



Divya Jyothi,
St. Ann's Provincialate,
Melamiyur,
Chengalattu - 603 003
13.05.2018

“ I trusted in His steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in His salvation; I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me”. Ps.13/5-6

Dearest Sisters,

On the early morning of 9th May, when the darkness had been put to flight and the light of day dawned on the eastern horizon, our dearest Sr. Francesca Francis left for her eternal home in heaven. The Sisters of Madonna Villa had kept vigil during the night as they noticed Sr. Francesca's pulse rate going down and her breathing becoming irregular. Sister was put on oxygen, through which she survived the night, but in the morning, at 6.40 a.m. her soul departed in a serene and peaceful manner as the sisters around her bed prayed the rosary.

Sr. Francesca had been suffering from acute Osteoarthritis, since many years and was on regular medication. She was operated for the left shoulder replacement in 2013. In 2014, she underwent the replacement of both the knees. As these operations caused acute pain and restlessness, sister had to find relief in pain killer drugs. Continuous intake of such drugs resulted in the abnormal increase of creatinine and urea, causing renal failure.

With the best possible treatment by expert doctors, after one year, Sister was able to walk in the normal way. Her health condition too began to improve gradually. In 2015, Sr. Francesca was extremely happy to join the first group of sisters, going to Rome, to participate in the International seminar for Ongoing Formation. This was indeed, a dream fulfilled in her life. She cherished and nourished this experience, often looking at her photo holding hands with Pope Francis, re-living those unforgettable moments.

In May 2015, Sr. Francesca took Ayurveda treatment for two months, in her hometown. Few months after she returned from this treatment, we noticed sudden decline in her health condition and was taken for medical check-up. The CT Scan revealed Chronic Kidney Disease and Hyper Uricemia, which also began to affect the other internal organs. Due to the complexity of the disease and considering her age factor, Sister had to be treated with tablets and injections only. On 28th March 2018, Sister suffered multiple fracture of the right humerus and had to be operated as a better

alternative, though it entailed high risk. The operation was successful and there were signs of improvement. But it was only for a short while. A week after the operation, Sister was unable to swallow even liquid food and had to be put on nasal feeding. The hope of recovery was almost nil and so the doctors advised us to shift her to the convent, where she could be kept on life support system under the constant care of the Sisters. Many of her family members who came to see her in the hospital, also advised us to do the same. Thus Sister Francesca was brought back to her room in Madonna Villa and was taken care by the Sister nurses, Sathya and Lizzy, till the last day of her earthly sojourn.

Sr. Francesca (Theresa Madavathu) was born on 31st May 1937, at Marangattupally, Kerala, in the Diocese of Tellicherry, to a pious couple, Mr. Francis and Mrs. Rose. Sister is the seventh of the eight children. Her ancestral Madavathu family is known for its strong catholic faith and has contributed many priests and religious to the Church. Her elder brother Arnold Madavathu was a holy priest, in the Capuchin order, who worked relentlessly to deepen the faith of the people and spread the Good news. Her nephew Priests, Fr. Biju, Fr. Joseph Shenoy and niece Sr. Mercitta were present for the funeral Mass.

Sr. Francesca entered the Novitiate on 2nd July 1956, made her first profession on 1st January 1959 and Perpetual Profession on 1st January 1965. After her first profession she was sent for training in nursing, after which she was placed in hospitals such as:- Gandhi hospital - Secunderabad, Tata hospital - Mithapur, St. Ann's hospital - Fatimanagar, Asha hospital - Gollapudi, where she was the pioneer, St. Joseph's hospital - Kilachery, St. Ann's hospital - Appnapeta, St. Ann's hospital - Dumaria, St. Joseph's health centre - Mambakkam and Mother Enrichetta health centre - Teganare. Sister was shifted to Madonna Villa in 2013, after her knee replacement operation for her well-deserved rest.

In her healing ministry, Sr. Francesca was known for her gentle and affectionate approach which would put the patients at ease. Her healing touch was soothing and comforting to those who approach her for treatment. Sister was very prayerful, kind and considerate to the poor, she enjoyed outings which was also her family trait. There were 42 members of her family including her elder sister 85 year old, who is the lone survivor of eight children, who attended the funeral.

The funeral Mass was celebrated on 10th May at 9.a.m. in the Chapel of the Animation Centre, Melamiyur. The Mass was con-celebrated by 5 priests and participated by a good number of Sisters and laity, mainly staff of the three schools in Chengalpattu. Rev. Fr. John Bosco, the main Celebrant, well explained the significance of the death of a religious, starting with the significance of the Easter Season that we are in, and the sixth week, which leads us to the celebration of the ascension of our Lord. He explained that Sr. Francesca, who followed Jesus through her mission on this earth, is specially privileged to follow Him on His ascension into heaven. He said that Sister will also be doubly honoured by St. Francis, as her name is

Francesca Francis. Fr. Biju, her nephew, recalled with gratitude the spiritual and maternal guidance that he received from Sr. Francesca. He drew inspiration from his aunt for his vocation and it was through his aunt that he developed a close affinity to the Sisters of St. Ann. Sr. Pramila H. in her introduction before the funeral Mass remarked “While preparing for the Mass, I was thinking, which of the eight beatitudes in the Bible would apply specially to Sister Francesca, but I could not come to a conclusion because, in some way or the other, she mirrored each of them in her dedicated life. However, an answer was provided to me in the final words of Jesus Himself to His faithful servant, “Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven”.

After the holy Mass, the mortal remains of our dearest Sr. Francesca was taken in procession to the cemetery and was laid to rest in a tomb among our sisters, who have gone before her. Dearest Sr. Francesca, we miss your gentle presence amidst us, but we find solace in the hope that you will intercede for all of us before the Holy presence of our Heavenly Father.

I extend my sincere thanks to Sr. Fatima Philip, Superior of Madonna Villa and to Sr. Sathya Duraivell and Sr. Lissy, who rendered every possible help and support to Sr. Francesca during her long period of illness. My sincere thanks to the Sisters of various communities, who participated in the funeral rites and had been great support to us in these difficult moments. A special word of gratitude to the family members of Sr. Francesca, who were very understanding, co-operative and appreciative of the service offered to their dear one, Sr. Francesca.

As we continue to offer our prayers and intercessions for Sr. Francesca, we place our hope in the One who rewards all according to their deeds. May her soul enjoy the lasting peace and joy in heaven.

Yours lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sr. Theresa Cherian", is displayed on a light purple rectangular background.

Sr. Theresa Cherian,

The Provincial Superior