

St. Ann's Provincialate,
Gollapudi P.O.
Krishna District
Andhra Pradesh - 521 225
0866 - 2970933/ 2975033
20th February 2020



Dearest Sisters,

“Those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount upon wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Is. 40:31

Such was the life and mission of our dearest Sr. Stella who, in health and in sickness, remained a valiant woman, empowered by the strength of the Lord, climbed and surmounted with hope, many a challenging mountain to become what the Lord asked of her, through the call of duty and finally surrendered her soul to the Lord of her life on February 3rd 2020 at 7.05 am thus bringing to a close the glorious chapters of her life.

Born on 23rd July 1937 at Mangalore, Sr. Stella D' Souza was the 2nd child to Mr. Stephen and Nathalie D'Souza. She joined our Congregation in June 1956, made her First Profession on 1st January 1960 and her Final Profession in 1967. She was placed in the Communities of Secunderabad, Eluru, Raichur, Kazipet, Tivim and Vijayawada where she held responsibilities such as office clerk, teacher and Principal. The last place, Vijayawada stood to benefit a great harvest of her good works from 1982 to 2013 where she was blazing a trail.

Her students are a living testimony of her labour. The staff were fired with zeal, learning from her tireless commitment to mould students into persons of strength and compassion. She set standards of excellence, and the message was loud and clear, from the glowing tributes she received.

One cannot miss the imposing edifice of the school building in five blocks, the completion of which was no mean task and which now accommodates nearly 4,500 students. Seeing bright future prospects, because of the increasing demand for admissions, she began the herculean task of constructing new buildings for the expansion of sections. It is amazing to note, that while she was at the helm of affairs of the reputed Atkinson school, reading the signs of the time, she dared to do away with the existing pattern of the Anglo Indian Board of Education and usher in a New syllabus of the Central Board of Secondary Education. It obviously involved, a lot of bureaucratic and legal settlements and personnel management not to forget the time and energy spent for it.

All this worked towards earning an outstanding name for the school and of course for the Congregation a good mission area to serve the little ones and the youth with love. While on this arduous mission she forged relationships, cutting across religious diversities and they showed up at her funeral, in gratitude and reverence!

She was even more graceful as she laid down her office – humble, detached, and ready to fade into the background. Her strong rootedness in prayer, firm trust in the God whom she had discovered as her closest confidante, drew her to a greater degree of simplicity and surrender on her bed of pain. What a picture of heroism, resilience and quiet resolve. We are blest to witness a citadel of strength, courage, compassion and meekness as she yielded her spirit into the arms of her loving Father.

Sr. Stella was a Cancer survivor from 1999. She was careful in maintaining her health through regular follow up with her trusted physician. However on 24th October, 2019 she suffered a stroke, was admitted into the hospital and received acute medical care till 11th November. She recovered to a great extent needing only physiotherapy to help her recover the use of her limbs.

Contrary to our expectations, on November 21st she was re-admitted to the hospital for the second time and received the same treatment to remedy the second clot which re surfaced in her brain. Thanks to the efficient medical treatment, by the grace of God, Sr. Stella was discharged from the hospital on 2nd December. She cooperated well with the physiotherapist and was an excellent patient despite the discomforts of being confined to bed with nasal feeding till her last day!

On 4th January, 2020 she was again admitted to the hospital with severe breathing difficulty and once again recovered within a week. She was brought back home and continued care was given. Yet the Lord was preparing for her homecoming and she was getting convinced about it. It is worth mentioning about the marvellous way everyone showered their care, Sisters, staff, students. Thanks to Sr. Charlotte who willingly sent her younger sister - Sr. Lorenza to be of solace to her and it did work a miracle of revival!

The expression of goodwill and assurance of prayers from dear Mother Francesca, our Sisters, and Sisters belonging to other Congregations, Priests, members of her Staff and Ex-students became a huge wave of good will motivating her to bounce back to normalcy.

During her period of hospitalization, the Sister Nurses of Asha Hospital were a great help for the night duty. So too were our young Sisters of her Community who volunteered the night duty and the others lovingly assisted her throughout her period of pain. All through the days that she was confined to bed, we could see her completely surrendered to the will of God. She suffered much, but no word of complaint escaped her lips. God was preparing her and the end came with two days of laboured breathing.

Sr. Theresiamma from Asha Hospital happened to visit her on 2nd February and she was able to perceive her deteriorating condition. She volunteered to assist her for the night. The Community and our Sisters from the neighbouring St. Anthony's Convent visited and prayed by her bed side.

On the 3rd of February at 4.00 am. she opened her eyes and looked around beckoning to say something. The Sister who was attending to her called for the Superior who immediately rushed to be by her side. She gave a last glance and nodded her head as the Sisters assured her of God's Presence around her. Together they started praying the powerful Memorare and the Mercy Chaplet invoking God's Mercy through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mother to whom she was greatly devoted, St. Joseph and St. Michael were her favourite saints. The breathing rate kept fluctuating, the Community gathered to pray the Lauds, and proceeded for Mass. At 7.05 am. she gently breathed her last in the presence of the Superior Sr. Monica and Sr. Theresiamma.

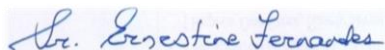
The Parish Priest who was intimated about the same in the morning came and blessed her. By 8.30 am her body was laid out for the public to pay their respects. Our Sisters, Priests, Parishioners, teachers were among the first ones who received a jolt on hearing the news and hastened to have a glimpse of her. News spread quickly and many people of different faiths started trickling in, to pay their respects. Soon the trickle turned into a stream and people kept coming even till late night. The silent tears of her students, the parents, some well wishers and even government officials were a proof of their love and esteem for her. The Sisters from the Provincialate and neighbouring houses kept night vigil along with some members of the staff.

On 4th February, at 9.30 am. the Holy Eucharist was celebrated by the Parish Priest assisted by eight Priests who had a close association with her. A heart-warming introduction, an inspiring and comforting homily, a soulful prayer of the faithful, and an uplifting melody of the choir added to the solemnity. The vote of thanks was a fitting final tribute to the departed soul and all who helped her during her last days. While the students stood guard of honour, her coffin was carried by her staff to the ambulance, which proceeded to the cemetery of our Sisters at Gollapudi where the mortal remains of dear Sr. Stella were laid to rest with our other Sisters gone before her.

I extend my heartfelt condolences and prayers to dearest Sr. Lorenza and the bereaved members of her family, Sr. Monica and Community especially Sr. Lancy who assisted Sr. Stella as a guardian angel all through her many years of sickness and suffering. Thanks to all our dear Sisters from the other Provinces for sharing in our pain through their presence at the funeral. Thanks too, to all those who sent us messages of condolences.

We believe that our Sister is with the Lord, nevertheless let us now commend her soul to the Mercy of God through our prayers and suffrages that she gain a speedy entry to behold the beatific vision! I greet you with much love on the eve of the beautiful feast of Mother Enrichetta.

Yours affectionately,



Sr. Ernestine Fernandes

Provincial Superior.