

Traces of Marisol's life: a Lay Scalabrinian

Her name was Maria Isabel Macias Castro, but she called herself Marisol Castro identifying herself with her sister's name who died of leukemia after an operation in which Marisol had donated part of her spinal cord. Born in Nuevo Laredo on July 16, 1972. she lived a difficult childhood, affected by poverty and the daily struggle to survive. Marisol was very reserved about her personal and family life, but occasionally talked about "her baby", her 12 year old daughter and "her baby", son studying in abroad in the USA. Abandoned by the father of her children which happened after Marisol lost a leg in an accident, and then replaced by a prosthesis, she rebuilt her life. She was always a fighter for her children, her family, her work and in recent years, as a secular Lay Scalabrinian or for "*my dear migrants*" as she called them. She tirelessly worked as the editor of the newspaper Ultima Hora, specializing in graphic, advertising and social networking, "*always online, a permanent reference point*" as defined by a fellow lay Scalabrinian.

Through her work with the "Casa del Migrante" Center in Nuevo Laredo which entailed graphic art, she began, accompanied by a volunteer lay scalabrinian who is currently a Scalabrinian Seminarian a profound journey of awareness in the migrant. Her "conversion" and commitment to migrants in such a short time passed from indifference and prejudice which is typical for the local people, to a deep awareness of human and social reality dramatically experienced by thousands of migrants that are crossing or being deported from the border. She was constantly enlightened by the life and writings of Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini (read all the available articles and books with much passion) in fact, her "Skype" account included a photo of her commitment ceremony as a Lay Scalabrini (June 1st 2009) along with a phrase by Blessed Scalabrini which reads, "*We must do good, all the good possible, and do it the best way possible...*".

Notwithstanding the extended work hours from Monday to Saturday, Marisol always tried to get her editorials done quickly in order to spend quality time with her family and to faithfully make herself available for the migrants. Treating anyone who came for help with maternal affection along with comforting words... "*you have to behave well here because this is a*

house of God ", words flowed from her deep personal experience of her encounter with Christ the migrant._____

On the weekend in which she was killed, the Gospel spoke of John the Baptist, Martyr who was beheaded because he fought for truth and justice. On Wednesday 21 September after work she was abducted and nobody realized it. The only sign at first was her cell phone ringing with no answer... Hours of terror and fear began brewing in the hearts of her family and friends, her presence in skype, yahoo, hotmail was sadly no longer there, thoughts that something very serious had happened began to emerge. On Saturday September 24th, 2011, three days later, the decapitated body of Marisol appeared naked and thrown into a monument at the main entrance of the city of Nuevo Laredo. A keyboard, a DVD and a sign with an inhumanly sarcastic note rested next to her body stating that she was murdered for her publications and her social networking site.

A web of contradictory and dubious information accompanied the early hours of the morning. Several people that drove through that avenue witnessed something that was unhumanly horrible and impossible to conceive that something like that could possibly happen between humans, but were unable and unwilling to declare their sentiments for fear of their lives. We had to wait several hours until an officer of the government of Tamaulipas, made the shocking official recognition of what everyone already knew. The news of the Marisol's murder immediately spread by various news media; newspaper, radio and news broadcasts in several countries. The allegations and convictions caused the International NGOs immediately raise their voices with complaints. The congregation of the Missionaries of st Charles and movement of Lay Scalabrinians where Marisol was well known and appreciated were saddened and grieved with unbelief. The staggering number of emails from around the world was a instant reaction from the Scalabrinian prophetics with hopes that the death of one of their daughters and sisters would not be in vain and would help plant the seed of righteousness and truth, which commits us to care , make it grow and mature in our life and vocation of missionaries and Scalabrinians.