

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 about 2:00 PM (local time) on the 24th of December 2018, the Christmas Vigil, our brother priest died in the hospital of “Centro de Especialidades Dr. Rafael Lucio” in Xalapa, Veracruz (Mexico)

FATHER GERARDO JOAQUÍN VELASCO ACOSTA

57 years, 29 of Pauline life, 22 of religious profession, 13 of priesthood

Father Gerardo left us suddenly and prematurely, at the prime of his life, due to a pulmonary edema caused by diabetes that he had suffered for some time. While on holiday with his sister, in the native village of Las Vigas, during the Christmas holidays, he suffered in the night between 23 and 24 December a severe pain in the abdomen, which necessitated emergency hospitalization. Two heart attacks followed, the second of which was fatal.

As per the testimony of the brothers, Father Gerardo made himself very much loved for his simplicity, a gift always appreciated in the priests by the faithful. Many were looking for him for his smile, which he would share on liturgical occasions as well as during festivities, to which he wished to participate for his simple and jovial character.

Gerardo was born in Las Vigas, a town not far from Xalapa, the capital of the Mexican state of Veracruz, about 400 kilometers west of the capital city of Mexico. The first of three children, the only male with two sisters, he saw the light of the sun on 16 August 1961. Papa Gaudencio is a worker. Mama Eva Aurelia works as a household help. A few years later, he lived with suffering the separation of his parents, an event that did not prevent him from completing regularly his studies and cultivating his faith. It is striking in those who will meet him in the following years his devotion to the Mother of God and the love for the Eucharistic adoration, as evidenced by his participation in the early years of *Pauline Adoración Nocturna Mexicana*.

Once he graduated, he worked in a pastries shop, until when, at 28, he focused on his Pauline vocation and asked to enter the Congregation. Crossing the threshold of the community of Mexico City – Taxqueña on 10 August 1989. Prior to joining the novitiate, he lived some years of formation and discernment, in which, in addition to the apostolate, he attended and finished his studies in communication and philosophy respectively at the *Instituto Paulino de Comunicación* and the *Instituto Paulino de Filosofía*. He consecrated himself to the Lord, together with three companions, on 11 August 1996 after the canonical

novitiate year lived in the community of Aguascalientes. Five years later, on 25 January 2001, on the occasion of the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, he made his perpetual profession at Taxqueña, followed on 16 April 2005 during the Year of the Eucharist (October 2004 – October 2005), by the presbyteral ordination by the laying on of hands of Mons. Guillermo Ortíz Mondragón, Auxiliary Bishop of Mexico City.

The time of his Pauline ministry that followed was largely devoted to the diffusion in the bookshops: in Mérida from 2005 to 2006 and from August 2018 until his death, in Aguascalientes from 2008 to 2009, in the Taxqueña community from 2006 to 2008. Here he was also Director of the Center of Pauline Spirituality of the Mexican Province (2009-2011) for two years before asking and obtaining permission from the Superiors to attend the Pauline Family Charism Course in Rome (2012-2013). From 2013 until July 2018, in Guadalajara, he dealt with the management of copyrights, also assuming responsibility for the infirmary, a demanding task in favor of the sick brothers that he has done with great sense of responsibility and spirit of service.

Departing from Mérida to reach his sister in his hometown, Father Gerardo first visited his father, a resident of Mexico City, and then, on 20 December, he went to greet the community of Taxqueña, sharing lunch with the confreres and the aspirants for the traditional Christmas exchange of greetings. So, from 21 December, he was at his sister's house in Las Vigas, awaited with joy by the parishioners of the village, who appreciated in him the priestly heart, always available to listening and encouragement. Then, all of a sudden, the situation precipitated.

In entrusting to the Divine Master, a Child born in the manger, our brother priest, through his intercession, we invoke on the eve of the vocation year of the Pauline Family (25 January 2019 – 25 January 2020) the gift of holy vocations for our Congregation to continue and to flourish, in the year about to begin, the evangelizing mission entrusted by Blessed James Alberione more than a century ago.

Rome, 26 December 2018
Feast of St. Stephen



Father Stefano Stimamiglio, ssp
Secretary General

The funeral of Father Gerardo will take place today, 26 December 2018, in Las Vigas. Then the place of burial will be announced.

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