

“Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. (Lk 18, 22)

After meditating on these words, Guido, having no substantial possessions but his Medical School degree, decided to dedicate his profession to the poor. And then, he left his family, friends and home to follow Jesus.

Guido was born on May 22nd, 1974, in Volta Redonda, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to Guido Manoel Vidal Schäffer and Maria Nazareth França Schäffer. He lived his whole life with his parents in the neighborhood of Copacabana in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

He was baptized at Santa Cecilia Church in Volta Redonda, Rio de Janeiro, in December of 1974. He received both his First Communion and the sacrament of Confirmation at Our Lady of Copacabana Parish, on December 11th, 1983 and December 2nd, 1990, respectively.

He attended elementary and high school at the Sacred Heart of Mary school in Copacabana from 1979 to 1991.

Guido had a healthy and joyful childhood and youth, enjoying his leisure time at the beach, in the sea or practicing sports. His devoted Catholic parents used to take all their children to Mass and taught them to pray before going to bed. His father is a doctor and his mother is a member of Comunidade Bom Pastor, the Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Our Lady of Copacabana Parish. She has been a volunteer Catechism teacher in Rio de Janeiro's public schools.

From a young age, Guido used to invite his friends to meet Christ, first through the preparation to the sacrament of Confirmation and then through the prayer of the holy rosary in the monthly Cenacles of the Marian Movement of Priests Nazareth organized for her children and friends.

He attended Medical School at Faculdade Técnica Educacional Souza Marques from 1993 to 1998.

In his graduation year he started the Prayer Group Fogo do Espírito Santo (Fire of the Holy Spirit) with Father Jorge (also known as Pe Jorjão) under the Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Our Lady of Peace church in Ipanema.

Guido did his medical residency at the Hospital Santa Casa de Misericórdia (4th and 20th wards) tutored by Prof. Clementino Fraga Filho from 1999 to March 2001. He then worked as a General Practice physician in both wards for the remainder of that year. His choice for that specialization was motivated by his desire to treat the patient as a whole. He also considered it a challenge for the need to be knowledgeable in all areas of medicine.

“Throughout that time, he gave testimony of his faith through his irreproachable behavior towards others. He lived according to the Christian values of cordiality, temperance, charity and justice” (Professor Clementino Fraga Filho)

Guido felt a call for the Ministry to the Sick while working at Santa Casa. Two members of the Ministry who used to serve in the Hospital were very interested in the way that young doctor treated the patients. They invited him to join them for Mass and shortly after that he started helping them in that Ministry.

At that point, Guido still had a girlfriend, planned to marry and wanted to pursue his career as a doctor both at Santa Casa and in private hospitals.

In 1999, during a retreat at Comunidade Canção Nova, he was moved by the following verse of the bible a priest said in his sermon: “Do not turn aside your gaze from the poor and the Lord shall not depart from thee” (Tobiah 4, 7). Guido paused and reflected on how many times he had turned his gaze away from the poor. He asked for God’s forgiveness and prayed to Him: “Jesus, help me care for the poor”.

A week later he met the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, established by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, whose mission was to provide care for the poor. He realized God had answered his prayer and was showing him the medicine He expected him to practice. He then started to help the Sisters of Mother Teresa and offer his medicine to the homeless. In addition to the time dedicated to preaching God’s word in the prayer group, he was now serving God through his work with the homeless.

He invited other young people from the prayer group Fire of the Holy Spirit and from the Ministry to the Sick of Santa Casa many volunteered and made donations to help him support the missionaries of Mother Teresa in the care of the poor.

He also brought doctors from the Santa Casa Hospital to work with the Missionaries of Mother Teresa. One of these doctors, touched by the work being done with the poor, recommended that Guido read the life of St Francis of Assisi in “Brother Francis of Assisi” by Ignacio Larrañaga. That book became a great source of God’s inspiration in his life.

“His only concern was to save souls to God – guiding as many people as he could to a personal experience with Christ. He would work relentlessly for that. He didn’t miss a single opportunity to proclaim the name of Jesus, either through his actions or his preaching. When serving the poor in the facility of the missionaries of Mother Teresa, he took care of both their body and soul. He talked to all of them about Christ. Most of them left his office in tears and deeply touched. He used to pray with and for each of them, always inviting them to receive the sacraments as source of grace and communion with God (...) He treated all with kindness, patience and empathy. I never saw him get impatient or upset with anybody.” (Sister Caritas, MC)

Called to priesthood, he joined the Institute of Philosophy and Theology of the São Bento Monastery in Rio de Janeiro, where he studied Philosophy from 2002 to 2004 and Theology from 2006 to 2007.

As an student, Guido was able to combine his schedule of classes in the Seminary with his apostolate as a layman. He continued to help out in the Ministry to the Sick at Santa Casa da Misericórdia Hospital and gave talks wherever he was called to. He volunteered as a doctor, seeing patients both at Santa Casa da Misericórdia Hospital and in the Missionaries of Mother Teresa facility in Lapa. He also helped the seminarians who needed any kind of health care and volunteered as a doctor in the Catholic Church events.

In 2005, he lived for a while in Queluz in the State of São Paulo, after being recommended by Fr. Jonas Abib from Canção Nova as a way to discern his vocation. Guido felt different calls to serve his neighbor: he wanted to become a priest, build a Community of Life such as Canção Nova, dreamt of studying in a Seminary belonging to the newly-established Community.

In Queluz, Guido served as a volunteer doctor for the City Hall and the medical clinic Pe. Pio in Cachoeira Paulista. He also brought the Gospel to people through Radio Caminho do Sol.

Monsignor Verreschi who used to be the Vicar in Queluz and is the Provost for the Seminary at Lorena (São Paulo) once commented on Guido's two main characteristics: an anxiety to perform as many deeds as he could for God, and at the same time, an obedience to accept "NOs" to some of his ideas.

In 2008, he joined Seminary São José in Rio de Janeiro in order to finish the last two years of Theology in order to become a priest.

On May 1st, 2009, at age 34, Guido died while surfing at Recreio dos Bandeirantes beach in Rio de Janeiro after being hit by the board on his nape, which caused him to faint and drown.

Guido had once confided to some friends that if God allowed, he would like to die in the sea, where he could feel God speaking to him through Nature.