

**St. Ann's Provincialate
B – 43, Cariappa Road
Bolarum – 500 010 Secunderabad
Telangana**



13th June 2017

I heard a voice from heaven Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from now on.....they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.” (Rev. 14:13)

Dearest Sisters,

With this quote from the Book of Revelation, suited to Consecrated life, faithfully and diligently lived by our beloved Sr. Celestine, we pay our final homage.

Sr. M. Celestine (Thekkethala Elizabeth) was born in Irinjalakuda, Kerala on 1st April, 1932 to Thomas and Theresa Kokadan.

She began her Religious life in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann as she entered the Novitiate on 8th January 1956, was clothed in Religious Habit on 1st January 1957 and Professed on 1st January 1959 at Secunderabad. Thereafter she was sent to Ebensburg, USA, to pursue her B.Sc. in Child Psychology and M.Sc. On 1st January 1965 Sister made her Perpetual Vows. On her return to India in 1965, she did B.Ed after which she took up the responsibility as a lecturer in St. Ann's College of Education, Secunderabad, just established. Because of this she always called the College 'My College'.

In 1968, obedience called her to Jamnagar as a Teacher. From 1971-1974 she taught Clothing and Textiles, Foods and Nutrition, Child Psychology in the Home Science department as a lecturer at Eluru. In the year 1974 she was appointed Headmistress and Sister-in-charge, at Raichur. After having completed her service in Raichur as Sister in-charge, Sr. Celestine was requested to go to U.S.A. in the year 1980. She taught in Pennsylvania. As she was suffering with severe and frequent headaches, her hearing was affected. This she had expressed to the authority before going to U.S.A. The Sisters, staff and students used to come together for prayer meetings in order to pray for her speedy and complete recovery. After going to U.S.A. she was diagnosed with brain tumor which was the root cause of her frequent headaches and loss of hearing. Her obedience was rewarded and prayers answered, as she received complete healing of the tumor in her brain.

She returned to India; in the year 1983 was transferred to Bandra as a Teacher; in 1984, to Jamnagar as Principal, 1992 back to Raichur, as Sister in-charge, 1998 to Tarnaka as In-charge of the Primary School and in 2004 to Secunderabad, Assisting in the Aspirancy, where she remained till her last breath.

She made a legacy through her spirit of obedience to the Will of God which was remarkable; even when she lost her hearing, she said, '*now I should speak less, and hear more from within, the Voice of God.*' She had no complaints and always said '*Thank You*' with a beautiful smile. Her loud voice echoes in the hearts of many and remains as a memory.

Sister lived a pious life and walked along the path of God to enlighten young minds with simplicity, to teach with diligence, guide them with competence, spending all her energy, talents and time for their well-being. An able teacher with good narrative skill and excellent handwriting, she gave her best wherever she worked. Irrespective of her impaired hearing and physical strain caused by to ill health, she

was always cheerful and put up a brave front so as to accept reality. She was a voracious reader who would narrate the anecdotes and stories from the Bible vividly.

Sr. Celestine was kind, prayerful, loving, understanding and a person of remarkable endurance. She was concerned about others and volunteered to help them. She loved to be amongst people and used to take the initiative for group work viz. preparing prayer services, adoration and other spiritual exercises. The child in her came out, when she played the Chinese Checkers with great joy and enthusiasm.

She had a strong sense of belonging, wherever she was placed. Of late, though her health was deteriorating, she wished to be present in the Community, to take part in the Community activities and to be in the company of her Sisters. She had a strong attachment to the Community and places of work. Some of the staff members both near and far, kept in touch with her.

Cleanliness is next to godliness. This adage is what Sister believed and vehemently followed because it was a unique feature of her personality. It was visible not only externally but also internally - very sincere, innocent and had a heart of thanksgiving. In a nut-shell, Sr. Celestine was a woman of prayer, deep faith in Jesus, coupled with a strong conviction to values, sincere to the core and committed to the apostolate.

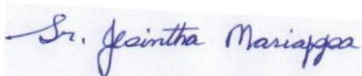
Her health began to deteriorate from July 2016, with a very high pulse rate. On 13th March 2017, she was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer and was taken to St. Ann's Hospital, Fatimanagar, periodically, for further treatment and nursing care. She returned to the Community to be with the Sisters for Easter and her Birthday on 16th April. On 17th April, she was taken back to Fatimanagar for palliative care. Many Sisters from far and near visited her at Fatimanagar. The many Sisters of Secunderabad Community paid a visit to her on 8th June. She breathed her last on 9th June 2017 at 2.45 p.m.

Her mortal remains were brought to St. Ann's Convent, Secunderabad, where she lived for 13 long years. From 9th June 6.30 p.m. to 11th June 2.00 p.m., Sisters, formees, staff and students paid their final adieu to their dearest Sister. On 11th June at 2.45 p.m. her mortal remains were reverently brought to St. Mary's Basilica, Secunderabad, for the Eucharistic Celebration. Fr. Balshowreddy, the Parish Priest, along with a few Priests, offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, for the repose of her soul. During the homily, three important stages of human life were highlighted by Fr. Victor Emmanuel, one of the Concelebrants i.e. our birth, life on this earth and the life after death. He said that, Sr. Celestine, lived her life in close communion with God, because of which she could render her committed and dedicated services, in various capacities as Sister-in-charge, Headmistress and other responsibilities. Now during the third stage – life after death, she enjoys eternal bliss.

I am grateful to Sr. Joysee Thottathil, the Superior of the Community and the Sisters of St. Ann's Convent, Secunderabad, for taking care of her. I am deeply indebted to Sr. Pauline, Sr. Nirmala and the Sisters of St. Ann's Hospital, Fatimanagar, for giving her their utmost care during her illness till the end.

Let us now accompany our dearest Sr. Celestine to her eternal rest with our prayerful and loving support. May our departed Sister obtain blessings for the whole Congregation, which she loved very much, while we in turn hasten her entry into everlasting happiness.

Affectionately,



Provincial Superior