



At 11:30 (local time) of 27 May 2018, Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, our brother priest

FATHER GONZALO CIRILO PONCE MERLOS

71 years, 56 of Pauline life, 49 of profession and 41 of priesthood

died in the community infirmary of Guadalajara community (Mexico), dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Gonzalo was born of father Cirilo Ponce and of mother Maria Auxilio Merlos on 10 January 1947 in Hidalgo City, in the Mexican state of Michoacán, diocese of Morelia, about 200 kilometers from the capital México City. He was baptized two weeks later in the parish of St. Joseph and confirmed in the same church on 19 November 1950. Fourth among 8 brothers and sisters, on 4 January 1962, on the eve of his 15th birthday, he entered the Congregation in the community of Mexico City. Here he carried out all his Pauline formation: on 8 September 1968, after the year of novitiate, taking the religious name of Cirilo, he made his first profession, which he confirmed in perpetuity on 25 January 1976; he was ordained a deacon on 18 April of that same year and presbyter the following 17 October.

His enthusiasm for the new lifestyle he started is immediately good. Over the years, the formators esteemed him for his application in the apostolate, for his diligence, generosity and responsibility, for docility in common life, for obedience to Superiors, for good piety, even if not exempt from a certain tendency to the independence of action. During his years of study of philosophy and theology, he was very involved in the photographic sector and carried out the task of being assistant of the boys.

The entire apostolic life of Father Gonzalo, before the long illness that struck him in 2008, evolved between the United States, where he lived many years and on several occasions, and Mexico. In 1979, in fact, he was immediately sent to the community of Los Angeles, where he remained until 1988, taking care of the Sunday sheet "Together for worship" and carrying out his ministry in the local archdiocese. Upon returning to Mexico, he was sent to Guadalajara for six years, where he worked full-time with the bookstore of that city. In 1994, he returned for four years to Los Angeles where, in addition to being a Provincial Councillor, he was appointed for a three-year term Superior of the community (1995-1998). Three years followed in Miami, where he coordinated the local apostolic activity. In 2001, he returned to Mexico destined at the Provincial House of Mexico City, where he was initially responsible for the local warehouse,

providing at the same time the purchase of books from abroad, and subsequently providing service in bookstores.

In June 2004, we still had him in Los Angeles to direct SOBICAIN. In 2005, when he returned to his homeland, he worked for a year with the publishing house of Guadalajara “Alba Publishing” before being transferred, from 2006 to 2008, in the community of Taxqueña of Mexico City as director of the Motolinia bookshop.

In 2008, he took a year off from the apostolate and arrived in Rome to participate in the Course of the Pauline Charism, but just arrived in the Eternal City, he was prognosticated a neurological disease destined to progressively disable him in his motor skills. Returning immediately to Mexico, he lived with a patient spirit – first in the provincial community of Mexico City and then, since December 2011, in the infirmary of Guadalajara – a great purification, which led him by natural consumption, on 27 May, at a definitive meeting with the Master of Life.

Father Gonzalo maintained to the end a certain lucidity, which allowed him to follow with interest the recent developments of the Mexican Province, always surrounded by the affection of the Paulines confreres who constantly visited him. The Mexican brothers remember him for his great strength of character and the entrepreneurial spirit that has always distinguished him, a sign of love for the Congregation that he has worked to serve for many years through the apostolate of diffusion.

Let us now entrust this apostle to God’s infinite mercy. May he intercede from heaven for the whole Congregation, called in this period to the task to renew and update its apostolate to proclaim to the world Jesus Christ and «*the extraordinary riches of his grace in his kindness to us*» (Eph 2:7).

Rome, 29 May 2018



Father Stefano Stimamiglio, ssp
Secretary General

The funeral of Father Gonzalo has taken place today, 29 May 2018, at 16:00 (local time) in the Church of Hidalgo City, his birthplace. The body has then be buried in the local cemetery.

The circumscription Superiors should inform their communities about the prescribed suffrages (Const. 65 and 65.1).