

Sisters of St. Ann
18 Dama de Noche St., New Manila
Quezon City, Philippines

January 3, 2015

Dearest Sisters,

Our dear Sr. Debbie (Sr. Divina) slipped into the loving arms of the Good Father at the dawn of the last day of the Year 2014 at 5:50 AM, just as she had so ardently desired. It was significant that she passed away when all the Sisters of the Delegation were praying the Lauds and imploring that God's will would be done in her.

Before entering into a coma, Sr. Josephine, Sr. Nora and myself went to see Sr. Debbie in the hospital at 1:30 a.m. of December 31, 2014 in order to be by her side. Her family members were also gathered around her.

Sr. Divina N. Naval was born on May 4, 1960 to Mr. Vivencio and Mrs. Maria Naval. She is the 5th child of six siblings.

She entered into the Postulancy on	May 26, 1984
She entered into the Noviciate on	May 18, 1985
Made her First Profession on	May 31, 1987
Perpetual Profession on	May 27, 1993

After her Juniorate formation in Rome, she came back to the Philippines in 1990 and from then onwards she offered her service in the following assignments:

1991	Campus Ministry at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral School, Quezon City
1993	School teacher at Cainta Catholic School
1995	Sent to Rome in preparation of her mission to Cameroun to where she was sent in the same year
1995	was appointed Postulant Mistress in Cameroun Mission
1997	appointed Councilor of the new Delegation of Divine Providence, Cameroun
1998	was sent to the Formative Community in Viale Marconi, Rome
2001	went back to Cameroun and formed part of the Formation Team in Bamenda
2004	was appointed Delegation Secretary
2009	was appointed Delegation Councilor
2012	returned to the Philippines for medical treatment; assigned in the Delegation Community in Dama de Noche.
2014	was transferred to the Formation House as member of the Formative Team.

Sr. Debbie gave her all to God. Though frail in health, she had a steadfast faith in Him and a childlike love for the Blessed Mother which she acquired from being a Legionary of Mary right as a young teenager. She courageously responded to God's call, and allowed His hand to take her where her service was needed.

Wherever she was, she cultivated a love for prayer and lived life coherently. In everything, she brought her joys and preoccupations to the Good Father. The beautiful messages of our Camerounian Sisters (her former formees) who lived with her shed some light about Sr. Debbie's life:

- ✚ "Sr. Debbie, you are a woman of prayer, an example of humility and obedience..(Sr. Paschaline)
- ✚ "Your life of prayer was mirrored in your actions... (Sr. Mado)
- ✚ "You did not only teach us by words but you lived it in your life, even in your sickness."
(Sr. Yvonne)
- ✚ "Your life was a beautiful gift, because it was about giving all that you were and had."
(Sr. Nancy)

In November 2012, Mother Ernestine Fernandes communicated to me about Sr. Debbie's health condition and requested that she be given the care and medical attention in the Philippines, the Delegation could not but welcome Sr. Debbie back to her own land. She was a daughter of the Philippine Mission returning to us and had to be welcomed back without conditions. Hence, she immediately underwent the necessary medical treatment and series of chemotherapy and radiation for her breast cancer. We witnessed how her strong will submitted to the rigors of medical interventions while her physical strength resisted to the same.

The couple of years that she stayed in the Philippine Delegation made us see her determination to be faithful to God even in moments of pain. She remained accommodating and kind, and shared willingly whatever she learned from the mission. Her love for the Congregation was manifested in her availability to animate formative encounters of the LASA and prepare devotional prayers to St. Ann. As long as her body allowed it, she initiated little projects for the Formative Community, such as selling religious articles.

We thank God for the opportunity given to us to attend to her needs and be a Sister to her in her suffering. Although we prayed much for her healing, the Good Lord led Sr. Debbie and us to understand that His ways are different from ours. God instead made us to discover His forms of providence that gave us hope, such as the collaboration of Sr. Debbie's family in looking after her during the last months of her intense suffering. It was also uplifting that a General Councilor, Sr. Jacintha Saldanha was present in the Philippines when this sad event struck us, thus, making us feel the closeness of Mother Francesca and her Council, who were always following her with their prayers and support. Surely she must have carried with her the encouraging telephone conversations she had with Mother Francesca and some Sisters prior to her death.

We thank the Mother General and the Generalate Community, the Provinces and Delegations, particularly our Sisters in Cameroun, a mission place where she desired to go back to till her last breath, for the messages of condolences and prayers.

Mother Francesca's message, read during the funeral Mass, mirrors to us her life: "Sr. Debbie was a simple, joyful, generous and coherent Sister who loved her vocation, her mission and service to the poor... Her missionary heart continued to beat strongly even when due to sickness, she had to return to the Philippines."

Sr. Debbie's life left a mark in the universal church. In the homily of His Grace Cornelius Fontem Esua, the Archbishop of Bamenda, during Sr. Debbie's Silver Jubilee of Religious Profession, he thanked her for "her faithful service in the last 25 years, half of it having been spent in the formation of young girls to Religious Life. Among the many things he spoke of Sr. Debbie, one thing was very distinct – her dedication to her ministry..." (AGC no. 240, 1 Nov.2012)

Our confidence in God's mercy assures us that our dear Sr. Debbie now fully enjoys God's personal love for her as she held on to this thought-

"You are precious to me...for you are loved."

Isaiah 43:4

Affectionately,
Sr. Bernadette Albuquerque