



BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1941: 10th July. Montserrat Grases was born.

19th July. She was baptized in the Church of Our Lady of the Pillar in Barcelona.

1944: 11th June. Dr. Juan Perello, Bishop of Vic, confirmed the three Grases children: Enrique, Montse and Jorge.

1946: October. Montse went to Jesus-Mary School.

1948: 27th May. Montse made her First Holy Communion in the school chapel.

1949: August. Montse moved to the School of the Child Jesus close to her home.

1955: October. Montse went for the first time to Llar, the first Home Economics School run by women of Opus Dei.

1956: 4th October. She enrolled in the Professional School for Women in Barcelona, doing home training, cooking, drawing, sewing and design.

1957: 24th December. Montse asked to be admitted to Opus Dei as a Numerary member.

1958: 20th June. The doctor told Manuel Grases that his daughter suffered from Ewing's sarcoma, an irreversible and fatal cancer. Radiation therapy began at once. **20th July.** Montse's parents told her about the gravity of her illness and she reacted very supernaturally, abandoning her life in God's hands.

11th-17th November. Montse travelled to Rome to pray close to the Pope and meet the Founder of Opus Dei.

1959: 8th March. She received the Anointing of the Sick. Many people went to see her and were moved by her love for God, her joy and apostolic zeal.

26th March (Holy Thursday). She died at 1:20 p.m. Immediately after her death, her reputation for holiness spread throughout the world. Within a short time, prayer cards and informative bulletins about her life were printed in different languages.

1962: 19th December. The first session of the Information Process for the Canonization of the Servant of God Montserrat Grases took place presided by the Most Reverend Gregorio Modrego, Archbishop of the Diocese.

1968: 26th March. The Information Process for the Canonization ended in the Church of Our Lady of Montalegre in Barcelona presided by the Most Reverend Gregorio Modrego, the retired Archbishop of Barcelona. The Copy of the Process was then immediately sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

1974: 22nd February. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints issued its Decree on the writings.

1992: 15th May. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints issued the Decree declaring the validity of the Process.

1994: 14th June: Her mortal remains were transferred to the Bonaigua Residence Hall in Barcelona.



PRAYER

O God, you granted your Servant Montserrat the grace of a serene and cheerful surrender to your Divine Will, lived with admirable simplicity in the midst of the world: grant that I may know how to lovingly offer you all my daily activities, turning them into a Christian service to others. Deign to glorify your Servant and through her intercession grant me the favor I request... (here make your petition). Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

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

The Servant of God

MONTSERRAT GRASES

Every one in the Church - affirms His Holiness John Paul II - precisely because of being her member, receives and therefore, shares the common vocation to sanctity. The lay faithful are called, with full title to this common vocation, without any difference with respect to the other members of the Church (*Christifidelis laici*, 16).

Montserrat, who died three years before the opening of the Council, did not know this solemn declaration. Nevertheless, she already lived this doctrine. Montserrat, following the advice of Blessed Josemaría, tried to know and imitate the lives of those disciples of Jesus, who knew Peter, Paul and John, and were also witnesses of the Death and Resurrection of the Master. (*The Way*, no. 925). She also knew and loved the life of the first followers of Jesus, ordinary men and women who in a short time, Christianized from within the pagan world where they were living. They were present in all environment and in the field, in the city, in the forum, in the municipal halls, in the Senate, in the army and even in the Royal Palace.

Many friends of Montserrat remember how the Servant of God explained to them that sanctity is not a task exclusively of the priests and religious (cf. *The Way*, no. 291) but involves all persons. And she said this not in special events or surroundings, but in normal conversations among friends: "I remember the circumstances," relates one of them, "the day when perhaps we were talking more profoundly. It was an afternoon, when we were returning from Aguda. Evening came and all along Montse and I were separated from the rest of the group, talking about Jesus Christ: if we were sad we could tell him things and this would help us rest in Him."

The Founder of Opus Dei explains that "the specific way by which the lay people can contribute to the apostolate and sanctity of the Church is by their free responsible action in the womb of temporal structure, the ferment of the Christian message. The testimony of Christian life, the word that illumines in the name of God, and the responsible action, in order to serve the others contrib-

uting to the resolution of the common problems, are other manifestations of that presence in which the ordinary Christian fulfills his divine mission. Since many years ago, from the same foundational date of Opus Dei, I have meditated and made others meditate on the words of Christ which St. John relates: *Et ego, si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum* (John 12:32) Christ, dying on the Cross, attracts towards himself the entire Creation, and his name, the Christians, working in the middle of the world, have to recant. All things with God, putting Christ at the peak of all human activities." (*Conversations with Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá*, no. 58) As taught by Blessed Josemaría, Montserrat felt the demands of the call of God towards holiness in the middle of the world with such force that she struggled to do her best and with all her love in her ordinary work, seeking God in the ordinary circumstances of her life.

The Servant of God carried out her mission on earth without doing anything extraordinary. She struggled extraordinarily well in what was ordinary, what was common every day. And with her struggle in the little things of each day, she responded faithfully to the call that God makes every Christian since the day of his baptism.



Winner of a cycling race in Vallvidrera in 1951.

I met Montse in the Home Arts School of Llar in 1955. Nevertheless, our personal dealings intensified from 1957 onwards, when she joined the Work. I remember her as a cheerful, athletic person, a mountaineering enthusiast and a good singer.

Fashion-wise, she was sporty and stylish. She overflowed with youthfulness and life. Even with these attributes, she passed unnoticed in the beginning; and was just one more at Llar.

In the afternoon of December 24, 1957 I was in Llar when Montse arrived. One could notice that she was anxious: she went to and from the office of Lia, the directress, who was busy. Montse confided to me about her desire to ask admission to the Work. I understood then her anxiety. Finally, Lia came out and Montse approached her immediately: *Lia, can I talk to you for a short while?* It was about 8 in the evening when she asked admission to Opus Dei.

At the beginning of 1958 the first symptoms of her illness appeared although these passed unnoticed: a slight limping in an athletic girl, who had injured herself suddenly while skiing, caused the least worry. In the last days of June, Lia told me clearly: "Montse has cancer and the doctors have given her a short time to live." Moreover, the primary concern of Montse was that she might not be able to continue being in the Work. Of course, she was told that she can, and she calmed down.

It was already the month of November when her health deteriorated more rapidly. Upon her return from Rome, she became very sick. And from then on until mid-February, she stayed in bed more often; later, she did not go out anymore. Her leg swelled progressively, she could not sleep well at night, and the pains increased. When she was in this condition, we would go to her house. With all these, whenever she could, she would go to Llar, specially, when there were apostolic reasons. I think that, at that time, she learned to play the guitar: in this way she participated and enlivened gatherings or get-togethers. One day I was with her in Llar when she told me: *Today I cannot take much more.* And she stood up. I offered to bring her home, but she told me: *No, because Mama might be feeding the small ones and I don't want to interrupt. I do not want to disturb her.* We remained for a while, and later, I accompanied her.

When I was with her, she did not want me to waste my time because of her condition: since she

knew that I had to prepare many assignments, she instead made me study. Neither did she waste her time; and she took the opportunity of people visiting her to do apostolate. That is why she never refused to receive her friends. She gave herself so much to the others that it was difficult to know whether or not she was in pain. One day, upon arriving in her house, I heard her talking amusedly with one of her friends. Before entering her mother told me: "Look, I think that she doesn't feel well. You enter and if you see that she is suffering, interrupt the visit and ask them to go." I entered and saw her so energetic that I did not comment anything. When they left, as soon as the door was closed, she exclaimed: *O my, I cannot take this anymore, I cannot take this anymore, I cannot!* She suffered a very intense pain, that a few minutes ago I did not even notice. And to top it all, when her mother reproached her for not saying it beforehand, she merely commented: *And what's more, they come to see me...* She was very affectionate and attentive to everybody. One day, when she could go out to the street, she told me: *Today I saw a sweater that fits you very well. Go and try it.* She would always think of other people.

During Christmas, I helped in the decoration of her room. We placed a lot of Christmas cards, a small Nativity scene and other decors. Her illness did not diminish the joy that permeated that family, because she participated eagerly whenever she could. However, her condition worsened even more since then. I saw her suffer more than ever, but she did not complain and it could hardly be noticed. If her spirits were low, she knew how to overcome them.

On March 25, at midday, the residents in Llar called up whoever was in Barcelona, to visit Montse. I had a very important family matter to attend to but I went immediately. We entered her room. She was already unconscious. At 12 noon we prayed the Angelus and positioned ourselves around the headboard. I was impressed to see her again. Her face was sallow and emaciated, with shrunken eyes. She was agonizing. A few minutes later she moved a little. Someone commented: "Her breathing pattern has changed." Montse had just died. Enrique, her brother, who was then a seminarian, prayed for her soul. We knelt down around her bed. I had never seen anyone die until that moment. I realized that Montse had left us when I saw her mother close her eyelids. Every one remained serene and continued praying.

An abstract of the written testimonial of María del Carmen Delclaux Fernandez, Madrid, October 2, 1990 (AGP, MGG T-013). The author of these memoirs, born in Barcelona, is licensed in Chemistry. She sought admission in Opus Dei in 1956.

Montserrat's life is a simple story of a girl whose life combines suffering with joy, and love with pain. Her life teaches how joy can be born for suffering, how sorrow can be the root of happiness and how pain can be converted into love.

We were in Seva, during the last days of the summer of 1958. It was already a tradition to have a theatrical play during the feast of the Our Lady of Mercy. That year "La Casa de Quiros", written by Carlos Armchis was presented with Montse playing the role of Doña Castula, a pleasant old lady. Her parents had been hearing the passage:

"Ay que esto no es pa mis años!... Ay Madre de la Piedad, que yo me muero!" (Oh, this is not for people of my age! Oh, Mother of piety, I am about to die).

They knew that Montse was aware of what she was saying. They felt moved while she would repeat serenely the phrase from the booklet.

The day of the play arrived: "I did not expect," said her mother, "that Montse could act so well and graciously (...). It was an enjoyable afternoon, but Montse returned exhausted. One could notice in her eyes that the pain had recurred."¹

Incidentally, it was precisely on that day and at that particular hour when the play was held, those intense pains reappeared, after a respite of a few months. While everybody was laughing at what happens to Doña Castula, suffering had become part of the scene in her life. However, she had gained more than hide her pain: she had converted it into joy. Only her parents knew what was happening, while the others laughed, enjoying her acting.

Montse loved life because it is a gift from God and accepted death with the same joy, if it is the will of God. She was grateful for life—or death—with serenity, peace, and cheerfulness.

One of the few friends who would visit her during her last days, remembers many years after: "Her parents asked me to enter her room. Montse was in bed, very pale but I saw in her the same expression of habitual joy. This smiling image moved me, impressed me from that first moment. It was then when I realized who Montse was. She was dying yet she remained serene, happy and smiling with her characteristic equanimity."²

¹ Manolita Garcia, Barcelona 27-IV-1990 (AGP, MGG T-057).

² Jorge Suriol, Barcelona 17-XII-1990 (AGP, MGG T-087).



Montse in the role of Lady Cástula.

With her brief life, Montserrat Grases has given us a great example—perhaps unknowingly—of what is simplicity, the simpleness of heart. Our Lord proposes to us this virtue by giving the example of a child: "If you do not change and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven!"¹

Simplicity is a strong virtue developed by abandoning one's self in the hands of God: "The children have nothing for themselves, everything belongs to their parents... and your Father always knows very well how to administer the patrimonial goods."²

Montserrat saw all the events of her life as coming from the hands of God. One would hear her say: "everything is for the good!"³ The Founder of Opus Dei repeated this phrase many times.

When they told her about her terminal illness Montse's reaction was that which was natural in one who absolutely trusted God. In her evening prayers, she directed herself to God in full acceptance to His Will and slept immediately and profoundly. Thereafter, her supernatural outlook was manifest when they would propose to her a new treatment and she would answer: *Okay*. When they asked her whether

she wanted to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, she said: *Alright*.

However, she was impatient about one thing: she wanted to go to Heaven as soon as possible. She wanted to go immediately to Heaven but abandoned herself generously to the will of God. She would exclaim: *How egoistic I am! Lord, whenever you want, however you want...*

On the eve of St. Joseph's feast in 1959, she expressed her desire to see God and to conform to His will. She felt very sick—she died a few days later—and it seemed to her that her time had come. She was happy and, from time to time, the person who accompanied her that night remembered that she asked: *How do you find me?* Without waiting for a reply, she herself said: *I think I am okay. Imagine that!* A little later, she asked: *What time is it? Am I still here?...* And later, she commented: *Do you know what I think?* "I am not going to worry more. God will take me whenever he wants... From that moment on, she did not talk about "leaving".

¹ Matthew 18:3.

² Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, *The Way*, no. 867.

³ cf. Rom 8:28.



Montse (second from the left) dancing the "sardanas", a typical folk dance of her region.

In spite of the diagnosis

On Friday, May 27, the Feast of St. Ferdinand of Henares, my daughter Maria Mar went to a fair to celebrate with some friends. They rode on a machine whose attraction among other things are speed, height, etc. This attraction was being introduced for the first time in this fair. At one point, she slipped and was thrown out hitting against various objects until she landed on the ground, where she became unconscious. She was admitted at a government hospital and there she was sedated and diagnosed. This was the summary: "Displacement of cerebral mass and cranial trauma", in critical state and had to be operated on Sunday, May 29, in order to resolve several cerebral trauma.

Maria Mar was in critical condition for 2 days after the accident. However, on the second day she began to respond to stimulus, surprising the doctors, because her response did not correspond to her diagnosis.

Today, June 27, one month after the accident, Maria Mar has fully recovered her physical and intellectual capacity.

Maria Mar has a special devotion to Montserrat Grases that she takes very good care of the place where the prayer card is placed in her room. We started praying to Montse since she had already granted many small favors to Maria Mar in previous occasions.

All the girls in her class began to pray to her and even asked for more prayer cards for the other members of their family: cousins, grandparents, uncles, etc. Her English teacher also asked her friends and the entire College where she lived to pray for her.

We would like to confirm that the intercession of Montse has miraculously influenced the cure of Maria Mar. "We could not bet a peseta for your daughter's life which was slipping through our hands," said a doctor who treated her. He was surprised with the recovery of Maria Mar.

Considering it as a favor obtained through the intercession of Montserrat Grases Garcia, I would like to communicate it to the Vice-Postulation of the Prelature of Opus Dei, in Spain.

R. I. B. (Coslada, Madrid)

I could talk with a guy

One Sunday, I went out for a walk with some girls and boys. I had a liking for one of the boys and I asked Montse to help me find the chance to speak with him even though it be for only five minutes without anybody interrupting. On the way home, I mentioned to some female friends that I was going to Mass alone, because my family had already gone that morning and suddenly, the boy that I like, for what I had asked Montse, offered to accompany me. Montse did not only obtain for me a pleasant conversation with him, but also helped me bring him closer to God.

S. A. (San Salvador, El Salvador)

Montserrat helped me to study

I was preparing for the examinations in the university in order to be promoted to the next level. When I opened the textbook study of one of my subjects, I found a prayer card of the Servant of God Montserrat Grases. I had never prayed this prayer and I took advantage of this coincidence in order to go to her intercession to help me prepare for this subject. The examination came out to be one of the most difficult and I doubted whether or not I had passed it. The results in this subject were announced last and in my case, it was absolutely necessary for me to pass it in order to continue with my studies. I passed it and everything came out

well. I decided to publish this favor if it were to be granted. The intercession of Montse helped me a lot in the situation I was in.

K. W. N. (Nairobi, Kenya)

At last, I am a grandmother

I would like to communicate to you that I have recently obtained a very special favor through the intercession of Montserrat Grases. I was desolate for many years since my married daughter resisted the idea of becoming a mother. I had prayed daily the prayer card of Montse for this intention. Since two months ago I felt blessed because finally, I have become the grandmother of a baby boy who is the joy of the whole family. I believe and I am grateful that I have obtained a great favor. I thank God every day for this. I believe that this testimony could serve for the Cause of the Canonization of the Servant Montserrat.

M. E. G. (Geneva, Switzerland)

Pope John Paul II with the parents of the Servant of God

The gravity of the situation disappeared

I have the pleasure of informing you that through the intercession of Montserrat, the Lord has granted me a favor. I have a relative who has been diagnosed by the doctors that he will become blind because of his diabetes. I entrusted him to Montse Grases and upon returning for follow-up consultation, they observed that the gravity of his illness has disappeared.

Very grateful, I ask for the immediate canonization of Montserrat.

L. M. M. (La Coruña, Spain)



Due to space constraints, only some paragraphs of a few of the numerous letters that have been received as a testimony of the intercession of the Servant of God are reproduced in this informative bulletin.

We are grateful for the contributions sent as a collaboration in the expenses of the Vice-Postulation of Opus Dei. These contributions can be sent by check or money order. Donations are tax deductible.

We would appreciate our readers sending us names and addresses of persons who might be interested in receiving this informative bulletin or prayer cards of Montserrat Grases.

UPDATE ON THE CAUSE

On the days from June 14 to 16, 1994, the acts foreseen by Canon Law of identifying the mortal remains of the Servant of God took place in Barcelona under the presidency of the Auxiliary Bishop Msgr. Jaime Tracer. They now rest at the crypt of the Oratory of the Bonaigua Residence Hall, Barcelona.

The Postulation is working on the *Positio super vita et virtutibus* of Montserrat, under the supervision of the Narrator nominated by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

The numerous correspondence manifests the constantly increasing private devotion to her in the whole world. The testimonies and narrations of spiritual and material favors as well as the request for prayer cards and copies of informative bulletins likewise attest to this.