

St. Ann's Provincialate
B – 43, Cariappa Road
Bolarum – 500 010
Secunderabad, A.P., India
Tel. No. 040-27862122



Date: 27th January 2012

How favoured they are whose work is now done whose deeds remain!

Dearest Sisters,

A beautiful dawn, the 19th of January 2012, a heavenly sound of angels singing, announcing good news – a favoured one has just gone back to her Creator. Yes, our dear and much loved Sister Gabriel is no more. She has completed the work assigned her and her deeds of generosity and love remain....

“Smile and the world smiles with you”. True to this adage, she carried with her perennial smile which revealed a happy sense of fulfillment in the service of the Lord, as the Sister of St. Ann.

Our dear Sister was born in Mangalore on 18 April 1922, to deeply religious parents, Martin and Isabel Rebello, whose great love of God was instrumental in leading three of their daughters to follow the Lord, consecrating themselves to His service in our Congregation.

Sister Gabriel entered our Institute on 19-3-'43, and, after her Initial Formation, which was strict, and prepared her to face the challenges of Religious Life, she made her First Vows, on 21-1-'46, and her Final Vows on 1-1-'52.

Her first assignment after her First Profession, was in Bolarum, as Teacher and Boarding-Mistress. In 1948, she went to Kazipet, where she was a Teacher as well as Choir-Mistress. Subsequently, she continued her apostolate at Nidadavolu, Lallaguda, Teganare, Bhagalpur, Bolarum Novitiate, and, lastly, Tarnaka.

Wherever she went, Sr. Gabriel was always happy, attentive to those who approached her, sharing the warmth of her love and affection with others, and drawing people closer to God. Her charming personality, freedom of spirit, happy and carefree abandonment to God's Will, even in precarious situations, struck people with wonder and admiration. Children and youth were drawn to her by her love; they enjoyed her company and she drew them closer to God. She herself declared that, inspired by our Charism, she found happiness in caring for the poor and needy.

In Community, her discreet presence and regular observance were edifying, and her prayerful support was a precious gift to her Sisters. Her love and respect for her Superiors was unique and overwhelming. She appreciated every tiny service she received from them, nourishing gratitude and love for them even long after her transfer from that Community.

Sr. Gabriel loved singing; in later life, she kept herself busy doing something or the other, helping wherever she could, and enjoying her hobby of knitting baby-sets.

At the time of her Diamond Jubilee, Sister Gabriel had declared: “I ask Abba Father and Jesus Christ not to let me be a burden to the Congregation or to the Community where I live. I pray that God may give me a happy and holy death.”
And, this is exactly what happened:

On the 18th, at 3.00 p.m., she had a Cardiac Arrest, after which she revived. She took a turn for the worse at midnight, and the Doctors advised that she be given Haemodialysis. However, at 3.30 a.m., she had a second cardiac arrest; the Doctors tried to revive her, but did not succeed. At 4.00 a.m., the Doctor declared that Sr. Gabriel was dead.

God had answered her prayer for a peaceful, happy and holy death.

As we gaze at the remains of our dear Sr. Gabriel, we remember with nostalgia, all our experiences with her, proofs of her many virtues. She was loving, caring, approachable, gentle, obedient, prayerful, helpful, generous and kind-hearted. We recall how loving and protective she always was towards her younger sister, Sr. Genevieve, who now feels her loss immensely, and to whom we offer our condolences, our loving solidarity with her, and our prayers. We remember her elder sister, Sr. Ilaria, who must have happily welcomed Sr. Gabriel in Heaven. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Rev. Fr. Cyril, Sr. Gabriel’s grand-nephew, who celebrated the Mass with six other Priest one of whom was Fr. Studden from Canada the boy she taught and trained at School and in the Parish.

We recall that when Sr. Gabriel was asked: “What message would you pass on to the young Sisters of St. Ann?” she replied: “I would advise my younger Sisters of St. Ann to be content with whatever is given to them. To be always happy and go about with a cheerful heart. Ask for nothing and refuse nothing – this is my motto.”

The Sisters of St. Ann’s Tarnaka, Sr. Cicily and Community, need special mention in that they took care of Sr. Gabriel on her last days, even at the Hospital, to uphold her with love, care and concern. Thanks ever so much dear Sisters. May the Lord reward you a hundredfold and bless you.

Thank you, dear Sr. Gabriel, for your wise and saintly advice. All of us, not only the young, but also the not-so-young, cherish what you advised with these words, and witnessed with your life. While we pray for your eternal rest, we also pray to you, asking you to obtain abundant graces for us from God, that we may follow in your footsteps and those of our Founders - the footsteps of Jesus.

Close to you in thought and prayer,

Provincial Superior.