



Sebastian QUETGLAS
1926-2008

Sebastian Quetglas was born in Marseille on June 12, 1926, of Spanish parents who came from the Balearic Islands. He had a sister four years younger than him. He kept his Spanish citizenship, although we could say that he was “international”.

As a youth he attended a youth center in Marseille and was a member of the Young Christian Students movement. After his high school he worked as a waiter in a restaurant and for three years he was part of a group of “belated vocations” in Marseille. After a stay at the postulate of the Claretian missionaries, he begins his philosophy at St-Sulpice seminary in Paris. At twenty-five he enters the Sons’ novitiate and takes his first vows on October 7, 1952, his final vows on October 7, 1955. He was ordained a priest on May 31, 1958.

Coming from a laborer’s family, he has known material hardships and because of that he has always endeavored to translate his faith in an involvement with the poor and the workers to which he belonged. That is how he became a Son.

There was a missionary side in him: openness to international events and the desire to spread the Word of God by putting it at the reach of simple people. He began his ministry in Clichy and in Gentilly, in the Paris outskirts. But very soon he offered to go out of France as a volunteer to prepare the ground for possible foundations. That is how he was in Madrid for many years (1964-1967) and in the U.S. from 1972 to 1984 (New York, Chicago, Hartford), where he worked with Spanish speaking people, mostly Porto Ricans. Always ready to serve on precise missions (in Jaffa in Israel and in Manila in the Philippines. He had a very keen intelligence and a great curiosity” He was a polyglot, spoke currently French, Spanish, English, Portuguese and also some Greek and Hebrew. Well informed on social, political and religious issues, he often made very pertinent analyses.

He was a dynamic pastor, close to the people, seeking to bring the Christian communities to translate their faith into concrete actions. That brought him some trouble with the police in Franco’s Spain, but also the sympathy of all those, believers or not, who fought against the dictatorship and its effects on the poor and the workers. A moving celebration organized by those who had known him and

worked with him in Madrid, has recalled these events at the occasion of his death. His passion for the Bible and to make it accessible led to develop methods, publish booklets and books, to organize Bible study sessions with simple people. It was his main ministry during his last years in Mexico where he lived from 1996 until his death in 2008.

Sebastian had a strong character and a heart of gold. His character sometimes made communal living difficult, but his heart and his intelligence would compensate these difficulties. His age and perhaps some health problems had made especially humble and pacified these last years. He had been seduced by the kindness and the welcome of the Mexican people. He would say: “They’re the happiest years of my life.” He even thought of asking to become a Mexican citizen. At 82 and in spite of his health problems he kept on working intellectually. After having published a booklet on the history of the Church during the Apostolic times and a small book on Jesus’ Passover, he was working on two more; one was about the Gospel and the Christian communities and the other one entitled *To help read and understand easily the Book of Revelations*. Lately he had written: “That small task already fascinates me”.

Fr. Anizan said: “Give back to the people the understanding of Christianity”. All that work of Sebastian to put as much as possible the Bible within the reach of the people was really in the Sons’ tradition, along the line of Pierre Thivollier and of Philippe Denis.

Our brother died on August 12, 2008 in Majorca (Balearic Islands in Spain) where he was spending a few days of vacation with his family. His body rests in the small village graveyard of Santa Eugenia, near Palma de Majorca.

For General Council, *José Miguel Sopena fc*

Translated by *Lorenzo Lortie fc*