

Berkeley Divinity School at Yale

**The Right Reverend Maria Griselda Delgado del Carpio**

Born to a respected patent lawyer and a loving homemaker in 1955 in La Paz, Bolivia, you Maria Griselda Delgado del Carpio were educated at the Instituto Americano’s Methodist High School. You next attended the Universidad Mayor de San Andres in La Paz, graduating in 1981 with a degree in sociology. In 1982, you moved to Cuba to enter the Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas, Cuba.

Since 1959, the work of the church in Cuba had been limited to celebrating the sacraments, because the government believed its revolution would fulfill both the material and spiritual needs of its people. Atheism was the declared position of the state, and detention camps were established for those who openly practiced religion in the public sphere. As a result, an entire generation was lost from the church.

You remained in Cuba after seminary and were ordained as a deacon in 1986. Shortly thereafter, you arrived at Itabo, Cuba, a small town with little knowledge of Jesus Christ, to serve at a church property with crumbling walls and no roof, known as Santa Maria Virgen. Working from a small house across the street, you began introducing the townspeople to the love and hope of Christ. In 1991 Bishop Emilio Hernandez ordained you as an Episcopal priest in a ceremony of ordinations that included two other women, the first three womenpriests of the Episcopal Church of Cuba. You continued at Santa Maria Virgen as Rector for the next 20 years, and were consecrated as bishop coadjutor for the Diocese of Cuba in 2010 and installed later that year on November 28 as diocesan bishop of the Episcopal Church of Cuba at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Havana, the first woman to serve in that role as diocesan bishop of Cuba.

You launched a 'radical' agenda—transforming the Church from a focus within its four walls to a community-based approach for the benefit of all, regardless of religion. Recognizing that people across Cuba are literally starving and many are ill, you have inspired the church in Cuba to do its work based on the philosophy that nourishing the bodies of their brothers and sisters enables them to nurture their hearts and minds.

Today the Episcopal Church of Cuba is growing and increasingly impacting communities across the island. The communities of Itabo, Cuatro Esquinas and Santiago de Cuba are evidence of the transformations you and your team are achieving.

You and your colleagues have completely restored these three church buildings (despite a significant lack money and supplies). You have cultivated land around the churches to provide enormous supplies of crops and animals to feed the entire community, provided seeds to plant, and installed the only source of purified water for miles around—serving up to 30,000 families per community. You have transformed these churches into vibrant community centers for everyone in the village – especially the weak and vulnerable.

In all these churches, the first three or four rows of each church are reserved for children who come to church without their parents (who have not been brought up with religion). You are growing the church from the ground up—a model we can learn from at a time when the U.S. church is struggling to find a mission that truly serves its community.

Beyond all of the above, you have developed an aggressive six-year transformational plan for the entire diocese of Cuba (all 46 church communities) that you are now in the process of executing.

“La Obispa,” as you are affectionately known, are the proud mother of three now-grown children: Griselda Edith, Lautaro, and Marcela Beatriz, and are married to Rev. Gerardo Logildes Coroas, a building contractor recently ordained as an Episcopal priest. You have been described as a humble, yet powerful force.

The stamina and creativity with which you approach your pastoral work and episcopal oversight are extraordinary—as are the results.