

FR. MAX ALEJANDRO CALDERÓN CHANG (1968-2021)



Son of Luis Calderón Gómez and Angélica Chang Ramírez, Fr. Max was born on December 22, 1968, in Piura in Peru. Later, his family moved to Huaral (Lima).

After his primary and secondary school education, he entered the *San Camilo* Seminary in Lima in May 1986. He attended preparatory course and two years of philosophy at the *Juan XXIII* Theological Institute and participated in the formation courses of *CONFER* (union of Institutes of Consecrated Life). He began his novitiate on February 11, 1989 in the *San Martín de Porres* community at Jr. Junín-Lima, and professed temporary vows on January 21, 1990 in the church of *Santa María de la Buenamuerte* in Lima. He continued his theological studies at the *Juan XXIII* Theological Institute until December 1993. He then moved to the community of *San Martín de Porres*, where he lived his pastoral year. There, he professed solemn vows on December 8, 1994.

He was ordained a deacon on December 18, 1994 in the church of Huaral, and was ordained a priest in the church of *Santa María de la Buenamuerte* in Lima on December 7, 1995, through the laying on of hands by the archbishop of Lima Cardinal Augusto Vargas Alzamora. He was appointed chaplain of the *Arzobispo Loayza* Hospital on June 3, 1996. On May 1, 2002, he moved to the new *Blessed Luis Tezza* community, of which he was appointed superior on October 2, 2002.

He participated in a one-month intensive CPE programme, and studied piano, flute and choir conducting at the conservatoire in Lima. He was a member of the Catholic University choir with which he participated in competitions in various countries. He also studied the technique of art restoration at the School of Fine Arts in Lima.

In March 2005, he moved to the community at Trujillo as chaplain of *Victor Lazarte* hospital, and then in August 2007, he was transferred to the chaplaincy of the regional hospital. There he carried out various activities together with the hospital's team of volunteers.

In 2017, he was transferred to the *Convento de la Buenamuerte* community, where he assumed the chaplaincy of the *Benemérito Dos de Mayo* Hospital. He also offered his ministerial service as chaplain of the *Carmen Alto* Monastery in Lima, as confessor of the *Santa Clara* Monastery in Lima, and as spiritual assistant at the *Madres Trinitarias* Monastery.

In the *Convento de la Buenamuerte*, under the direction of teacher Isabel Salas, together with some young people in formation and some confreres of the community, he organized a choir for the solemnity of our founder Saint Camillus and for the Christmas celebrations. In his restoration workshop, he also did various works for the care and conservation of the artistic heritage of the *Convento de la Buenamuerte*. He shared his hobbies of embroidery and weaving with the *Madres Trinitarias*, and often willingly cooked for the confreres of the community.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, he continued his work as a chaplain, visiting many sick people and administering the sacraments to them. His commitment and dedication was even publicized through a nationally broadcast television programme entitled "Father Max and God's Nurses." He continued to lead prayers and give reflections for the medical staff and all the sick in the hospital. His presence was greatly appreciated by the management of *Dos de Mayo* hospital.

In October 2020, he was diagnosed with lymph node cancer, which caused a progressive deterioration of his health, despite the chemotherapy and radiotherapy he underwent. He asked his superiors to allow him to go to the hospital until his strength prevented him from doing so. He continued his visits to the sick until December 2020, when a slight difficulty in his legs prevented him from walking. Despite his repeated attempts to resume his activities, the hospital management signalled to him in a cordial dialogue that it was no longer possible.

On December 7, 2020, Fr. Max celebrated his silver jubilee of priesthood. Due to the pandemic situation, the Mass was celebrated via *zoom*, for his family and friends. Despite this precarious situation and illness, he continued to thank God for the precious gift of his vocation and for His faithfulness to him. At the end of the celebration, the Carmelite nuns offered him a performance of a recital, via *zoom*. It was a day of great joy for him and all who accompanied him.

Max's family members, who live in Santiago, Chile, organized themselves to accompany him during this time. His parents, sisters, nieces and nephews took turns to take care of him during the first months of this year. Then, as his illness worsened, everyone together began to accompany him on an on-going basis, and eventually, his entire family was with him.

In mid-September, he received the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and the Viaticum, accompanied by his confreres and his family, who expressed to him feelings and words of gratitude. In the following weeks, several friends had the opportunity to visit him and talk to him, despite the progressive deterioration of his health.

On Friday, October 15, he had several seizures and lost his consciousness. He breathed his last, surrounded by the love of his family and confreres, in his room at the *Convento de la Buenamuerte*, on Sunday, October 17, 2021, at 1:07 p.m.

His death was experienced in a profound way by all those who had the grace to know him and to share beautiful moments with him! Thank you, Fr. Max, for showing us your love for the Camillian Order and for your family, for your ministry and for the sick, for art, for cooking and for singing! Thank you for allowing us to love you. Rest in peace!

Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Tuesday, October 19 at 9:00 a.m. at *Santa Maria de la Buenamuerte* Church. Afterwards, burial will take place in *Campo Fe de Huachipa*.

