



1991: In Valladolid

# BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

**1917**

**Nov. 28** José María Ortega Ijazo, official of Telecommunications, resident of Zaragoza, marries Manolita Pardo Valdoman, from Corcubión (La Coruña), in the Church of St. Mark at Corcubión.

**1920**

**May 5** The Servant of God is born in Ponte Caldelas (Pontevedra).

**May 23** She is baptized in the Parish of St. Eulalia.

**1926**

The family moves to Teruel where her father has been assigned.

**1927**

**June 13** The Servant of God receives her First Holy Communion.

**September 12** Her mother dies giving birth to her 4th child.

**1928**

Encarnita receives Confirmation in the Bishop's Palace.

**1936**

**December 23** She begins working in the hospitals of Teruel.

**1938**

**January 7** The republican army occupies Teruel. Encarnita is arrested and imprisoned and transferred to Valencia.

**1940**

**June 30** She receives a Medal for suffering for the country.

**1941**

**April 1** In Valencia, she asks for admission to Opus Dei, after some days of retreat with the Founder of Opus Dei.

**1946**

**December 26** She moves to Rome and collaborates with St. Josemaría in the expansion of Opus Dei in Italy and the whole world.

**1948**

**April** She accompanies Carmen Escrivá in an audience with Pope Pius XII.

**1961**

**October** She returns to Spain.

**1962**

She heads Llar, a School for Home and the Arts in Barcelona.

**1964**

She moves to Oviedo where she helps establish Montealegre, a center for the professional formation of women.

**1969**

**November 3** The father of the Servant of God dies in Zaragoza.

**1972**

**August 21** Her sister Teresa dies. She was Prioress of the Monastery of the Mother of God in Olmedo (Valladolid). The process of her Canonization has been opened.

**1973**

She lives in Valladolid and gets involved in initiatives

related to fashion and culture. She carries out an extensive personal apostolate among professionals of different sectors, with the desire of imbuing their activities with a Christian sense.

**1977**

She organizes a series of conferences to advance the cultural formation of professionals involved in the field of fashion.

**1980**

**March 27** She is operated on due to cancer.

**1991**

**August 23** Her brother Gregorio dies in Argentina.

**1992**

**May 14** She is operated on for a tumor in the vertebral column. Because of this she was unable to attend the Beatification of Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer.

**1993**

Publication of her book: *La moda ¿La conoces en toda su dimension?*

**September 21** She has another operation.

**1995**

**December 1** She receives the Last Sacraments. After praying the angelus, she dies in the Hospital Clinic of the University of Navarre.

**December 2** Her remains are transferred to Valladolid. The funeral takes place in the Church of Peace.



# ENCARNITA ORTEGA PARDO





## PRAYER

Lord, you who have shown your daughter Encarnita the attractiveness of holiness in the middle of the world and have given her the grace to faithfully go through this path of Opus Dei, grant that, like her, I too may discover your love each day and pass it on to those around me. Deign to glorify your daughter Encarnita and grant me through her intercession the favor I request (...) Amen. Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

*In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating the judgment of the Church and that this prayer is not for public use.*

The first session of the Process on the Life, Virtues and Fame of Sanctity of Encarnita Ortega Pardo, member of Opus Dei since 1941, took place on March 26, 2009, at the Alcazarén College in Valladolid. The ceremony was presided by then Archbishop of the Diocese, Msgr. Braulio Rodríguez Plaza.

Since then, the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Valladolid has taken care of receiving testimonies according to the prescribed norms. It has previously been established that Encarnita enjoys an authentic and widespread fame of sanctity. Her writings, testimonies of others, and documents were also gathered and presented to the Holy See, together with the documentation necessary to determine whether the Servant of God lived the Christian virtues to a heroic degree.

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Encarnita Ortega inherited her mother's Galician gentleness and refinement, and, among other things, her father's sense of humor. She stands out for her extraordinary strength of character forged at Teruel, where she spent her childhood and adolescence. Her mother died soon after Encarnita received her First Holy Communion. When she was only 16 years old, she worked as a military nurse in the city of Teruel during the Spanish civil war. She worked in this hard and challenging task for many months until January 8, 1938, when the military authority surrendered the city.

At that time, the human and Christian virtues of Encarnita developed remarkably, with her strong and mature personality. Her enthusiasm and generosity in caring for the sick was the forge for the spirit of service which would characterize her whole life.

At the end of the war in 1941, she providentially attended a retreat preached by the Founder of Opus Dei in Valencia. During those days of intense prayer and recollection, with the help of the priest's preaching, she received God's call, and the supernatural strength to respond to it. Her decision was firm and definitive. She resolved to follow the path of Christian life according to Opus Dei; this was to fill her life completely and for always. From then on, her fidelity to God and to St. Josemaría was unbreakable, with renewed fervor every day.

The Founder of Opus Dei entrusted her with different apostolic tasks from the very beginning. Certainly, the best proof of her holiness -according to the different testimonies that span her life- is the perseverance with which she lived and transmitted what she learned from St. Josemaría. In 1946 she went to Rome where she spent fifteen years of intense work well-carried out and converted

into prayer. There, very close to the Holy Father, she collaborated with the Founder in the government and apostolic expansion of Opus Dei throughout the world. Her firmness and equanimity, without any trace of self-sufficiency nor arrogance, inspired confidence. She knew how to listen, understand, encourage, look at things from a realistic perspective, and laugh things off when needed. She was very attentive and affectionate to those who had a rough time or had a problem. With her positive and supernatural outlook, at times she was able to make what seemed impossible, possible.

In 1961 she went back to Spain to begin a new phase in her unconditional life of dedication to God's plans. Her supernatural sense and adaptability made her apt for whatever assignment. She worked with the



*Encarnita with her parents and her sister Teresa.*





1981: In Villa Sacchetti, Rome.

same enthusiasm as always in the apostolic initiatives that benefit women, parents and the formation of the youth, first in Barcelona and then in Oviedo. She was also involved in activities related to fashion and culture, striving to help inculcate a deep Christian sense among those who work professionally in this field. She had heard the Founder of the Work talk about the need to sow good seed in this area which affects both the family and society.

Her life of piety led her to find in friendship an occasion to draw others closer to Jesus Christ. Since 1973 she lived in Valladolid until her last days, with the same apostolic vibration as always, working without slackening the pace, despite suffering from a grave illness for fifteen years.

In 1980 she was diagnosed with cancer. She had three surgeries and had various chemotherapy treatments. She died on December 1, 1995 at the Hospital of the University of Navarre. People there remember her habitual smile and strength amidst pain, which she faced with serenity and without complaints. The funeral took place the day after her death, and the burial was in Valladolid where her mortal remains rest in peace.

There were many witnesses to her fame of holiness throughout her life. After her death, that fame continued to spread throughout the world. The Postulator of the Cause accepts testimonies of favors received through her intercession.

## PUBLICATIONS

– **Maite del Riego Ganuza**, *Paginas de amistad. Relatos en torno a Encarnita Ortega*, ed. Rialp, Madrid 2003, 212 pp.

– **Maite del Riego Ganuza**, *Encarnita Ortega: hablando de tú a Dios*, ed. Palabra, Madrid 2005, 92 pp.

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# OPENING OF THE CAUSE OF CANONIZATION

The Opening Session of the Process of Canonization of Encarnita Ortega took place on March 26, 2009 at 6:00 pm at the Alcazarén Specialty School in Valladolid, presided by Archbishop Msgr. Braulio Rodriguez Plaza.

Once the ceremony had begun, which took place with utmost simplicity, the Postulator of the Cause, Fr. Carlos Martin de Hoz, following the established protocol and fulfilling the assignment from the Prelate of Opus Dei, in the name of and representing all the faithful of the Prelature, proposed to the Archdiocese of Valladolid to consider the life of Encarnita, and gather all the necessary proofs to examine it with depth in order to determine whether she may be considered as an example of holiness in ordinary life, and an intercessor for all Christians.

At one point, Fr. Carlos quoted Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI who declared that the saints “are the true bearers of the light of history, because they are men and women of faith, hope and love”, and that the only goal of the Causes “is the glory of God and the spiritual good of the Church and all those who seek the truth and evangelical perfection” (Benedict XVI, 24-IV-2006).

Msgr. Braulio Rodriguez affirmed that the Church conducts processes of sainthood of our brothers for our sake, so that they could serve as example and encouragement in our Christian life. The Archbishop asked those present for their prayers “so that the Archdiocesan Tribunal of Valladolid may carry out their work well, seeking the truth, praying likewise for the people who will be giving their testimony.” The witnesses will be called upon to make their declaration once the procedures in the Instruction *Sanctorum Mater* of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints have been completed.

The event was well-attended, and among those present were family members of Encarnita, numerous friends and acquaintances of all ages, who had dealt with her, remember her with great affection, and turn to her intercession.



Opening session of the Process of Canonization at the Alcazarén Specialty School of Valladolid



# FAVORS

Fifteen days ago I asked Encarnita that my sister's employment be transferred near Jaén, where she lives; in the capital if possible. She has been working in Cazorla for four years. Given her circumstances, it was difficult for her to travel every week. Moreover, due to some family circumstances, it was advisable for her to live in her own home in Jaén. She had been promised a transfer several times in the past but it never materialized. This year, before the start of the school year, I thought that perhaps Encarnita could help us. I began the novena asking her that upon ending it, everything should be resolved. After seven days, there arose a possibility of a transfer to Martos, some 20 kms. from Jaén. Fourteen days after I started praying, my sister obtained a post in a school in the capital. I am telling many people about this favor so that they too may be encouraged to turn to Encarnita's intercession.

(M.P.G.A., Jaén)

My sister has gone through some serious economic difficulties because of her separation from her husband. All throughout, she had supported her daughter exerting unbelievable effort. Now that she is 51 years old, she finds herself too weak to continue the effort. Her work is not appropriate for a person her age. I asked Encarnita for something impossible: that she find work suitable to her condition, and which at the same time would give her rest from too much tension. After a couple of weeks, she received a call from a company informing her that she can soon start working there. Once again I consider it a big favor considering her age. And I am very grateful.

(C.V.M., Valencia)

I thank God, through the intercession of Encarnita, for the conversion of my father who was far from the Catholic faith for a long time. In July 2004 he had an operation in the foot and I entrusted his recovery to Encarnita. I knew that it was a difficult favor, but I did not give up and I continued asking God for his physical cure; and if not possible, for his spiritual cure. My father continued receiving treatment for the healing of his foot, but to my surprise and joy, in 2005 he decided to go back to the Catholic Church and to the Sacraments. I believe that Encarnita helped my father in this process of conversion to God.

(D.M.E., Rome)

In July 2004, a friend suffered a cardiovascular accident while fishing in the old port of San Sebastián (Guipúzcoa). He was a lively fellow and had always filled his family with joy. I met him soon after transferring to San Sebastián (...)

I felt very bad when I heard about the accident because according to the diagnosis of the doctors, he most probably was going to die, and if ever he came out of the coma, he would be like a vegetable, since the medical team arrived too late and the brain was left too long with insufficient blood supply.

It was during those days in July that I received the prayer card for private devotion to the Servant of God Encarnita Ortega, and I asked her intercession for his recovery. It was the first favor I asked the Servant of God. I prayed, telling her words to this effect: "Encarnita, you who listened to so many concerns and worries of women (...) have pity on the mother of Rufo and ask God to cure this boy completely."

Aside from this, I prayed a lot for his health especially on July 16, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. After some days, I heard that he had recovered his consciousness and his speech. The doctors told his parents that it seemed like a miracle. Later, I found out that they operated on him to strengthen his heart. At present, as far as I know, he is able to lead a normal life.

I think that the intercession of Encarnita Ortega has a lot to do with this. I am communicating it to the Office for the Causes of the Saints of the Prelature of Opus Dei.

(R.H.N., San Sebastián)

I met up with a friend who was inconsolable: her family situation was unbearable because of the behavior of her adolescent son. This started some months ago and my friend could not stand it any longer. Seeing her like this, I asked Encarnita to resolve the matter. After some days she told me that something miraculous had happened: her son has become affectionate, is able to focus on his chosen field of study, and as a consequence the atmosphere at home has improved. I write this down seeing how incredible the changes have been.

(A.G.A., Gijón)



1990: At the entrance of the shrine in Molinoviejo (Segovia)

For more than a year now, a girl from India has been living with my mother. She is entitled to almost two months' vacation a year, and during this time she goes to her country. I looked for someone to replace her when the time came, but since I couldn't find anyone, my brother and I decided to take turns to accompany my mother. I was the first one to go. I soon realized that I could not manage attending to my mother and doing what I normally do. So I began to look for someone to help, in particular, someone who can stay behind when I have to leave. This is not easy especially in the months of July and August. It was then when I was given a prayer card of Encarnita, and since I entrust to her everything that has to do with the care of my mother, I asked her to find me a helper. On the 5th day, I was able to get a wonderful person, without problems with the schedule. However, she would have to leave for her country either on the 9th, 15th or 25th of August. The first 2 dates had already gone by and she had not yet arranged for her trip. The 25th of August would be ideal because by then, the other person would have

come back. I am very grateful to Encarnita.  
(C.R.S., Sant Cugat de Vallés, Barcelona)

My brother is going through a difficult economic situation. I began entrusting the matter to Encarnita, asking her for lights to ease the problem. My sister-in-law is severely incapacitated for work. Since she had worked for some years in Switzerland, they decided to solicit from that country the pension due to her as an invalid.

After months of waiting, the approval came, though with less than the percentage expected.

I consider it the answer to my prayer to Encarnita and a favor which God granted us through her intercession, both for moving my brother to pray for it, as well as for its approval.

We don't know yet how much it will be because they only spent a few years there, and besides we have to wait for months to receive the actual amount. But whatever it is, we are very happy, and I am very grateful.

(C.O.B., Santiago de Compostela)