

*St. Ann's Provincialate  
B – 43, Cariappa Road  
Bolarum – 500 010  
Secunderabad, A.P.*



15<sup>th</sup> April 2016

**“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” Mt. 5:8**

Dear Sisters, how true this is of our dear Sr. Monica Thomas, who practiced purity of heart and of intention, all the days of her life.

Sr. M. Monica Thomas (ELIZABETH) was born on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1935 at Muvattupuzha, Kerala, to a devoted and pious couple Thomas and Mary. She was the second child of a large and happy family of twelve, with 6 dedicated to God through religious consecration. Two Sisters – Sr. Romana and Sr. Alda belong to our Congregation and one more sister Jeese joined the Sacred Heart Congregation. Two of her Brothers are Priests – Fr. Thomas and Fr. Mathew.

Responding to the call of God, our dear Sr. Monica joined our Congregation. She entered the Novitiate on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1960 and was given the religious habit on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1961. She made her First Profession on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1963 and her Final Profession on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1969. Her exemplary life inspired her younger Brothers and Sisters to follow the Lord through their religious consecration.

For the past 52 years of her Religious life, Sr. Monica, held various responsibilities such as office superintendent, Headmistress and Sister in-charge in different Communities. From 1965 - 68 she worked in Kazipet school as a pioneer. Some of her students, whom she taught with love and instilled in them service mindedness are doing their best to render their services for the society at the large. They still remember her and visited her till today. One such person is Dr. Nagaraju, Ophthalmologist, who operated on her. She was office superintendent for 2 years at St. Ann's College of Education, Secunderabad and 1 year at Ramachandrapuram. She was Headmistress of St. Ann's Novitiate Boys School for 13 years and also bursar for 2 years at Secunderabad. She was a good and able administrator of schools.

Sr. Monica was the animator of 4 communities over a period of 18 long years, namely, Nidadavolu, Munagala, Kazipet, Bolaum – Novitiate. Her experience as a Superior speaks volumes. She would look after the Sisters lovingly as a mother. She was slow to judge others but quick to appreciate and encourage them. It was her simplicity and humility which drew people close to her. She was very humane in her approach to Sisters in the community, students and teachers in the school, besides being is very kind, generous, hardworking and thoughtful.

Sister was a woman of prayer, silence, few words and well known for her jovial nature. Her every word was peppered with humorous. Recreations were more lively and relaxing in her presence. Wherever Sister Monica was, there was laughter and fun. The name of Sr. Monica brought smiles to the faces of all those who knew her. She would lighten the hearts of those who were in difficulty and tension. As Pope Francis says “A Consecrated person is a ‘joyful person’”, it was just so in the life of Sr. Monica who always spread sunshine around.

She had special love for the poor. She would never speak ill of others or join the company of gossipers. She suffered in silence the pain caused by arthritis and constructive lung disease, with

resignation. There was never a word of complaint on her lips as she accepted all suffering as coming from the hands of our Provident and Merciful Father. With endurance, she offered all discomfort for Holy Mother the Church, Congregation, Province and the Community.

From 2010 Sr. Monica's movements were much restricted due to Rheumatoid Arthritis, so she was transferred to St. Ann's Home, Bolarum. In November 2011 she was diagnosed with Malignancy of the Breast and shifted to St. Ann's Hospital, Fatimanagar, for treatment. She underwent mastectomy surgery in 2012, followed by Chemotherapy. After surgery she enjoyed fairly good health for 2 years.

In Dec 2015 she complained of breathlessness. When it was investigated she was found to be with constructive lung disease. It was a complication of Rheumatoid arthritis; as a result she suffered for the last 6 years. Her lungs would not expand fully to give her sufficient oxygen and this caused breathlessness even for the smallest movement. For the last 4 months she was on oxygen inhalation and nebulisation as and when necessary.

On 05<sup>th</sup> April 2016, as usual, in the morning at 5.30 nebulisation was given. But she did not show relief from breathlessness which is usually seen soon after nebulisation. Doctor was called and immediate medical attention given. But she continued with breathlessness in spite of oxygen inhalation. At 6.30 a.m. sister was administered 'anointing of the sick' by Fr. Kiran, the chaplain of the Community and she received Holy Communion consciously. Prayers were continued at her bedside by the Sisters of the Community and neighbouring Communities.

In spite of all the medical treatment her struggle continued till 11.25 p.m. when she breathed her last, while most of the Community sisters were praying around her.

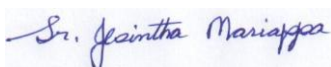
The funeral Mass was celebrated on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 9.00 a.m. in St. Ann's Hospital Chapel, by Frs. Thomas and Mathew, her brothers, along with many other Priests. In his homily, Fr. Balashowry, the Parish Priest, gave a beautiful reflection on our life on earth and life after death. 'Our life here on earth is transient and we need to focus on our permanent life in heaven, while fulfilling our day-to-day responsibilities.' Fr. Balashowry, who knows Sr. Monica from the year 1997, said she lived a saintly life. Though she had not taken active part in the activities of the Parish, she contributed much to its spiritual well being, by offering all her pains and sufferings.

We offer our sympathies and condolences to the dear family members, especially Sisters Alda, Romana, Jeese and Sr. Rosita – her cousin, Rev. Fathers Thomas and Mathew. Except for her elder sister who passed away recently, one brother and another sister, all her brothers and sisters, brother in-law, sister in-law and one niece were present at the funeral. We sincerely thank each one who had come to bid farewell to dear Sr. Monica. Their love, care and support was unremarkable.

Sisters from the neighbouring Communities, the Province of Southern India, other Religious priests, brothers and sisters, friends, benefactors, staff and students of St. Ann's School of Nursing and College of Nursing Fatimanagar and the Teaching and Non-teaching staff of St. Ann's Boys School, Bolarum, where Sr Monica spent most of her time together with the co-workers from Munagala Community, all gathered to thank and pray for a lovable person who had shared, blessed and enriched their lives.

As we offer our prayers and sacrifices for Sr. Monica, that she may enjoy eternal bliss, may she intercede for us to remain faithful in our commitment to the Lord and in our encounters with the mercy of God in this extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

With love and affection,



Provincial Superior