

St. Ann's Provincialate
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Cariappa Road, Bolarum
Secunderabad
Telangana - 500 010

3rd June, 2021

*'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these...
you did it to Me...*

Now enter into the Home of my Father' (Ref. Mt. 25, 31-46)



Dearest Sisters,

On 26th May, 2021 at 7.35 a.m. our Heavenly Father visited Sr. Franca and welcomed her into His eternal abode with the above life-giving Word. The Lord brought to an end her long suffering, owing to an open wound on her legs. On her death bed she had hardly any time to breathe her last. So gentle was the Lord's touch!

Sr. M. Franca Joseph (MARY ANN JOSEPH) was born on 7th November, 1936 to a devout and pious couple, Joseph and Maria at Vaddy, Quilon in Kerala. She was blessed as a 3rd child among her three brothers and three sisters. Presently, one of the brothers and two sisters are alive. God planted the seed of Vocation to Religious Life in her and her parents nurtured it. She courageously responded to the call of her Master by entering the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann of Providence on 21.06.1955 as a Postulant at Secunderabad. She received her Religious Clothing on 01.01.1956, made her First Profession on 03.01.1958 and Perpetual Profession on 01.01.1964 in Secunderabad.

Her itinerary in Religious Life for the past 63 years is as follows:

1958 January	-	Secunderabad - In-charge of kitchen
1970 June	-	Fatimanagar Home - Assisting the Destitute
1974 June	-	Mallapur - In-charge of Household works
1976 June	-	Wellington - Sister in-charge
1983 June	-	Dumaria - Sister in-charge
1989 June	-	Aruvankadu - Boarding mistress and Office Administrator
1991 May	-	Dumaria - Village Apostolate
1995 June	-	Fatimanagar Home - taking care of the aged and disabled
1998 May	-	Bolarum Home - Sister in-charge
2003 June	-	Bansilalpet - Sister-in-charge
2010 June	-	Bolarum Home - Assisting the senior Sisters
2011 May	-	Bansilalpet - Taking care of the Inmates
2013 July to till date	-	Bolarum Home - Rest

Sr. Franca was on medical treatment for years on end owing to Hypertension, Diabetic and Elephantiasis [lower limbs]. She was quite regular and gladly participated in all the activities of the Community. On 20th May, 2021 at 9.30 p.m. Sr. Arokia Mary, the Animator of the Community of the Home took notice that her blood sugar was quite high owing to consumption of Mangoes and had vomiting, probably due to heat stroke. Therefore, initial medication was given and she was asked to rest.

On 26th May, in the early hours of the day, at about 12.30 a.m. Sr. Arokia Mary found Sr. Franca loudly and repeatedly calling out the name of Jesus in Malayalam (Isho), simultaneously making the sign of the cross on four sides of her bed. Sr. Arokia Mary assured her prayer and remained with her till the end.

After attending to her needs with the help of another Sister they were surprised to find that Sr. Franca was no more. At 7.35 a.m. she breathed her last without any struggle. What a peaceful death indeed!

All praise and glory to God for the very gift of Sr. Franca to our Congregation and the Church! She was surely an embodiment of virtues which required living a life in God with a self-surrendering attitude. When she was alive, the Sisters, Formees and laity remembered her as a living Saint who showed the path to eternal life by accepting suffering constructively. She was a woman of God fulfilling the Word - *“Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s”* (Mt. 22: 21)

She never compromised with Community Prayer. Most of the time, Sisters found her in the Chapel praying the Rosary to her Heavenly Mother. St. Paul’s word was infused in her - *‘nothing can separate me from the love of Christ’* (Ref. Rom. 8: 38-39). Even in her sickness, she was faithful to the Sacraments and Sacramental life.

All those who met Sr. Franca admired her endurance to bear suffering, specially the Elephantiasis. Her intense physical suffering did not restrain her from being faithful to her spiritual life and her community life. On enquiring about her wounded legs, we used to receive very edifying reply from her, *“yes, pain is there always. It is for my purification. I need to offer something to God. Why should I give so much importance to this donkey (referring to her body)”*.

Her total commitment to the Lord was an inspiration to all. She always sought the Lord and His glory and that was enough for her! Her wholehearted service to her Master was really admirable, be it in the kitchen or working for the destitute and disabled. In this way she made her presence felt in Secunderabad, Dumaria, Aruvankadu, Fatimanagar, Bolarum Home and Bansilalpet. God truly blessed her with a simple, loving, caring, hardworking and prayerful nature. She was known and remembered for her great culinary skills by which she made the Sisters and others happy.

The very evening of her First Profession in 1958, the Provincial Superior asked her to take charge of the Kitchen in Secunderabad as the previous Sister-in-charge was then seriously ill. Although Sr. Franca’s feet were trembling at this ordeal, she accepted to do His holy Will. Her tremendous deep faith was displayed through her radical and risk-taking ‘yes’ to God. Her spirit of humility was obvious, whenever she responded, saying, *‘I have done only what I ought to have done’*.

Sr. Franca was a person who radiated peace wherever she went. She was a messenger who diffused God’s love in every person she met. She was sent as a pioneer to start the ‘Home for the Aged and Disabled’ at Fatimanagar. It was a challenging task, to make the impossible possible. She was the Animator of the Community, where her presence and care healed many wounds. Through her cheerfulness, personal touch, prayer and love she soothed and healed many of the mentally retarded and physically disabled persons. Her tireless service brought many souls to God.

Her willingness and goodness paved the path to shoulder yet another responsibility in Bansilalpet. It required tremendous strength of character and deep rootedness in Christ to lead a radical yet sacrificial life for no reward except the innocent smiles of those she served. She faced the challenges of life with the grace of God, saying, *‘He knows best’*.

Sr. Franca was the personification of serenity and peacefulness. Many young and old Sisters remember her with love and gratitude for her kindness, compassion, understanding and helping nature. She took care of the poor and the miserable with edifying empathy and brought them together in love. She was the source of peace and reconciliation through her simple smile and ready wit. All those who came in contact with her felt the vibration of peace.

Her missionary spirit was ever ready to run the race and win the prize. In one of my latest visits to St. Ann's Home, when I spoke to Sr. Franca about a new foundation of the Mission in Bihar and asked her whether she would like to go. At once, with radiant smile and sparkle in her eyes, she said, "*Yes, I am ready*"! Such was the nature of this mission Sister of ours!

She was known for her missionary work and zeal for souls. One of the greatest missionaries we have come across in our life time will be Sr. Franca. Dumaria was best action for her missionary work. Walk into any house in Dumaria and we would hear the same name being repeated by young and old alike, the name of Sr. Franca. During her stay in Dumaria she touched the lives of people residing in the nine substations of the Parish. Many of them were baptized in the Catholic Church. She would walk miles to reach them, stay with them in their huts catechizing and instructing them irrespective of time. After a few days she would move to another village on foot to continue her mission. There were times she slept even in the cow-shed. It was here that she contacted the disease Elephentiasis. She never complained about it till the end. She carried no purse, no bag, no food; she was content with the food and shelter offered by the people. As Priests were not available she would conduct dry Mass in each of these villages where the entire village participated with great devotion and simplicity. She would feel extremely happy and fulfilled at every Easter as hundreds of adults and children whom she catechized would receive baptism. Dear Sr. Franca, intercede for your people in Dumaria that the seed of Christian Faith you sowed in their hearts may continue to bear abundant fruits.

Here are a few words of appreciation from our Sisters:

"Sister was humble, unassuming, dedicated, prayerful and a very zealous missionary for the kingdom of God. She proclaimed the Word of God to bring His love to everyone whom she met in her humble apostolate wherever she was sent and with no complaints ever uttered. Thank you dear Sr. Franca we remember you and now that you are in heaven, pray for us". - Sr. Arokia Mary, the Animator of the Community

"Sr. Franca was a very remarkable person with the ability to cater to the food needs of a large category of people. The priests of St. Mary's Parish, Secunderabad and all the Priests who came to Bishop's house came to St. Ann's Convent for meals. In the Convent itself there was a large group of Professed Sisters, Postulants, Novices and Junior Sisters who had their meals in the large refectory downstairs and enjoyed themselves to the full. Notwithstanding the number of boarders and orphans to cater for she always received them willingly". - Sr. Neonie Eugene (Batch mate of Sr. Franca)

"... Sr. Franca was simple, cheerful prayerful doing kitchen work - a noble work indeed. The Italian Sisters called her pillar of the Community at St. Ann's Convent, Secunderabad!

When I was going to different Schools for my teaching experiences I would always find my breakfast and lunch boxes ready by 7.00 a.m. without fail. Little acts count a lot and that satisfied her soul". - Sr. Grace Gonsalves

“I recall a grateful memory of Sr. Franca’s hard work at St. Ann’s Convent, Wellington, Tamilnadu. When I was the Animator, she worked hard in our 12 acres of tea garden in order to get income to provide food, lodging and education to the poor children nearby. She took up this noble and hard work and did it with much love...” - Sr. Fiorina Perez

“Dearly beloved Sr. Franca, what a shock you gave us! Calling the name of Jesus in Malayalam and blessing your room countless times you flew into the arms of Abba Father... You lived your “yes” in obedience to the authority, when you were made head cook in Secunderabad for the kitchen to care and to serve the Bishops, Priests, Religious, three types of boarders and resident teachers what knowledge, intelligence, strength and power... Such a young Sister to do such a lot for such a big Community! There was joy, happiness on your face...You spent time before the Lord after your duty - your faithfulness for your prayer life...

I then met you here in St. Ann’s Home in 2019... My heart broke to see your two legs in such a condition. The true God knows the naked truth of your legs. Anybody’s heart would melt to your suffering, but no complaints from you. Going up and down with the walker only to be in the presence of the Lord, praying, working and suffering with heroism... Beloved Sr. Francamma, continue to bless and pray for our Community, for our Province, for the Congregation and the world at large...” - Sr. Raphaela Crasta

During this ravaging 2nd wave of Covid-19 in the Country, Sr. Franca was fortunate to receive Holy Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Valentine D’Mello, Parish Priest of St. Joseph’s Church, Bolarum in the morning at 10.30 to bless her remains. Sisters of the Community and a few Sisters from the Provincialate Community were present. At 2.45 p.m. her remains were shifted to the Cemetery at Mettuguda and placed it to rest in God in the grave at 3.30 p.m. to enter into the Home of our Heavenly Father.

I thank Sr. Arokia Mary for taking care of Sr. Franca from morning to night. I am also grateful to the Sisters of the Community for assisting her in all her needs. Owing to the Covid restrictions the family members of Sr. Franca were unable to be present but our sympathies go with them.

Dear Sr. Franca, no pain or suffering has proved greater than your implicit faith and trust in your Abba Father. Thank you for teaching us the lesson of endurance and showing us the power of faith.

Let us offer our prayers of suffrage for Sr. Franca so that together with the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the Saints she may enjoy the presence of God eternally. Being the day for Vocations, we ask Sr. Franca to intercede before the throne of God to send vocations to the Church, particularly to our Congregation.

Affectionately,



Provincial Superior