

GOD'S SERVANT

MANUEL LOZANO GARRIDO

- Born in Jaén, August 9th 1920
- Joined 'Acción Católica' 1931
- His first article in 'Cruzada' 1940
- Start of his illness 1942
- Permanent disability, on wheelchair 1943
- Founded 'Sinai', magazine for the sick 1956
- Went blind 1962
- Member of 'The ONCE' in October 1964
- Published nine books from 1961 to 1971
- Awarded journalism first prize 'Bravo' 1969
- Made a Best Son of Linares 1969
- Died in Linares on November 3rd 1971
- December 5th, start of canonization trial in Jaén
- April 21st 1996, end of trial process in Jaén
- April 27th 1996, beginning process in The Vatican

MASS AT MANOLO'S

(José Luis Martín Descalzo)

From the original recording of J. L. M. Descalzo.

(Record "Words of Those Who Suffer" - in the own author's voice- San Pablo Edition, 1971)

This letter is different to any other.

It has never been posted and has no stamp on.

It is such a particular letter that even I'll tell you the name and surname of the one who signs.

He's someone who left us some months ago and I could even say that these words come to me from the 'supernatural.'

It's a mere card.

One side of the card tells about MANUEL LOZANO GARRIDO, now resting in peace forever, after long years of cruel illness. The other side shows a quite short letter, Manolo's message for all his friends:

*“My friends,
We won't meet for a time,
I'm going on ahead to meet Our Father.
I'm really grateful that you all have gathered
To comfort and share my death
Just the same as you did when on my wheelchair
I always be yours and I'll be waiting for you
In the JOY.
City of Lucy.
Always remember that all is grace”*

These words have lashed my soul as clearly as a flash of lightning.

And I have felt amazed.

As there's nothing so deep as a soul that has taken Faith seriously.

Only with truly faith one can speak about death with such an amazing calm, free of pomposity, just like one should write on the point of death.

Because Manolo has been dying for long.

In the forties, rheumatism in the joint attacked his body, which slowly concerned bits of his life to total paralysis and blindness.

Nevertheless, sitting on his wheelchair, he wrote and published nine books, hundreds of articles and tales and he even headed a magazine for the sick.

I met him when he already was a paralytic.

No, I tell a lie, he still had a slight movement: his forefinger was able to press the button of a recorder where he dictated his books and thoughts; then, Lucy, his sister, his secretary, his second soul, typed to edition.

I remember when I once came into his room and greeted “Hello, Manolo!”, and he said, “I've heard this voice before”. Sure enough, he had heard a lecture of mine on the radio three years before!

Manolo was a living file: sounds, voices, ideas, thoughts ... his incredible memory recorded and sorted out everything. He told pieces of an article I published eight years before, that hardly could I remember. Blind, as he was, he kept the innermost experiences he had lived when sighted.

“Look for n° four blue file”, he asked his sister, “In the middle there’s a tree-column article from ‘YA’ where it can be read about Juan XXIII’s death”

He was impressive! And he was so due to his impressive joy.

God was no tale for him, actually. To believe and to be a christian were his profession. He devoted his whole life to believe and to be a christian and so he always felt and was cheerful and happy.

His paralysis had not concealed his soul, all the contrary, how interested he was in the world!, how passionately he kept in touch with the living church!, how well he realised its crisis and how little he distressed about them!. He professed hope!

That Monday morning I had been to his home town, Linares, to give a lecture. I said the mass in the tiny room where he went through his life. Scarcely was there enough room for the little altar between the bed and his wheelchair.

He was facing me almost in his bones but answered my liturgical words in the strength and joy of a young seminarian. I got a bit embarrassed to realise that I felt Manolo the real priest, much more priest than I, much more victim, anyway.

I thought there were two altars and two victims in the mass at a time. Christ was alive in that consecrated wafer. Christ was also in that struck and shattered body after so many years of happy suffering.

And now I’ve received this card that says about his death

*“We won’t meet for a time
I’m going ahead to meet Our Father
... I renew my date in the Joy
... remember that all is grace”*

Yes, Manolo. Dying was for you nothing but going ahead to meet Our Father. Getting away just a bit from your friends, the ones you will meet again just round the corner of the death. Your quote in the **JOY** (you always wrote JOY with capitals) , is not a quote of fun.

You felt JOY like a PERSON and this was CHRIST. You had assumed so deeply the calm certainty that ‘all is grace’, that living without a body and seeing with no eyes was a precious gift.

Your bright death has been so important for me: we are in the point that all of us, who believe we are making church, all are living with plenty of arguments and stress.

Just while we were arguing, you were thinking in depth. While we were upsetting bitterly, you were dating us in the **JOY**. While the most hesitate and even are afraid about the future of the faith and the church, you kept on saying that ‘all is grace’.

Yes, indeed, Manolo, ‘ALL IS GRACE’.

Your living was special grace for me on that day I said the mass in your home. Your dying has been another bright grace in these times when we persist in watching dark what Christ gives us so clear everyday.

LOLO’S FRIEND. LINARES

MANUEL LOZANO GARRIDO ‘LOLO’S FRIENDS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box No 208 – 23700 Linares (Jaén)

**TWO HUNDRED JOURNALISTS ASK THE POPE FOR A COLLEAGE
CANONIZATION** (Zenit, September 11th)

Manuel Lozano Garrido, LOLO, a young man of A.C., writer and journalist, disable and blind, on a wheelchair for more than 28 years.

When Lolo’s biography was presented in Madrid, Cardinal Javierre commented: *‘Knowing the Pope is especially fond of the youth and the sick, it may be anticipated how delighted Juan Pablo II will feel to welcome Lolo to join the Saints’ Congregation ... , and added, “It’s easily supposed the joy of Juan Pablo II watching a disable ascending into the glory of Bernini. It would be good for the Saints’ Congregation to change the stairs into ramps. I don’t know for a fact a rising on wheelchair. I love to think that the Providence has kept for Lolo such an honour”*

THE BLESSED Manuel Lozano Garrido “Lolo”

A young man of the Catholic Action, a writer and journalist, disabled on a wheelchair for more than 28 years, and blind for his last 9 years, conveyor of joy to youngsters from his disability

1. But, who is Lolo?

Lolo was a young man of the C.A. He was born in Linares (Jaén, Spain) in 1920. At the age of 22, a creeping paralysis sat him on a wheelchair until total motionless. Total blindness stuck him for his last nine years.

But Lolo was a young layman, a Christian who took the Gospels very seriously, or as Father Martín Descalzo said about him, “He devoted to be a Christian. He devoted to believe”.

So seriously he took the Gospel that one day someone (Brother Robert Taizé) came around to his house, watched him, listened to him, looked at that stiff tiny body, took the pen and wrote on the lamp shade that lit from the corner Lolo’s working desk: “Lolo, sacrament of pain”

But this man of the C.A. who kept constant joy in his permanent smile, on the one hand ‘man of pains’, on the other hand he sowed with joy the hundreds of young and adults alike who came to him to ask for advice, had a secret, “Lolo’s secret” the title of the biography in comic for children, published by Blanca Aguilar

2. Which was Lolo’s secret that made him live joy in pain?

When young, Lolo had been very fond of sports and nature, cheerful in his childish pranks and even more cheerful when young, when he started to face the life and desired to ‘devour’ vocationally the world.

He had developed an apostle in the C.A. centre of youth in Linares back in the thirties. “The Catholic Action was all for him”

In the C.A. he learned to love the Virgin Our Lady passionately. He wrote beautiful, tender and loving pages about Her along his 28 years of disabled writer and journalist.

In the C.A. he hardened his Eucharistic fervour that marked him for life. His articles about the Corpus Christi festival or about Maundy Thursday or about priesthood are there like an evidence. Being already a paralytic – from his house balcony just facing Saint Mary Church main gate, where he was baptised and where

he now rests in peace – from that balcony he halted work and said, “And now, face to face to the tabernacle, I’m going to have a little talk with Him”

3. Lolo’s Eucharistic experience

This let him become another “Tarsicio” when young, carrying secretly the Eucharist in war times. It becomes deeper when he spends a long Maundy Thursday night in prison worshipping the Sacrament that his sister Lucy, just a little girl then, had passed hidden in a bunch of flowers.

The Eucharist marked Lolo head over heels. How beautifully Martín Descalzo describes this in ‘Mass at Manolo’s home’!. Because Lolo, who had discovered what the Eucharist is for the Church and every christian life, cannot do without it everyday having “A Round Table with God”, actually, this is the title of another of his books. The Eucharist is for him strength of spirit in his weakness, joy in his pains, source of apostolic preoccupations and spring for his pen.

4. Apostle.

This Lolo, an apostolically involved young man in harassed and even religious persecution times, travels over towns to spread the C.A. He does not hesitate to evangelise through the radio, he falls in love with Christ and tells Him, “A loan, let me have Your heart ... not to take everything easy selfishly but to take well enough the duty of loving You at Your extent” as he writes in ‘The Swallows Never Know the Time’.

This lively Lolo, has the visit of the pain: Apparently the pain changed my fate radically. I left the classrooms, hung up my tittle, and was shattered to loneliness and silence.

“The journalist I would have loved to be did not enrol the School; the little apostle I dreamed to become, stopped going round the neighbourhood; but I now have my ideal and vocation facing me as deeply as I had never dreamed before”. So he writes in “Letters with the Sign of the Cross”, another of his works.

5. Disabled

God gives this apostle ‘a vocation of sick person’: “My profession: disabled”.

He is so seriously handicapped that is losing strength and motion day by day. Although his body becomes a twisted jumble of aching bones, he neither complains nor speak about his sickness. When his right hand paralyses, he learns to write with the

other; when there is no motion at all in his left hand, he speaks on a recorder. So, he turns into a tireless journalist and writer from his wheelchair.

6. Writer and journalist

Two remarkable anecdotes not to leave out: He was given a typewriter when still had some move in his fingers. Guess what he first wrote! “My Lord, thank You. The first word, Your Name, may it always be the strength and soul of this machine ...May Your light and clearness be in the mind and heart of everyone who types on it, so that everything written may be noble, fair and promising”.

And when he was allowed to have the mass said at home, he had a hunch: “Fetch the typewriter!” – “Now, what for, are you mad?” – “Come on, hurry up, do. And put it under the table in such a way that the cross leg takes root on the keyboard”

The roots! How deeply they rooted in his life and how rich the crop was!

7. “Sinai”

Motionless in his corner, from his wheelchair, Lolo becomes a journalist and writer. Even more, he founds a devout work, “**Sinai**”, prayer groups for the press’. Every twelve sick persons together with a cloistered monastery take on ‘spiritual care’ of a specific social mass media, and so on until three hundred incurable sick whom Lolo joins, encourages and breaths through the monthly magazine he writes for them. The same as Moses, when with arms up, prayed in Mount Sinai to help Israel, all those sick who can “neither raise their arms nor walk on their feet” become Christian and apostolic support for journalists.

Lolo wrote ‘Decalogue of a Journalist’ and ‘The Prayer for the Journalist’, and he could do so because he was a Christian journalist in two ways: firstly because he could speak about religious matters, secondly and the most important, because he could speak about anything from the church doctrine and the faith viewpoint: mining industry, town planing, education, monoculture, agriculture, city reports or universe development ...

8. An ill person who works everyday

Lolo is his own maker as a writer and journalist. “I earn my living by the sweat of my brow”, he once says when being awarded one of his literary prizes. He writes nine spirituality books, diaries, essays, an autobiographical novel and hundreds of articles in the national and provincial press.

Lolo is a worker in a lot of pain or a sick man who works from morning to night. Year after year, his life plaits tightly hard work and serious illness. But his life also lies peacefully on **his big secret**: Marian and Eucharistic devotion, from which a passionately love with the church and a restless vocation spring “motionless on his wheelchair”.

9. In love with the Church

Lolo developed a fine love with the Church day after day. He moved to the beat of the ‘Church in Council’. How avidly ‘he read’ – he was blind already – listening to the chronicles and thoughts of the Fathers and Theologians in the Second Vatican Council, and how deeply he pierced the Council spirit!

10. Infectious joy

His pain worth, accepted in peace with joy, as a plan of God, was soaking his living. Then, his everyday life, his keeping in touch with people, developed into infectious joy.

At the foot of Lourdes Cave, Lolo, sick pilgrim, told the Lady, “I offer joy to You, the blessed joy” . And the Lady sowed and multiplied the seeds of joy and good humour, which he passed on those who came to his wheelchair.

11. Something outstanding lived as normal

A new dimension was growing up in Lolo’s life: to make that unusual facts, (the serious pains he suffered), seemed usual and he managed to make ordinary his extraordinary pains and sorrows living in a routine his dreadful circumstances. The most outstanding about this is that Lolo turned it into ‘apparently’ normal, so as he was a strong and healthy man!. He looked like a Job in XX century.

12. Youngsters’ adviser

People of all social classes came around his house: workers and intellectual, priests and sick but young people were the ones who more often struck up a friendship with him. Lolo kept a close a fine feeling to them. He always was “the ever cheerful friend, the joy transmitter”.

One of those tells about him: “Affectionate, smiling, ... he took interest on my life, my family, my plans, my work ... ; I was honest to him and told about my life and worries, he spoke about God the Father, the One who understands and forgives, he

told me about bearing Christian witness and how essential loving others is And I was feeling happier and more joyful every time I went to him, feeling the happiness I was looking for..." This is the way the most youngsters speak when going to him, young students, miners of Linares, undergraduates, office workers ... Lolo's heart was so wide that there was enough room for more and more friends.

13. November 3rd 1971

Lolo's life faded on November 3rd 1971. It was Saint Martin of Porres Day, "Brother Broom", the saint grown up in saintliness in a narrow corner of the monastery, just alike Lolo who had spent his life in the one square metre that his wheelchair took up. And meanwhile, beside him, me myself, Rafael Higuera Álamo, the priest and Lolo's friends Association Adviser in Charge who felt overjoyed to be nine years next to him. We were both praying the 'Our Father' and shared a prayer to Saint Mary: "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death ...". And just in that moment his heart stopped, "a heart that did not go in his chest", as his doctor said every time he was checked. His sister Lucy, Expecta y Antonio Luis, who received his last breath, were crying calmly and faithfully and they wanted Lolo's last wish to become true: "In the very moment of his death to say a funeral mass" And so it was done beside his just dead body.

Twelve years before, just on November 3rd, Lolo had written: "Today it tastes of railway, when the train arrives and a friend you haven't met for ages gets off. You're now sitting here by me, my arm on Your shoulders ..." (So he wrote in 'God Speaks everyday'). The time had come to embrace God warmly, God, who he had loved so deeply and tenderly, to Whom, crucified with his cross of long and hard illness, he had offered himself like a friend.

Those who met him alive harvested his heritage: All his written works have been re-edited ; A canonical association to promote his canonisation has been held. Having known his modesty, perhaps he is now looking down from heaven and smiling with humour. The diocesan trial process for canonisation started and finished (1994-1995). Afterwards, the Congregation for the Trials of the Saints has studied his life.

On December 17th 2007, Pope Benedicto XVI declared like heroic the life and virtues of The Venerable Manuel Lozano Garrido "Lolo".

On December 19th 2009, Pope Benedicto XVI sanctioned like a miracle the recovery of a child through the intercession of Manuel González Garrido. Finally, on June 11th, The Saint Pope signed the Apostolic Act accordingly which Lolo, Manuel Lozano Garrido kept registered in the record of the Blessed. On the following day, June 12th the Blessing solemn act was held in Linares, chaired in the name of The Pope by His Excellence and Reverend Monsignor Ángel Amato Prefect of the Congregation for the Trials of Saints.

After the ceremony, Lolo's mortal remains were buried in the Parish Church of Saint Mary in Linares in order to be venerated.

Lolo's sisters, Expectación y Lucía also met that happy multitudinous congregation of faithful who met to sing the mercies of God that He had spread on the Blessed Manuel Lozano.

Lolo, a layman, young man of The Catholic Action, a Christian journalist and writer, totally disabled and blind, with a deep Eucharistic and Marian spirit, loving son of the church, happy in pains, apostle and adviser This is his visiting card! . Will he be able to ascend into "the Glory of Bernini" like a CANONIZED SAINT along a ramp on a wheelchair?

Manuel Lozano Garrido "Lolo" Foundation

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