

**Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann**  
**Delegation "Mother Enrichetta"**  
**Rua Madre Henriqueta Dominici, 998 – Jd. Monte Belo**  
**CEP 86041-346 – Londrina – PR**



1<sup>st</sup> December 2016

*"The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want"* (Ps.22:1)

Dearest Sisters,

On 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, as the sun had set and the night began its course, Sr. Marlene responded to the voice of the Good Shepherd, and went to meet Him to rest eternally in the green pastures that He had prepared for those who love Him.

Sister Marlene Aparecida Ribeiro was born at Lorena, in the city of San Paolo, on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1957, the second daughter of Geraldo Ribeiro and Ana Eloy Ribeiro. Her parents separated when Sr. Marlene was just 5 years old. It was a difficult time for the family, but her mother, with a great spirit of faith, brought up her 3 children, teaching them to love God and Our Lady and she even encouraged them to pray for their father, something to which Sr. Marlene was always faithful.

After having completed the middle and high school, she attended the Faculty of Library Sciences, as a suitable preparation to be a librarian, and worked for several years in this field.

Though she knew other Congregations, she was fascinated by the Charism of the Sisters of St. Ann and entered our Institute in January 1984 at the age of 27, at Londrina - Paraná.

After some days of Aspirancy, she entered the Postulancy. She did her Noviciate also in Londrina in the years 1985 and 1986; made her First Profession on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1987 and her Final Profession on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1993. After the first two years of Juniorate in Curitiba, Sr. Marlene was asked to form part of the Community of the International Juniorate in Rome, since she was prepared for further studies and showed her joy in helping the other Sisters who had difficulties in them. She attended the Course of Bachelor in Theology of the Religious Life at the Claretian University from 1988 to 1991.

She returned to Brazil, and from 1992 to 2000, she rendered her service in the community of Assis, in the State of San Paolo, dedicating herself to the formation of the Aspirants and also as the spiritual guide for married couples as the Coordinator of the Conference of Religious in Brazil (CRB)

In 2002, she went through a period of restlessness and dissatisfaction regarding some aspects of the Congregation, for which reason she asked for a year of exclaustation, and it was granted to her. She came back in the same year and it was proposed that she should go to Italy to regain her strength and revive her vocational motivations. She stayed in the Community of Carmagnola San Grato, where she is much remembered by the people till today.

On returning to Brazil, she worked in the Community of Tamarana from 2003-2005, precisely in the Project Solipar and from 2006 to 2011 in the Community of Ilha Comprida, that had as its specific mission the various sectors of parish pastoral work entrusted to the Sisters.

In 2012, she was sent to the Community of Curitiba for treatment of her sickness which was slowly advancing. In 2016, with the worsening of her health – in fact she was already using a wheelchair – she was transferred to the Community of Barretos, a house suitable to accommodate the sick who need treatment and therapy at the nearby Cancer Hospital and which would facilitate her movements in the different rooms of the house.

Sr. Marlene delighted in praying the Psalms, especially Psalm 22: *"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want..."* and also in singing the refrains: *"where love reigns, fraternal love, where love reigns, God is there."*

*“Right from the morning I prepare an offering and remain waiting for a sign from you”.* She loved life and everything that she did, living it intensely. She was profoundly involved with the people whom the Lord put on her path, she was a Sister that searched for inner freedom, something to which she devoted her whole self. She was a very humorous person, liked by everyone. She had great devotion to the Angels and lovingly called her guardian angel “Luca”. She had a very special devotion to Our Lady of Aparecida and this sustained her during her difficult moments; she prayed the Rosary and repeated the ejaculations of Our Lady: she knew one for each situation. Of late she used to pray: *“I need only to assure myself that I am in the hands of Mary and... to cross over... I wish to take to Heaven my father and a multitude of people”.*

Her manner of being happy and free, her simple and beautiful spirituality, were lived with a great deal of effort during these last years because of her difficulty in accepting her sickness, which day by day, made her less self-sufficient and more impatient with herself and with those who were close to her. It was very difficult for her, who had always been active, to see that little by little her movements and abilities were becoming limited, making her more and more dependent. In reality, her sickness had started in 2009, with the difficulty in writing, very severe pain in her fist, after which she began to lose the movements in her right foot, then the left foot, and little by little, she lost her mobility, until it reached to the point of endangering the muscle of the diaphragm and consequently led to difficulty in breathing. The doctors diagnosed her sickness as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Faced with this diagnosis, Sr. Marlene was never resigned, on the contrary, she intensely searched for the cure through doctors, treatments and other suggestions that might be good for her health. Meanwhile, the treatment that the Lord chose for her was not to let her suffer in a room without being able to breathe. In fact, when the sickness had truly worsened, she stayed for one week in the ICU, under sedation, so much so that she had also to undergo tracheotomy. But at 6:30 p.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Sr. Marlene was called to the Father’s House. She, who had always desired heaven, in her own way, was called by the Lord a very special way, to live with Him, in the presence of the Virgin Mary, to sing forever His praises like the angels.

When the funeral agency put her remains in the coffin, the day after her death, she was brought directly to the Parish Church dedicated to St. Ann, to which our Community of Barretos belongs. At 8:00 a.m. the funeral Mass was officiated by Fr. Raphael Lourenço di Moraes, parish priest of the cathedral of Barretos, and concelebrated by Fr. Luiz Paulo Soares, parish priest of St. Ann’s community. Many priests, religious men and women joined our Sisters of that community and also our Sisters representing the nearby communities of Londrina and Tamarana. After that, the remains of Sr. Marlene were taken to Lorena, her birthplace, where the wake took place for more than a day in the Church dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary.

On Saturday morning, another funeral Mass was celebrated, officiated by the parish priest Fr. José Justino and concelebrated by several priests of the Diocese of Lorena. Her dear ones, friends, the Sisters of St. Ann and a representative of the LASA group from Curitiba were present.

Sr. Marlene was loved by many people. We received many messages of condolences, including that of our beloved Mother Francesca, who is in South India for her canonical visit, from the Sisters who were missionaries in Brazil, from the Brazilian Sisters who reside in other Provinces and Delegations, from other sisters and friends of Sr. Marlene.

I am grateful to the Sisters who lived with Sr. Marlene and who took care of her, making her physical, moral and spiritual suffering more bearable. I also thank the persons who made their presence felt in various ways in this particular moment of our life. May God in His infinite goodness help us to live in this world, as we prepare for our final encounter with the Father. May He bless us and fill us with His graces during this precious time, in which we offer ourselves as a Gift. May Our Lady of Aparecida, much loved and venerated by Sr. Marlene, be with her in glory, and together, intercede for every Sister of St. Ann, so that we may be open and faithful to the Father’s plan.

Affectionately, united in prayer.

Sr. Maria Regina Henrique

  
Superiora Delegada