



ST. ANN'S PROVINCIALATE

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“My God is great and Greatly to be praised” Ps. 144

Dearest Sisters,

These familiar words of the Psalmist truly describe the long and fruitful life of our dearest Sr. Pia who left us for her heavenly abode on the 8th of June 2011 eager to meet her Spouse and enjoy happiness forever.

Sr. Pia's health began to take a turn for the worse when she was rushed to the hospital on 10th November 2010. Then she had suffered two heart attacks following which she had a long period of convalescence.



Once again in the month of May she had to be admitted to the hospital as she suffered pain in her chest. She recovered for a short while and had to be re-hospitalized in the first week of June to be treated for infection in the lungs. The end came very softly on 8th June at 11.35 p.m. when no one expected it. She was well prepared to receive her Lord when He came to take her home.

“I will miss you darling Sr. Pia. You were a mother, a teacher, a guide, a counsellor, a comforter, my guide and my right hand. I know you are in heaven and will intercede for me. Love you, miss you.” Angela Roland. (Teacher of our school). The message we received speaks volumes of the life of Sr. Pia in a nut-shell.

Sr. Pia (Angela D'Costa) the beloved daughter of Caetano Francis D'Costa and Maria Angelina Braganza, was born into a happy family of thirteen children at Pune, Maharashtra on 02.10.1929. She was greatly loved by her devout parents being the eleventh in the family. Two of her elder Sisters were nuns. One of them joined our Institute (The Sisters of St. Ann). She chose her name sake – and the other entered the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Poor. In fact the visits of these Sisters became an incentive to her becoming one of them. However, she joined the Sisters of St. Ann of Providence on February 2nd 1947, received the Religious Habit on January 1st 1948, was Professed on January 1st 1950 and took her Final Vows on January 3rd 1956.

Despite her distaste for studies, the vow of Obedience took first place and gradually she completed her M.Sc in 1965 and M.Ed in 1968, all for the glory of God and for the spread of His Kingdom wherever she was placed and had to exercise her respective assignments.

The giver of all gifts endowed her with innumerable blessings, blessings which she shared particularly in the Community of the Mother House – Secunderabad – She began as a teacher in the year 1950, a B.Ed. Student in June 1956, Vice Principal of the School in April 1957, a B.Ed. College Lecturer in June 1968 and finally Principal of the B.Ed. College in June 1974. She was called to render her service in Italy in Propaganda Fide. She is remembered lovingly even till today. Then in June 1984 she was sent to animate the fairly big Community of Secunderabad. Moral Science, a subject close to her heart became her priority when she taught the same in St. Ann's School in June 1987. The year 1996 saw her in the position of

Aspirant Mistress and after some time the Tertians enjoyed her presence and teaching. In 1972 she was the Principal of our School at Moradabad and a teacher in the year 1980 November at Eluru. She was transferred to Mallapur, as Bursar. Then again Sister-in-charge at Lallaguda 1990 –96. Back to the work of Formation, Sr. Pia was in-charge of the Aspirants at Tarnaka in February 2001. She arrived at St. Ann's Home, Bolarum in September 2004 where she remained till the close of her life.

Sr. Pia was a woman of prayer, a charismatic at heart. Regular at the Community acts, she expected the same from the other members of the Communities reminding them to be faithful in their prayer-life. She would often pray over men, women and children encouraging them to have faith in the Divine Physician of Souls. Following the advice of her Novice Mistress “ask nothing and refuse nothing” she went out of her way to put the adage into practice till the end.

She was loyal to Holy Mother the Church and to the Congregation. In fact she often shared her thoughts and impressions on the Documents of the Holy Father and on our Acts of the General Council from Rome, thereby reminding us of ways and means to become fruitful in our vision and mission. Her frequent notices on the Bulletin Board were welcome!

She was an ardent lover of Priests and would faithfully lead the Congregation singing with gusto: ‘keep them I pray thee dearest Lord...’

Her love for the poor and needy was admirable. Whatever she received in the form of food or clothing or sponsoring was distributed to the little ones. Being a good seamstress she would meet their demands as soon as possible. Her spirit of poverty was remarkable, having retained nothing for herself.

“I am so grateful to Abba Father, our Founders and Blessed Mother Enrichetta for the new rule of Life – Constitutions – which I accept wholeheartedly and cherish with love especially in the evening of my life. I wish to proclaim to all how great and how wonderful are God's designs.” (An extract from her article on “How great is my Abba Father”)

Service oriented to the core, there was no age bar for Sr. Pia. She was busy reaching out to others in the process of healing and growing. She excelled in her inimitable way in the Medical Field. It was quite interesting to listen to her diagnosis, come what may, but after all said and done she was the winner and worker of miracles at times!

Many a time Sr. Pia would be seen at the bedside of our Sisters who were on the point of Death, leading and assuring them of God's powerful support and Mother Mary's intercession to take away all fear and fill their hearts with hope.

Small of stature she had a winning smile which brought rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad. The lives she touched are innumerable indeed! Sister was one of the pioneers of the Divine Mercy Centre, Habsiguda – Hyderabad. Through her steadfast love, guidance and the delicate work of counseling, she brought many unforgiving souls back to the Sacraments. Empowerment of Women was uppermost in her mind and therefore she organized a Women's Cell which was a real blessing for many families.

Only the good Lord knows what she went through in times of difficulties and set-backs encountered on the narrow way of religious living. Her untiring zeal for souls goaded her on to work for their sanctification. Her immense love for the Lord of her life, her rock and her shield brought her through the tunnel of gloom – successfully. I am reminded of the words of Mother Teresa: “Death is something beautiful it means going home!”

Dearest Sr. Pia, you have gone to a new eternal life – the glory of God on you has dawned.

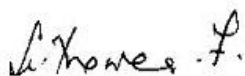
We render our heartfelt condolences to the relatives and to all those near and dear to Sr. Pia. One cousin and two nephews were present for the funeral. They have lost a loved one but have won a powerful intercessor above.

The Sisters of St. Ann's Home, Sr. Lidwine and Community, not forgetting Sr. Rosita the previous Superior, need special mention in that they laboured night and day, even at the Hospital, to uphold her with love, care and concern while the neighbouring Communities were close to her in thought and prayer. Thanks ever so much dear Sisters. May the Lord reward you a hundredfold and bless your intentions.

Sr. Pia is singing praises for all the unending mercies she has received during her earthly sojourn yet let us remember to pray for good Sr. Pia, that as she professed her faith in the mystery of our resurrection, she may gain possession of eternal joy.

We can be sure she will be interceding for all of us, so we on our part shall strive to be like the wise virgins keeping our lamps lit for the Bridegroom of our hearts.

Close to you in thought and prayer,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "L. Howe S." with a small flourish at the end.

Provincial Superior.