

St. Ann's Provincialate,
Melamiyur,
6th July 2020



“Blessed is the one whom the Master will find at work when He comes.” (Mt. 24:46)

Dearest Sisters,

The above quoted verse of the Bible is familiar to all of us. But it has become a tangible reality when I look at the life and death of our dearest Sr. Rajendra Mary Savariappan, who left us to her eternal home, unexpected, leaving us in shock and dismay.

It all happened in a matter of three days. On 29th June Sr. Rajendra Mary attended the regular community exercises and shared meals with the Sisters. On 30th morning, as she was absent for the morning prayer and breakfast, the Sisters went to her room to enquire and found that Sr. Rajendra was ill with vomiting and dizziness. She had been a chronic diabetic patient so they tested her blood sugar. It had escalated to 400 mg/dl. Being a hospital community, the doctor on duty was called in and Sister was administered the medicine to control the sugar level. She was kept under observation for few hours. In the afternoon her sugar level continued to rise and her consciousness level too kept fluctuating. I tried to speak to her over the phone. Though she could hear, was unable to respond. So I asked the Sisters, to find some way to shift her to any good hospital with immediate effect.

In this present situation, where we are trapped in the extended spells of lock down, it became a hectic task to take her to a hospital, for no hospitals would admit a patient with the symptoms that she had. With much pleading and persuasion, the doctors of Saveetha Hospital in Chennai, where she used to go for check-up, admitted her and was given the emergency medication keeping her in the ICU. To begin the treatment, she had to go through the ordeal of COVID – 19 test and wait for the report for 48 hours. With no other alternative on hand we had to wait patiently. On 1st July various tests were conducted on her. She was diagnosed with AKI (Acute Kidney Insufficiency) and T2 DM (Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus). Though immediate attention was required they could not start the treatment unless COVID - 19 report arrived. Her condition grew worse by 2nd morning and was put on ventilator at 6.00 P.M. Her heart beat began to slow down gradually resulting in cardiac arrest. At 7. 30 P.M. Sr. Rajendra Mary was declared dead by the doctor. The cause of death was reported as Septicemia (infection in the blood from the presence of bacteria) AKI (Acute Kidney Insufficiency) and T2 DM (Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus).

When the news of her passing away reached us we were shocked and filled with grief and pain because no sisters could be next to her as she breathed her last and was deprived of the anointing of the sick. Though Sr. Sahaya Rani was outside the room, she was not permitted to enter the ICU. The body was shifted to the mortuary until the COVID -19 report arrived. Sr. Fathima Selvi, Sr. Shaya Rani and Sr. Shibi George stayed the whole night in the hospital premises. The report arrived at 9.30 A.M. on 3rd and thank God it was negative. Thus after completing the formalities, the hospital authorities handed over the body to the Sisters at 10.30 A.M. With due permission and following the protocol of the lockdown, the body was brought in an ambulance to St. Mary's Convent, Chengalpattu, where the funeral service had been arranged.

Sr. Rajendra Mary Savariappan, lovingly called as ‘Rani’ was born on 1st April 1958, to Mr. Savariappan and Mrs. Soosai Mary in Kannapalayam, Peria Kodiveri, in sathyamangalam District of Tamil Nadu. She entered the Novitiate on 21st January 1980 in Bolarum, made her First Profession of Vows on 6th January 1982 and final Commitment on 1st January 1988.

As a trained needle work teacher, Sister Rajendra Mary rendered her service in Communities like, St. Ann's Juniorate, Tarnaka (1982) St. Ann's Convent, Dumria (1985) St. Ann's Convent, Mambakkam (1985) and Sacred Heart Convent, Vijayawada (1988). In 1991, Sister Rajendra Mary was appointed in the aided post as Needle work teacher at Aruvankadu, where she worked till 1997. She was transferred to St. Mary's Convent, Chengalpattu in the aided post and Boarding in-charge in (1998). In 2002, Sister was called back to Aruvankadu to continue as needle work teacher. In 2005, She was sent as Sister in-charge of the newly erected community at Nellore. She re-joined as needle work teacher in Aruvankadu in 2007 and in 2011 was appointed as Animator of the same Community. In 2017, after retirement from teaching service, Sister Rajendra Mary was transferred to St. Joseph's Hospital, Kilachery, as Warden of Christ College Hostel (Diocesan). In 2018 Sister was the Hostel Warden at St. Theresa's College, Inter Campus, in 2019 she was called back to Christ College Hostel at Kilachery.

Sr. Rajendra Mary accepted the transfers, that were many in her life, with much docility and in a spirit of obedience. When she was asked "Sister Rajendra, can you go to this place and take up this work", she would respond with a smile, "Sister, wherever you send me, I am ready to go." These words are truly sweet music to the ears of any Superior. Her spirit of generosity and availability is indeed praiseworthy. It could be for this reason, that when she received the "Master's call" unexpected, she responded with her usual willing 'yes' and was taken away within a short time.

On hearing about the sudden demise of Sr. Rajendra Mary, the Archbishop of Madras Mylapore, send his message, *"Very sad to hear this sudden death. Condolences, be assured of our prayers for her soul."*

The funeral Mass was celebrated in the private Chapel of St. Mary's Convent, Chengalattu on Friday, 3rd July at 3. 00 P.M. Fr. Backia Regis VG of the Diocese along with Six other Priests concelebrated the Holy Mass, which was attended by the Sisters of Chengalpattu, Melamiyur, Kilachery, Mambakam and Mangadu, Sisters of Presentation Convent, the relatives and family members of Sr. Rajendra Mary.

Sr. Nambikai Kithari who lived with Sr. Rajendra Mary for many years spoke in the introductory words during the Holy Mass, *"Sister was a very artistic person, at random her fingers will paint beautiful images and pictures. Little strokes here and there would add colours and wonders to her work of art. Through her jovial nature she kept the community recreations alive. She had a special talent to imitate others and make everyone laugh."*

Rev. Fr. Praveen, the Parish Priest of Kilachery in his homily during the funeral Mass spoke of Sr. Rajendra Mary thus, *"Sr. Rajendra Mary was fondly called "RANI AMMA" in Kilachery Parish Campus. She was totally committed to her work in the Girls' hostel. During her tenure as in-charge of the Altar Boys' Association, the number rose from 6 to 60. Being very active in conducting the BCC groups, Sister knew the eighty families of the Parish, personally. She had an ardent and sincere thirst for spiritual activities. Today, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann of Providence has lost a beautiful Sister and in particular the Christ College Hostel and the Parish."*

Rev. Fr. Sebastian, the Principal of Christ College, Kilachery expressed his sentiments in these words, *"Rev. Sr. Rajendra Mary has accepted in obedience, when asked to take care of Christ College Girl's hostel. She is known for her motherly kindness, concern and cheerfulness. She is also known for her pastoral guidance in the parish and visiting the sick. We could definitely depend on her once we entrust any responsibility. We and the Christ College hostel girls will miss her."*

Mr. Balu a LASA member from Kilachery wrote about her, *"Sr. Rajendra Mary is a simple and holy Nun. She had such firm and strong faith in Christ, that she could motivate many to*

believe in Christ. She is cheerful with an ever smiling face. She took good care of the altar boys and the Parish choir. On behalf of the LASA we offer our condolences to our Sisters and to her family members.”

Sr. Rajendra Mary hails from a God fearing, loving and close-knit family. On hearing the shocking news of her untimely end, 16 of them came in two vehicles, braving the lockdown blues and unmindful of the long distance they had to traverse. Among them were her four brothers, two sisters, one a religious Sister of the Presentation Convent and her nieces and nephews. Though they were grief stricken, they accepted the reality in faith.

After the holy Mass the mortal remains were carried to the Sisters’ cemetery at Chengalpattu and laid to rest to those of our dearest Sisters, who have gone before us.

At this moment, I remember with a thankful heart, beloved Mother Francesca Sacria, the General Council and the Sisters of the Generalate Community, who joined together to share our grief and shock and strengthened us with their consoling words. I express my sincere gratitude to Sr. Fathima Selvi and the Sisters of St. Joseph’s Hospital, Kilachery for taking care of Sr. Rajendra Mary, in her great struggle. They have done what was humanly possible and the rest was in the hands of God.

I owe a deep sense of gratitude to His Lordship Bishop Neethinathan, Bishop of Chengalpattu for granting the permission to conduct the funeral service in His Diocese and to Rev. Fr. Michael, the Parish Priest of St. Joseph’s Cathedral, Chengalpattu for his kind co-operation and guidance during the burial.

I am deeply obliged to Sr. Nambikai Rayappan the Superior and all the Sisters of St. Mary’s Convent, Chengalpattu and Sr. Mercy Sebastian in a particular way for making all the arrangements for the funeral Mass.

With a thankful heart, I appreciate the solidarity and togetherness expressed by our sisters of the three Communities of Melamiyur and the nearby Communities; Mambakkam and Mangadu. I specially acknowledge the closeness of my Council members in this painful and trying situation. Finally I thank the Provincials of the four Provinces for their prayerful support and every Sister of the Province of Divine Providence for their unity with us in prayer.

On behalf of the Province I offer my condolences to Sr. Sandana Rani, her cousin and her other batchmates, 13 of them including, Sr. Marcia Lobo and Sr. Marykutty who are far away, who suffer the grief of having lost the first number of their batch. We hope and believe that our sadness will fly away on wings of time, but good memories of her would live on to eternity.

Let us generously offer our prayers and suffrages for the departed soul of Sr. Rajendra Mary, that she who has been gathered to the Lord may be rewarded with the crown of eternal life in heaven.

Yours Lovingly,

Sr. Theresa Cherian

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Provincial Superior