

Manuel Lozano Garrido, "Lolo" biography

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

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"

1.- But, who is Lolo?



Lolo was a young man of "Acción Católica" (A.C.) He was born in Linares (Jaén, Spain) in 1920. At the age of 22, a creeping paralysis sat him on a wheelchair. 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 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 on Lolo's desk: "Lolo,

sacrament of pain"

But this man of A.C. who kept constant joy in his permanent smile, on the one hand 'man of pains', on the other hand sower with joy for the hundreds of young and adults alike who came to him to ask for advice, had a secret, ("Lolo's secret" the tittle of the biography in comic for children, published by Blanca Aguilar)

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

("Joy lived in pain" Lolo's biography)

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 A.C. centre of youth in Linares back in the thirties. "A.C. was all for him"

In A.C. 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 A.C. 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,



which let him become another Tarsicio when young, carrying secretly the Eucharist in war times, becomes deeper when he spends a long Maundy Thursday night in prison worshipping the Sacrament he had been 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 everyday having 'Round Table with God' , actually, this is the tittle 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, travelled over towns to spread A.C. He does not hesitate to evangelise through the radio, he falls in love with Christ and asks 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 Lolo, lively and keen on walking, has the visit of 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 living with me as deeply as I had never dreamed before". This he writes in 'Letters with the Sign of the Cross'.



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 never complains. 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: 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 the mind and heart of all that type 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!" – "What for. Are you mad?" – "Come on, hurry up, do. And put it under the table in such a way that the cross log takes root on the keyboard"

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

7. Sinai



From his corner, on 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. Lolo encourages and breathes them through his pen. The same as Moses, when with arms up, prayed in Mount Sinai to help Israel, all these 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 was 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, 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



To go to an end, 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, 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

There is an aspect in Lolo´s life that grew extraordinarily: those serious pains he suffered – "You're the most serious sick who enjoys the best health", his doctor used to say - . He managed to make ordinary his extraordinary pains and sorrows living in 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. 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 corner of the monastery, just alike Lolo who had spent his life in the one square metre his wheelchair took up. And meanwhile, beside him, me myself, the priest 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.

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 – he died 31 years ago today – 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. D. Santiago García Aracil, Bishop of Jaén, started and finished the diocesan trial process for canonisation in 1994- 95. Afterwards, the POSITIO about his life and heroic virtues of



God's servant Lolo, has been published by the Congregation for the Trials of the Saints. It seems that even God is for 'the task': in this Vatican Congregation it has been already printed (year 2000) documentary evidence about a possible miracle ascribable to Lolo.

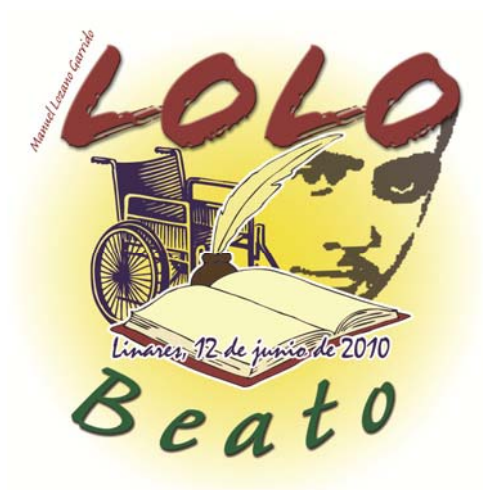
13. The 12th of june

On the 19th of december 2009, Benedict XVI himself, approved the miraculous cure of a child through the intercession of Manuel Lozano Garrido.

Finally, on the 11th june 2010, the Holy Father signed the Apostolic letter where Lolo, Manuel Lozano Garrido was inscribed in the catalogue of the Beatified. The next day, the 12th of june, the solemn event of Beatification took place in Linares, presided by Monsignor Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for the Saints, in the Pope's name.

After the ceremony, Lolo's remains were deposited in the parish of Saint Mary of Linares, to be venerated there.

A very human touch was added : the two living sisters of Lolo, Expectacion and Lucia, were present in the Beatification ceremony of their brother in the midst of the crowd that came to sing the mercies of the Lord, that has been poured out over Manuel Lozano.



Lolo, layman, young man of A.C., christian journalist and writer, totally disabled and blind, with a deep eucharistic and marian spirit, loving son of the Church, happy in pain, apostle and adviser This is his visiting card! Will he be able to ascend into 'the glory of Bernini' along a ramp on wheelchair?

(Linares, June 18, 2010)

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