

In the Father's House

«As we have been united
in the profession of the faith,
so let us keep ourselves united
in suffrage and intercession».
(Fr Alberione)



At 11:50 PM (local time) on Friday, 16 June 2023, he died in the Rome infirmary due to gastric dysplasia

FATHER TEÓFILO BERNARDO PÉREZ ROJO

87 years, 70 of Pauline life, 66 of profession and 60 of priesthood

Fr Teófilo was born in Gordaliza del Pino (León, Spain) on 8 September 1935, the fifth of six children (3 sisters and 3 brothers), of parents Domingo Pérez and Joaquina Rojo. He entered the community of Zalla (Spain) on 15 October 1952, began his Novitiate on 7 September 1955, made his First Religious Profession on 8 September 1956, assuming the name of Bernardo, consecrated himself definitively with his Perpetual Profession on 8 September 1960. He was ordained a priest on 1 July 1962.

Fr Teófilo, immediately after his ordination, stayed in Rome for a few years for further studies in the field of Philosophy. He returned to Spain in 1965, with the position of Prefect of Studies and Professor of Philosophy and in 1972, he became Director of *Vida pastoral*, *El Domingo* and *Mi Dominguito*. Elected General Councilor, in 1975 he returned to Rome, where he remained until 1986, the year in which, after a brief stay in Venezuela, he returned to Madrid, Spain, in charge of managing *Edizioni Paoline*, a commitment to which was later added that of Superior of the community. In 1988, he was appointed Provincial Superior of Spain and in 1992, he was re-elected General Councilor and Vicar. At the end of his mandate, he will remain in the Generalate until the end, carrying out various services: translator, animator, coordinator of the itinerant international Team, Delegate of the Canonico Chiesa Community, member of the Center for Pauline Spirituality.

Fr Teófilo was a calm, kind, smiling and delicate person towards everyone, with a touch of humour and irony that made him pleasant to those around him. A lively intelligence, demanding of himself, he worked methodically and faithfully to his commitments, with a great spirit of sacrifice. He was a balanced person, always available to help others. Truly a beautiful figure, an authentic Pauline.

In community life he was very welcoming and was a person who really enjoyed participating in community activities. Even at the table, although he couldn't eat much, he stayed with the others, laughed, joked. His language was calm, full of jokes and humorous answers, he never complained about himself or about others, an exquisite person, he loved the presence of his confreres.

Fr Teófilo was a person of culture, he kept himself updated in various ways, reading the newspapers and visiting various newspapers on the internet. He was above all a person of prayer. When he arrived in the chapel, he was always already in his place. He trusted and trusted God a lot, always, in all trials, and of these we know that he had to face and overcome many. This is what a confrere who lived with him for a long time testified: «Regarding the prayer of Lauds, he told me that when I happened to recite them alone, if a sentence struck me, I could stop on that sentence and reflect with it together with the Lord». His homilies were rich, perceptive, always thoughtfully written.

In the apostolic field he was the highest authority on the Norms of the Society of Saint Paul: *Constitutions and Directory*, *Manual of Authority* and *Ratio Formationis*. When there were difficulties in interpreting these texts, he was consulted and he

clarified any doubts. Even in the last few months, when he could, he went to his office. It was in fact a pleasure for him to be able to work again. When he recently returned from the *Sant'Eugenio* Hospital, although he had not yet fully recovered, he went to the office to do his translation work. And when someone went to see him in the infirmary, he confided in them that he wanted to work again.

Fr Teófilo was very patient and obedient. He has always accepted the therapies that were offered to him, since 1998 when part of his stomach was removed. In all these years he was always struck by the speed with which he recovered: from Covid-19, from the fracture of the femur, from the last operation on the intestine... In a short time, he returned to his daily life as if nothing had happened.

He faced the multiple health vicissitudes with courage. He was aware of his state of health and accepted this test with great faith. He testified of patience and acceptance of the ordeal he was facing. The nurses have repeatedly testified to his docility, kindness and gratitude. A nurse expressed this to the news of his disappearance: «He will have an important place in heaven, because there are very few people like him».

Fr Teófilo leaves us the testimony that despite suffering, despite the many ailments encountered in life, one can succeed in transmitting hope, patience, tranquillity, serenity and the ability to proceed along the path of suffering without ever complaining, accepting it, growing and maturing more and more through it. In recent days he had confided to a Pauline that he had «three main intentions: for the Pope, for the Superior General and for the Congregation». He also said that he was accompanying the General Chapter of the Sister Disciples with his prayer and sacrifice.

A confrere recounts: «One day when I went to see him, after he returned from the Saint Camillus Hospital, he told me that he thought he would die this month, and he confided to me that he tried to do as much good as possible for everyone. This word of his is like a testament to me».

Thus, Fr Valdir José De Castro, former Superior General, summarizes the figure of Fr Teófilo: «He was a Pauline of profound spirituality, serene, human in interpersonal relationships, always available when some work was asked of him, especially as regards translations, clarifications on some point of the norms of the Congregation and also the priestly ministry in the chaplaincies of the Pauline Family. Truly a great man, who will be missed! May God reward him for all the good he has done for the Congregation and for the Church».

May the Lord welcome this brother of ours – who left us at the end of the day of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and at the beginning of the day of the Immaculate Heart of Mary – and grant him the eternal reward, while we ask him to intercede for numerous and holy vocations for the Pauline Family.

Rome, 17 June 2023

Fr Vito Spagnolo, ssp

The funeral will be celebrated on Monday, 19 June, at 3:30 PM in the Sanctuary of the Queen of the Apostles. The body will be buried in the Laurentino cemetery in Rome.

The Superiors of Circumscriptions are to inform their communities of the prescribed suffrages (Const. 65 and 65.1).