

## Message by Liliana Camacho Angulo

Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverside CA

April 30, 2017

Good morning. My name is mother Liliana Camacho Angulo, better known as Mother Lily. I was born in the state of Sinaloa and I am the third of six children. My parents could not be together, and my mother brought us to Tijuana in 1988 to be near my father, and it was in the community of Cerro Colorado where we began a great ordeal. My father emigrated to this country in search of a better life and unfortunately left us. I grew up hating the United States, especially Bakersfield, since that was where my father lived most of his life. My mother, on the other hand, set about the task of raising each of us with enormous sacrifices. We were hungry and grew up without discipline, since my mother was away from home working. I grew up without directions and rules. My school was the street, but I did not forget that I had to go home at 4 to clean the house and to cook beans, because my mother arrived at 5 and if I did not do what she assigned me, she would hit me with a belt. I remember that at home my mom always had an apple and a Coca Cola to distribute among her children. Can you imagine the little pieces that we ate? I used to eat a lot and that small piece wasn't enough for me. I tried to get more apple and sometimes I took away my brother's piece. Once I got another piece, I started running and used to yell "catch me if you can." I ran, trying not to be caught, and I usually did not return until night, hoping my mother would forget what I did and not scold me. I think I was naughty.

I remember that I was 14 years old and there was a retreat for adolescents. I was motivated to ask my mother for permission to go. When we arrived in the afternoon to check in, the monks and friars looked at me with fright. I asked them the reason why they looked at me like this and if they did not accept me, I wanted to know the reason. I also remember that one day I fought with someone. A nun told me this: "Look, beautiful chubby one, they are not prepared to assist you because you are very special to God, but you need to change a little so you can attend these retreats. I am not going to go on this retreat, but the next one that I organize I will take you. But promise me that you will try to change." It hurt so much that they did not accept me at that moment. I was very angry and I told them that they just had to preach that I was a sinner. I wanted to heal my soul and if I lost it, it was their fault. I went home outraged and did not return to that group.

One month later, a friend came to get me because she was worried about not seeing me for a month. I shared with her my bad experience and she encouraged me to go again. In July they organized another retreat to which they accepted me. That was my birthday present. I celebrated my fifteenth birthday. From there my life began to change, until I was accepted into the consecrated life of God at the age of 19 years and I was immensely happy. I was an enthusiastic worker. I made myself do many activities with the children in catechism classes, and on August 14 I was officially the BRIDE of JESUS – a unique experience. To this day, I remember that day with emotion. Before making my simple vows, I decided to spend some time in the house of a large family who had supported me in my rebelliousness. The "marriage of Doña Chela" we called them.

I decided to belong to a tight and very conservative community of nuns, and there my second stage of falling in love with my beloved Jesus began. In that place, they were very strict and lived with great humility. I think God already had his plan and was preparing me for a great mission. There they had children with different abilities and we could not give them much help, so I decided to prepare and I took a 9-month course on working with children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Over time I discovered that I was a hyperactive girl and my mother never noticed it. Other companions and I left the institution, and one day I went to the doctor's office and met a woman with 5 children who asked me to take care of her children so she could work. This is how I made the decision to create the Casa Hogar (Children's Home) to care for and protect the children of single mothers.

**Comments by her friend (and translator) Laura Velazquez:**

I have participated with Mother Lily since she started her project. I am a witness of her great heart, her sacrifices and hard work in order to achieve a better life for her children. I remember when she went out in a daily basis to sing on the street and asked for money in order to be able to feed her little ones. It did not matter if she was sick, tired, or hungry. Mother Lily worked hard to pay for land and build a comfortable home for the children. There are 48 children who are provided with food 3 times a day, clothes, personal hygiene products, school, a place to sleep, etc. There are no words to thank her for the kindness and love she has for her children. If I could describe Mother Lily, I would say that she is a generous person, because she gives everything she has, hardworking, cares for her children 24 hours a day, and looks for ways to cover all the expenses. Determined – she never gives up. A dreamer – always planning a better life for her children. Loving – I love to see her seated, cleaning the girls' hair. Fierce – defending the children from whomever. Compassionate – she never says there is no place for a new child. Happy – she is always cheerful and makes jokes. But her biggest gift is faith. She lives one day at a time, trusting that the next day God will supply the necessary resources and strength to continue with her mission and provide her children with a dignified life. I would like to finish with our favorite quote: "All children deserve to live as children of God."

Thank you for your time and generosity.