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***“The Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of His Father and then He will repay everyone for what has been done” (Mt. 16:27).***

Dearest Sisters,

The mystery of suffering, death and life are closely intertwined in a mysterious manner, leaving us often dismayed. On **7<sup>th</sup> March, 2018** the Son of Man came with his angels to the Community of Talegaon Convent to invite our dear Sr. Michael D'Souza to her heavenly banquet and harkening to His invitation she said her final 'YES' at **2.40 a.m.**

Sr. Michael was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept. 1930 at Bantwal near Mangalore in Karnataka. Later the family shifted to Angelore, close to the Convent of Sisters of St. Ann. She is the sixth and youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David and Isabella D'Souza. She hails from a very loving, pious and God fearing family. She lost her father in 1942 when she was 12; thereafter she discontinued her studies. Everyone persuaded her for studies but her desire was to become a saint without the studies. The reading of many **Holy books** from the Parish library nurtured her vocation and enabled her to surrender herself to the Lord.

At an early age Sr. Michael had the desire to dedicate herself to the service of God and to help the poor. She had to overcome many difficulties and problems to actualize her desire to follow the Lord. The good example of her dear ones and the Sisters who taught her in school, spiritual life at home, reading the lives of the saints encouraged her to dedicate her life to God and the poor. With the help of the Lord and Mother Mary, she courageously took the great step and entered the religious life in 1951.

Sr. Michael entered the Postulancy on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1951, received the Holy Habit on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1952, made her Religious Profession on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1954, pronounced her Perpetual Vows on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1960. She was fortunate to celebrate her Silver, Golden and Diamond Jubilee of her religious profession. She participated in the healing ministry of Jesus. Her healing ministry was holistic and very fruitful. She was filled with compassion and empathy for the sick, the poor and needy. She found joy in seeing Jesus in every person and was expert in treating minor ailments with homemade remedies. Her vibrating personality and the continued desire for prayer was indeed a great boon to the Congregation.

“The Lord is my Shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.” (Ps. 23:1) Being authentic to her Shepherd Lord, Sister always sought Him and His glory with humility, simplicity, love, care, hard working and self sacrificing nature. She had a pleasant countenance, always happy and jovial. She glorified the Lord through her humble service in various Communities like Secunderabad, Angelore, Isanagar, Mithapur, and Talegaon Convent. Sr. Michael had a very gentle way of dealing with the Sisters, especially the young Sisters whom she addressed with an endearing Konkani word “Putha” (loving expression for a son or a daughter).

Since the time of her insertion into the Community of Talegaon she had been under the treatment of Dr. Durai Raj. She was a case of diabetic mellitus, hypothyroidism, hypertension, CVA and atherosclerosis (AS). From 2014 onwards her health condition was not stable. She was admitted thrice in Harneshwar hospital in 2017. Since then she was advised for bed rest but she made it a practice to participate in the Community activities till the end. On 27<sup>th</sup> February, she developed respiratory tract infection and had very high blood pressure. After consulting the physician she was treated with antibiotics and she showed signs of improvement. At 3.30 p.m. she had a fall and sustained facial injuries and was hospitalized. All investigations were carried out and was diagnosed of having COPD, DM and uncontrolled hypertension with concussion injury. After six days of hospitalization and medication there was no change in her health condition. Hence the doctor advised to take her home and give nursing care. Her condition continued to worsen and her vital signs began to deteriorate. On 6<sup>th</sup> March, by 8.00 p.m. her vital signs declined remarkably and she lost consciousness. At 2.40 a.m. she heard the whispering of her spouse “Come back my Love” and she breathed her last.

The funeral service was held on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2018 at 11.00 a.m. The Funeral Mass was presided over by Fr. Prasanna, the Parish Priest and Fr. Joe, the Assistant Parish Priest. Her nieces and nephews were present to pay their last homage to her. Sisters from the Communities of Ajgaon, Bandra, Arambhada, Bharuch, Jamnagar, Varvala and Mithapur were present. Her mortal remains were laid to rest in Talegaon Cemetery.

In the homily, Fr. Prasanna, the Parish Priest sang a hymn in Konkani, (Bhaghinthleya phoola modem...) and he connected saying a beautiful flower from His own garden the Lord had chosen today for Himself. In her earthly life Sr. Michael in her own little ways tried to love the lord at all times. She had a marvelous relationship with God which impelled her to detach herself from the things of this world. Her great desire to meet the Lord kept her alive and going till the end. In 1 Timothy we read that St. Paul says “I have fought the good fight... and the crown is waiting for me”. Sr. Michael has gone to receive this crown which she truly deserves.

I am grateful to Sr. Magline Gomes and all the Sisters at St. Ann’s Convent Talegaon for their continuous loving service offered to Sr. Michael. I thank especially Sr. Magline Gomes, Sr. Mary Cyriac, Sr. Agnes Thomas and Sr. Remya Mathew who took care of Sr. Michael day and night by being at her side especially during her illness. May God reward you for your selfless service, patience and dedication.

I extend my gratitude to the Sisters of the Community for their help, support and prayers in this moment of sorrow. I am grateful to the Sisters, Postulants and Aspirants of Mt. St. Ann and Sisters at Karunanjali for their powerful prayers, timely help and support. My special thanks to the Sisters of the entire St. Ann's Family, for their prayers.

I express my thanks to Rev. Fr. Prasanna the Parish Priest and Fr. Joe, assistant Parish Priest of Mt. Carmel Church for the support and the spiritual help extended to Sr. Michael.

I convey my sincere condolences to the bereaved family members of Sr. Michael. I thank all of them on behalf of St. Ann's Family for their frequent visits during her illness and for their very presence at the last rites to bid her farewell.

Let us offer our prayers and suffrages for our dear Sr. Michael as we thank the Lord for her exemplary life, dedicated and committed service. May she intercede for us to the Lord, especially for the success of re-organization of the three Indian Provinces.

Yours affectionately,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rosily".

Sr. Rosily Paul  
Provincial Superior

## ***Words of Appreciation for Sr. Michael D'Souza***

Sr. Michael was a disciplinarian especially in her spiritual life and gave first place for prayer and spiritual activities. She spent most of her time in interceding for various intentions of the Province, Church and Community. She meditated daily readings of the liturgy faithfully. During the daily adoration she spent her time before the Blessed Sacrament on her knees. Even on the day of her fall, she was praying in her room.

She was very generous in lending a helping hand in the kitchen though she was unable to move about freely. She contributed her talents - preparing pickle, Jam, snacks, stitching dresses for poor children etc. She enjoyed stitching and mending old clothes. She had a special love for animals and took care of them. **Sr. Nora Gonsalves.**

**Fr. Prasanna the Parish Priest** of Talegaon said that he was inspired by the prayer life of Sr. Michael. The selfless service rendered to Sr. Julita (who was blind) in reading the Word of God.

**Fr. Joe the assistant Parish Priest** said "Her love for the scripture was something marvelous".

**The Community Sisters** highly appreciated the responsibility and generosity in the fulfillment of her allotted time for adoration. Sisters were surprised to see her kneeling, singing to glory and praying the prayers aloud. She always appeared to be a contented person who never complained about anything. She gave her best to the Community in carrying out the daily chores in spite of her ill health. She always had the desire to give more of herself. She never missed any of the Community activities. Poverty was the hall mark of Sr. Michael. Despite her ill health her need to reach out to the person in need was so much that she was seen helping the kitchen girls cutting the vegetables wherein the animator had to persuade her to take rest. Her desire to pray was so much in her that during her hospitalization in the ICU she asked the doctor to give her a prayer book. Her love for animals was remarkable specially for the dogs. She fulfilled her responsibility among her nieces and nephews, grand nieces and grand nephews, always by keeping in touch with them and admonishing them time to time. Every Sister affirmed that she lived an exemplary life. Sr. Magline the Animator of the Community remembered her life in Mithapur Hospital wherein she never left any stone unturned for the sick children to bring them back to normalcy.