



Father Vicente Ramalho Marques de Freitas

was born in Rio Claro, in the interior of São Paulo State, Brazil. His parents were Paulo Marques de Freitas and Isabel Ferreira das Neves. He had two brothers: Sebastião and Leonor.

When he was a child, worked on a butcher shop, has been altar boy and sacristan on the São João Batista (St. John Baptist) Parish at Rio Claro City.

A pious priest wakes his attention to the sacerdotal life. The young Vicente chat with his father, from who he heard the following advice: "Once you decide, do not backup!"

Then at the age of 15 he joined the seminary called "Escola Apostólica Santa Cruz" (Holy Cross Apostolic Scholl), in Rio Claro City. It was the first seminary built in Brazil by the **Stigmatine Fathers and Brothers**, founded in 1816 by **Saint Gaspar Bertoni**, in Verone, Italy.

On December 7th, 1941, at the age of 27, he received his sacerdotal ordination, on the São Sebastião of Rio Preto Cathedral, together with one Augustinian and two diocesan priests; one of them today is the Bishop for Maringá, in Paraná State. The Bishop that ordinate him was the Most Rev. Manuel da Silveira D'Elboux, Auxiliary Bishop of Ribeirão Preto, on the presence of Most Rev. Alberto José Gonçalves, Diocesan Bishop.

As a priest he worked at many places (Ituiutaba, Morrinhos, Casa Branca, Campinas, São Caetano do Sul, Tupaciguara, Uberlândia, Ouro Fino, Borda da Mata, Jundiáí, Rio Claro, Ituverava, Araçatuba, Barretos, Adamantina, Tupã, Marília, Rondinha, Palmeira, Rio de Janeiro, Piracicaba, Iracemópolis, Monte Mor, Garça, Marília), but never wanted to conduct a parish, because he always willed to be available to celebrate the sacraments.

His delight was to celebrate the Mass, and used to say to his superiors: "I will celebrate how many Masses are necessary each day; if they are 5, I will end the 5th one with the same disposition that I started the 1st one". With the same energy he also used to prepare kids for the First Communion and help the other priests.

On the call of his superiors, his answer was immediate: "YES", and with a great disposition he moved from one place to the other, always with discretion. Never a single complain was born on his lips.

But there was a place that he had special affection: the St. Benedito Parish, in Campinas, São Paulo State. There he helped to introduce the devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus, which he used to celebrate with special enthusiasm, on the second

Tuesdays of the month. At the end of the Mass, he blessed the breads, which were distributed with love to all. Equal was his devotion to the patron saint, from which he imitates the virtues, specially the simplicity.

And, sensitive to this fondness, that his superior called him to be there, already elderly, to be the parish vicar, up to his last days. He arrived in October 1996 and worked up to his forces missed, in the beginning of May 1997. When he figured out that had no more conditions to celebrate the Holy Communion he said "Now I know that my end is near, because nothing else I have to do in this world".

He spent his two last weeks at the "Chácara do Vovô" (Grandpa Country House), in Campinas, because his health conditions was asking for the care of a nurse. And saintly, on the especially holy feast day of the St. Gaspar Bertoni, July 12, 1997, God called him to the heaven, and he, always obedient, promptly attended...

Surely, calling him at this day, God was conceiving a special grace to his loyal and tireless servant, which was closely tight to St. Gaspar during all his life. And so he wanted to remain together with him also in the heaven.

His material belongings? Almost nothing. If added all the things he left, including his own cloths and personal belongings, they did not sum more than one hundred dollars, verified his superior. Its treasure was in his heart, on his attitudes, on his unshakable faith, on the blessing that he used to distribute to everyone and of that he left us enriched.

That the good God keep him with himself on the heaven, together with the Virgin Mary and its "over chaste spouse" St. Joseph, St. Gaspar Bertoni, St. Benedito and that, from there, he bless and encourage us to be simple and helpful as he was, to love the Church as he loved, and to do the God's will in our life as he achieved in his life.