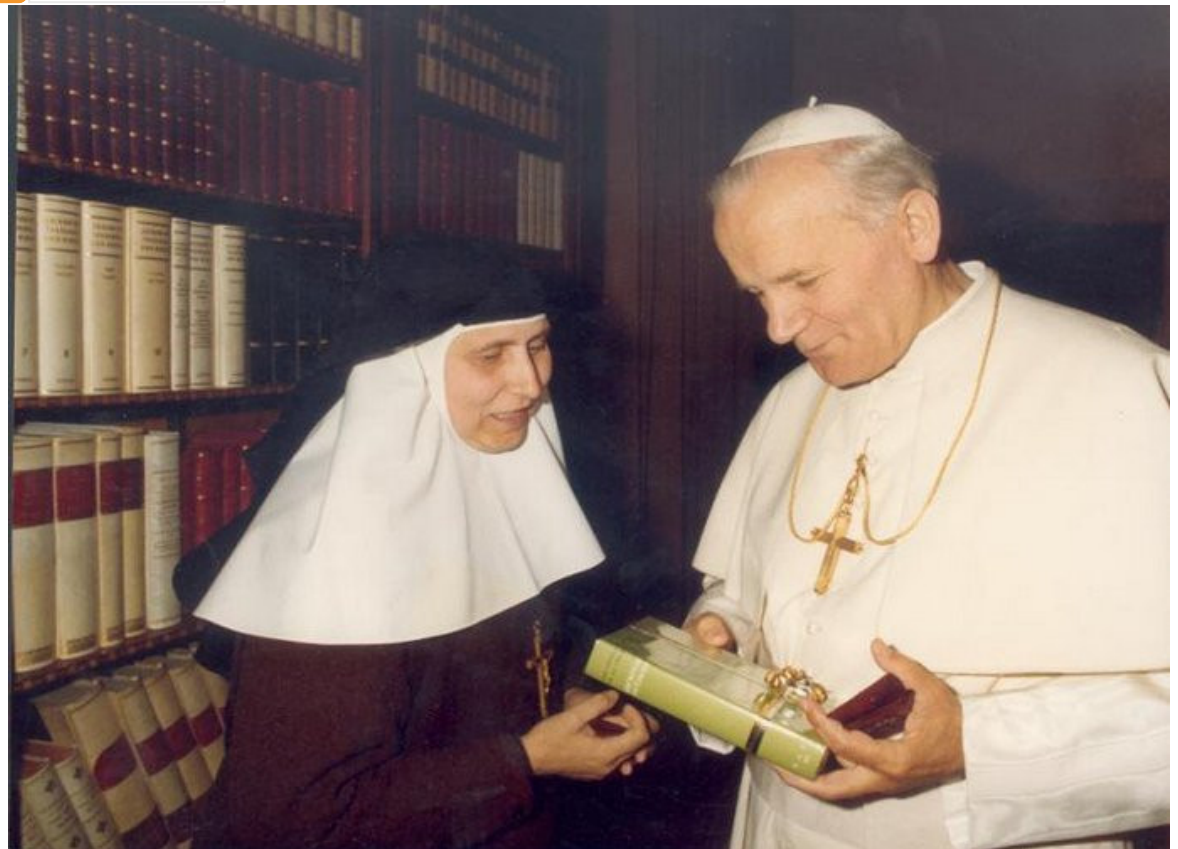


Saint María de la Purísima of the Cross

SAINT OF THE DAY

31_10_2023



Among contemporary saints only John Paul II was canonised faster than María de la Purísima of the Cross (1926-1998), born Maria Isabel Salvat Romero, canonised on 18 October 2015 by Pope Francis.

For certain manifestations of holiness, this Spanish nun is reminiscent of [Mother Teresa of Calcutta](#). “In the house of God there are no services more humble than others, all are high”, she told herself and her sisters of the Company of the Cross. For almost 22

years, until her death, she was the Mother General of the congregation. But even among the many duties that this position entailed, she found time for physical works of mercy, a constant sign of her life in the service of God: she visited the sick, washed their wounds and clothes, and cooked for them.

The third of eight children, born and raised by wealthy parents, she made her First Communion at the age of six. She was still a young girl when, accompanying her aunt, a nun, on a visit to a family in need, she felt the desire to live like the poor children she had met. A few days later she took them new shoes. She understood that Jesus loved them. And this illumination of the soul, accompanied by tender devotion to Our Lady, to whom she dedicated a special gesture every Saturday to make her happy, soon led to the decision to consecrate herself to God.

She was always attentive to all her fellow sisters, especially to those who were ill. During her time as Superior General she also experienced the sadness of the Institute being split into two provinces due to some internal misunderstandings, though later the situation was resolved. She educated the novices, trying to pass on her gifts to them. "The stronger our love for the Lord, the more we love our vocation and we are enthusiastic about everything that belongs to us: love for the poor, being at the feet of all... because we see in it opportunities to show our love to Him". She was tireless until just a few days before her death, despite the illness that had long affected her. When the doctor revealed to her the nature and severity of the tumour that would lead to her death, Mary smiled at him, quoting Psalm 122: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord!" (Ps 122:1).