



St. Ann's Provincialate  
Bolarum - 500 010 A.P

2 June, 2010

Dear Sisters,

With mixed feelings of grief and peace I, write about Sr. Martin. 18 Batches of Novices, 25 years have gone by for the last batch of Novices professed in 1985. These Sisters spread in the 3 Provinces of India, grieve the loss of one whom they loved dearly. As news of the death of Sr. Martin quietly spread to all corners of India her Novices made quick arrangements to be present to have a glimpse of their beloved Novice Mistress, for there lay a woman who played an important role in their religious formation.

There is a longing in me for You my God  
There is hunger in me for You my Lord  
There is a yearning in me for You my Lord  
I am the God you are longing for  
I give you the bread you are hungering for  
Just come to me ... Just as you are

This was her favorite song which encompassed her spiritual journey. She had lived her whole life in an attitude of attention to God and His Will, and at the call, she flew to Him in our Heavenly Home.

Sr. Martin, baptized Christine Martin, was born in Bombay on 14-6-1934, in a devout Catholic family. Providence seems to have chosen her to be a Sister of St. Ann, because her father's name was Tancredi, and her grandmother's, Julia.

After her father's early death, Sr. Martin, who was a well-qualified teacher, helped her mother to look after the family. But the call of the Lord became more and more insistent, and in 1957 she made the heroic sacrifice, leaving home and family to follow Him more closely. She entered the Novitiate in Secunderabad, and completed it in Turin, Italy, where she made her First Profession and then taught in Sicily, for a year and a half.

In June 1961, she became the Secretary to our beloved Provincial, Mother Clemenza, here in Secunderabad. During her tenure as Provincial Secretary, she made her Final Vows in January 1966. She was Secretary to four Provincial Superiors, till, in June 1976, she was appointed Superior and Novice Mistress at Bolarum Novitiate, where she stayed for nine years.

Her rich experience of administration and of formation prepared her very well for the heavy cross the Lord had in store for her. In June 1985, she was appointed Provincial Superior of the Province of South-East India and in 1991 was confirmed in this service for a second term.

In 1998, Sister Martin was asked to take up the difficult task of being the Delegate of the Superior General in the Cameroon Mission. In June 2000, Sister was transferred to Tivim-Goa, and became the Superior there in 2001. In 2007, she was sent to Fatimanagar Home, to help, as best she could, with the challenging apostolate of looking after the Disabled and Destitute.

Just in February this year, Sister was brought to our Home for the Aged Sisters in Bolarum, where she could have the congenial environment, the attention and care, that her delicate state of health required. Sister was happy there, and her health improved. That is why the news of her sudden death was a shock to us all; it was totally unexpected.

Only three days ago, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month, Sister took bad. The Doctor advised immediate hospitalization. In Vijaya Marie Hospital, she developed a temperature of 105° and was treated for it. Throughout the 26<sup>th</sup>, she was calm and normal. To all who inquired how she was, she replied, "I'm quite alright." Even the medical checks on the heart showed nothing wrong. That night, she could not sleep, but prayed continuously. She repeated: "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul! Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony! Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul with you in peace!"

On the 27<sup>th</sup> morning, she was restless and asked the Sister near her not to leave her alone. She was given an injection, but it was not possible to also give her the intra-venous treatment. She received Holy Communion at 7.00 a.m., and joined in the Our Father loudly. Her Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar were normal. Doctor said to give her breakfast, and wanted to discharge her. She declined to have the breakfast, so the Sisters held her to give her a few tablespoons of milk. They soon realized that they could not, as she had quietly passed away in their arms. It was 7-45 a.m. Our loving Heavenly Father had answered her constant fervent prayer for a peaceful and non-disturbing death. She died of a Massive Heart Attack.

Sr. Martin has left us a beautiful example of a virtuous religious life. She anchored herself on the Sacred Heart in the Holy Eucharist, to Whom she could cling in times of difficulty or of need. When unable to attend Mass, she would insist on receiving Our Lord in bed. Her pious devotions to Our Lady and the Saints were many.

She emulated Blessed Mother Enrichetta, who had been a Novice Mistress, and she had recourse to her. Her Novices testify that till the very end, she lived what she taught them:- to live the values of Prayer, Duty, Responsibility, Diligence, Courtesy, Punctuality, seeking and doing the Will of God, Detachment from self-will, Perfection, finding strength and comfort in Prayer and not in creatures.

She lovingly followed her Novices along their onward journeys as Religious, appreciating them, offering them corrections, encouraging them to persevere, trusting in the Lord.

Most of our Sisters remember Sr. Martin as a very nice person, charming, generous and kind, especially to the sick and the needy. Her love and concern for the elderly prompted her to establish a Home for the Aged Sisters, personally seeing that every detail was suitable for them.

She was very understanding with Superiors who came to confide in her, with their difficulties and trials. She loved God in nature, took great interest in gardening, and inculcated this in the Novices and Sisters.

At retreats and other gatherings organized by the Province, Sister personally saw that each Sister had everything she needed.

Sr. Martin was a perfectionist, as seen in her beautiful handwriting, her artistic creativity, her work, her demeanour, her very person.

She was known for her wit and wisdom, prudence and patience. These were enhanced and matured during the powerful Sadhana Courses she attended at Lonavla.

Sr. Martin's love for the Congregation cannot be measured. She lived and loved its spirit and its traditions. Her spirit lives on in all those she trained in the Novitiate and all those who shared her love and concern as Provincial Superior, all those who were close to her.

I also enclose the message of our dear Mother General:

‘As I try to come to terms with this sad news, these words very dear to Sr. Martin “Day after day O Lord of my life, shall I stand before Thee face to face” come spontaneously to my mind and seem to offer some consolation, that comes from knowing in faith that she is a woman of deep faith in God and with great love for God has reached the heavenly homeland to contemplate the face of the Lord and dwell in His presence forever.

I thank God profoundly that I had the fortune of being one of her Novices, for she has a hand in the making of me. Richly blessed with qualities of head and heart she touched the lives of many with her amiability, magnanimity, nobility, generosity and simplicity. With motherly firmness she inculcated in the young minds and hearts, love for God and the desire to live for Him alone, doing His holy will and serving His people as dedicated Sisters of St. Ann.

There are so many of us today who look back with sincere love and gratitude to the years of formation and thank God for the hard work put in by Sr. Martin to mould us into what we are today.

The Congregation cannot but be deeply indebted to our dearest Sr. Martin for the 50 years of Religious Life as a Sister of St. Ann and especially for her dedicated and devoted service as a Provincial Secretary, Novice Mistress and a Provincial Superior for two terms, which she carried out with responsibility with profound faith, true religious spirit and openness to the signs of the time.

May the Lord reward her abundantly for the many sacrifices she underwent and for her fidelity to His call and mission.’

- Mother Ernestine Fernandes

The human weakness that is common to us all, prompts us to pray earnestly for forgiveness and mercy for all our dear Sister’s sins and failings, and we ask her to pray for us and to continue being a promoter of the Charism of our Religious Institute.

We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family-members of our dearest Sister.

Our dearest Sr. Martin is surely already in the embrace of the Trinity, with whom she was always closely united during this life.

Dear Sr. Martin we loved you dearly, you still live in our hearts, do you know – you still speak in the echoes of the words we’ve heard you say again and again? Your memory is warm in our hearts, you are not apart, but part of us. For love is eternal, and those we love shall be with us throughout all eternity.

Affectionately,

Provincial Superior