



Elizabeth Dacanay SL (formerly Sister Coronita)
December 16, 1923 — January 9, 2011

God blessed me with a Catholic heritage that goes back at least four hundred years, back to the time when Ferdinand Magellan, first landed in the Philippines claiming the entire territory for King Philip of Spain. Magellan brought with him the first Catholic Missionaries --who brought the Catholic faith to the people of the islands.

Both of my parents were Filipino, well educated and steeped in the multi-culture of the Philippines, a culture into which were uniquely blended the Polynesian, the Malayan, the Spanish, and since the end of the last century, the American.

I was born in Shanghai. We had family prayers throughout our childhood years. Mother led the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin during which I

sometimes fell asleep! By first grade I knew all my prayers including the "Act of Contrition" and the "Apostles Creed".

I first attended the Sacred Heart Academy run by the French Sisters of the Sacred Heart and soon spoke French as well as English fluently. Around the time I was in fourth grade, the Sisters of Loretto opened their school for girls from grades 1-12.

My father approved of the American sisters. He told my mother that he was afraid the French Sisters might try to make a nun out of me and suggested that I be enrolled at Loretto the following year in 5th grade..."they won't try to make our daughter into a nun."

I graduated from Loretto as valedictorian and received a full scholarship to Webster College in Missouri. I did not use the scholarship right away. World War II was raging in the Pacific, the nuns were getting ready to go to the concentration camp, and it was forbidden for anyone to travel during those days. I kept in touch with the Sisters of Loretto and often visited them in the internment camp at Sacred Heart Academy.

The war came to an end, and my father suggested it was time for me to get my college education. I was delighted, but deep in my heart I felt I should give God a chance, and find out if he really wanted me to be a religious. I announced to my father that I wanted to go instead to the novitiate and become a Sister of Loretto. What a storm erupted! I trembled somewhat shaken by his outburst. "If they don't like me, or if I don't like it, I'll just leave and go to Webster for my college education, I said." A few years later my father became reconciled with my decision when he saw how happy I was.

As Sister Coronita, I pronounced my first vows April 25, 1947 and my final vows August 15, 1952."

Elizabeth taught kindergarten, and music, each a half-day at St. James in Highwood, Illinois for four years, followed by seven years at All Souls in Englewood, Colorado. She became a citizen of the United States in about 1961 due to the encouragement of Mother Edwarda Ashe. Elizabeth also taught at St. Catherine in St. Louis, Missouri, and St. John's in Denver, Colorado.

In 1972 Elizabeth arrived at Loretto Academy High School in El Paso, Texas. To her delight she was assigned to take on three jobs: secretary for the public relations office, attendance office coordinator, and Glee Club Music Director! As time went on she taught shorthand, typing, humanities, and American literature to a junior class for a semester. Sister also was head sponsor for the freshmen homerooms, and substituted in the school library every day at lunch.

In 2000, Elizabeth retired from the Academy and volunteered as needed. In 2004 she arrived at Loretto Motherhouse and entered the Motherhouse Infirmary. God bless you, Elizabeth.

