

# Philippine Modern Day Saint

Adapted from REAL LIFE STORIES  
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"MOTHER," I am almost convinced she is a saint, and I do hope the Philippines will soon have one."

These are the beautiful words that were written by a friend of Arceli Tanedo soon after her death. Arceli, whom we shall call Lily, was born in Manila on May 16, 1920, and died in Baguio on March 18, 1938. So she really lived during your own time. She was the oldest of four children and her father was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Philippine Army.

Lily first studied at the Cebu Normal School, and from there she went to the public school in Batangas, where she was found to be such a bright girl that she "skipped" a grade. From the public school she went to the Missionary Belgian Sisters at the high school of St. Louis College in Baguio, where she was graduated in only three years with the highest honors a student could get. She was then only 14 years old.

## "A Quiet Girl"

One incident occurred during her second year which serves to point out the remarkable brilliance of the girl. For her composition on the life and writings of Dr. Jose Rizal she was awarded a prize of twenty pesos. And to show her kindness of heart, she gave half of it to her brothers and the other half to a charitable institution.

Lily's first year in college was spent at the Junior College of Cebu, a branch of the University of the Philippines, where she became known for her quiet nature and great intelligence. However, she missed the Sisters and her religion very much; so she asked her mother if she could study with the Benedictine Sisters at St. Scholastica's College in Manila. She was given permission and one year later, at the age of 16, she graduated as valedictorian again.

One of her companions once said of her, "Lily would never act

smart even though she was the brightest girl in all her classes. When there was a hard problem to be solved, she was never anxious to raise her hand, but would wait until the teacher called upon her, and then she would give the answer slowly and surely.

An instructor in advanced mathematics said of her, too: "I never saw her downcast or in a bad humor or excited, for instance... She seemed to understand how to get joy out of little troubles and crosses. Surely she had Jesus as a personal Friend... If one saw her at prayer one could not doubt that she was near and dear to Him."

Her piano teacher described her as a girl "with a fine sense of the beautiful." "When I saw her in the church paying a visit to Jesus, she knelt as immovable as if she 'saw' something."

She continued going to St. Scholastica's and would surely have received greater honors had she not become sick and died at the age of 18. For the Lord was to take her, as little more than a child, into His kingdom.

Lily may have been a very quiet girl, but when there was something funny, she would laugh as hard as the rest of her classmates.

All the while Lily was at school, her mother could hardly wait until

vacation when her beloved daughter would be home again. But Lily was kept too busy that she scarcely had time to get her own work done. She spent several hours each day in the church, teaching religion and holy songs to the little children, and when that was over she would visit the sick and the poor who were always sure to welcome her with open arms.

During her days in school, Lily told one of the teaching Sisters her secret. It happened while all the children were having a picnic at the seashore. Lily departed from the group and took a walk with the Sister. After they had walked a little way, Lily said:

"I am so anxious to finish my studies in order to enter the convent!"

Those few words were all she said; yet they showed a whole life's ambition. Little did she know that her wish was to be granted sooner than she expected.

In October, 1937, Lily suffered so much from back pains and high fever that she was forced to go to the school doctor. It was about this time, too, that her father, at the school on business, found out that his daughter was ailing and rushed her to another doctor. The diagnosis was brief: Lily was suffering from tuberculosis. The next month was spent in a hospital; then she was

brought to Baguio where, it was hoped, the climate would effect a rapid cure.

And so Lily and her mother moved to a cabin among the mountains. A servant arrived from Cebu to attend to the sick girl; then she got sick herself and the mother had to care for two patients instead of one. A short stay in Baguio's more temperate climate worked wonders and Lily was soon well and on her feet. Then complications set in and she was forced to go back to a hospital.

But even here, sick as she was, her missionary spirit remained restless and she converted a Protestant nurse who was attending her.

A few days before she died, Lily begged that, should death actually overtake her, she would prefer that her face remain unpainted. She also requested to be buried in the habit of Our Lady of Lourdes. A blessed blue belt was dispatched from Manila and arrived on the morning on which Lily breathed her last.

On the day of her death, a certain widow in Cebu, who had been a close friend of Lily's during life, prayed to her. While she knelt thus, she saw a beautiful bouquet of white flowers and in the center, a rose. She was a bit frightened at first; then she tried to take

them in her hands and they disappeared. She told everyone that the flowers were radiant with light and extremely fragrant.

Lily's brothers and sisters could not be immediately notified of her death since their parents were with Lily at that time. So they never knew that their sister had worn the habit of Lourdes when she died. Yet, when one of the servants came home from the Cebu carnival late that night, a girl in that same habit, with features exactly like those of Lourdes, appeared and walked in front of him. Then she walked away towards the stairs and descended, just as had been Lily's wont in life. The servant tried to touch the beautiful vision, but it disappeared.

A Belgian Sister who had been Lily's teacher believes that Lily went straight to Heaven. She told her pupils that for many years she had been praying for a certain favor but that it had never been granted. However, a week after she had prayed to Lily, she obtained the grace.

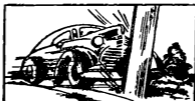
Here is another wonderful thing that happened after Lily's death. All her life she had suffered because her father had never been promoted in the army, despite the fact that many of his contemporaries had long outranked him. Soon after Lily's death her

mother prayed to her, asking that justice be done. A short time later, when General S. (Lily's father's superior) came to Cebu on a visit, Mr. Tanedo went to meet him as the boat docked.

As soon as the general got off the steamer, he greeted Mr. Ta-

nedo with a "How do you do, Colonel", a rank which Lily's father had never had.

The Philippines has never as yet had the honor of having given birth to a canonized saint. Who knows? Simple Lily Tanedo may yet give her country that honor.



### SMART GUY

The keeper of the seals for Louis XIII one day asked a little boy, "Where is God? Tell me and I'll give you an orange."

"You tell me where He isn't and I'll give you two oranges," replied the little fellow.

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Said of a mentally lazy man: "He had one thought once. But it soon died of loneliness."

### ON LEADERSHIP

"The leader for the time being whoever he may be, is but an instrument, to be used until broken and then to be cast aside; and if he is worth his salt, he will care no more than a soldier cares when he is sent where his life is forfeit in order that victory may be won. In the long fight for righteousness the watchword for all of us is — spend and be spent. It is of little matter whether any one man fails or succeeds; but the cause shall not fail, for it is the cause of mankind."

Pres. Roosevelt