

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

22nd November, 2021

“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

(Daniel 12:3)



Dearest Sisters,

Sr. Mary Elisabetta Fugle was called to her heavenly home, at 9.30 p.m. on November 14th, 2021, at the age of 93.

Sister M. Elisabetta (Orietta Dorothy Mary) Fugle, daughter of Mr. John Charles and Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Fersich was born on July 1st 1928 at Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. As a child she enjoyed a happy, loving and secure atmosphere of genuine Christian devotion. She is a proud product of Atkinson High School, Vijayawada her Alma Mater. After her schooling the Master beckoned her and she paying heed to an inner call entered the family of the Sisters of St. Ann of Providence on 7th January, 1952, at Secunderabad. She was Clothed on 10th August 1952. She completed her Novitiate in Turin, Italy and made her 1st Profession on 7th January, 1954 after which she returned to India. She made her Perpetual Profession on 10th August, 1960, at Secunderabad.

She completed her Masters Degree in English Literature in the year 1962 and B.Ed. in the year 1967. Sister Elisabetta was entrusted with many responsibilities and assignments. She carried out her apostolic ministry in different capacities: as an accountant, a gifted teacher, an able administrator and as an efficient Headmistress. She carried out her service of authority in the capacity of General Councillor, Provincial Vicar and Councillor and Sister in- Charge of various Communities. As an exemplary Formator she rendered her service at all levels of formation. As Novice Mistress and Assistant Mistress of Postulancy, Novitiate and Juniorate she inspired and instilled in the Formees an ardent love for God and our Congregation.

Her obedience to God's Providential plan enabled her to say yes to where ever she was sent.

- 1955 - Bolarum - Teacher and Clerk
- 1962 - Eluru - Lecturer
- 1963 - Secunderabad - Novice Mistress
- 1965 - Bolarum Novitiate - Novice Mistress
- 1969 - Secunderabad Vice - Principal
- 1970 - Secunderabad - SSC Principal
- 1973 - Italy - General Councillor
- 1979 - Australia - Member of the Community
- 1979 - Secunderabad - ICSE Principal
- 1983 - Mallapur Juniorate, Sister in-charge and Provincial Councillor
- 1985 - St. Ann's Provincialate, Bolarum - Provincial Vicar, Sister in-charge and Bursar

		of the Community
1989	-	Tarnaka - Provincial Vicar and Teacher
1990	-	Tarnaka - Sister in-charge and Teacher
1998	-	Mallapur Convent - Assistant to Postulant Mistress
2004	-	Mallapur Juniorate - Assistant Junior Mistress
2007	-	Mallapur Convent - Taught Junior Sisters and Postulants
2008	-	Bolarum Novitiate - Assistant Novice Mistress
2016	-	St. Ann's Home Bolarum

Sr. Elisabetta loved life and everything it offered her, the persons around her, her Congregation, her family yet her first priority was obedience to God's Will and nothing else.

She had great compassion for the poor and reached out to them in her own unique way. *"The poor are present in our midst. How evangelical it would be if we could say with all truth: we too are poor, because only in this way will we truly be able to recognize them, to make them part of our lives and an instrument of our salvation."* Message of His Holiness Pope Francis on the Fifth World Day of the Poor 14th November, 2021. Her childlike simplicity and openness, her total Trust and Confidence on the Providence of God was so remarkable that God chose 14th November celebrated as 'Children's Day' in India and as the World Day of the Poor, to call her to Himself. At 3.00 p.m. suddenly Sister developed rigors and had bouts of vomiting bile. Immediate medical assistance was given by our Sister Nurses and the Doctor was consulted for further treatment. Fr. Valentine D'Mello, the Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Church, Bolarum, administered the Sacrament of Anointing of the sick at 7.30 p.m. Gradually her vital organs began to drop and she became unconscious and suffered from a cardiac arrest. Dr. Raja Lakshmi who stood beside her exclaimed "Oh my goodness! a very pious soul is passing away peacefully from this world; let's keep praying." Thus her final end came and she breathed her last at 9.30 p.m. as Sisters stood beside her death bed in silent prayer with a great awareness that she belonged to God Alone.

Sister Elisabetta, as she was fondly called 'Betha', was a kind, gentle, loving and joyful person who was respected and loved by all. She was naturally gifted to Animate and to mould the young ones in the likeness of Jesus. At St. Ann's Home where she spent the last years of her life, her presence was life-giving, inspiring, active and energetic. She advanced in age gracefully and joyfully.

Music is a means of connecting with God. It is an expression and celebration of the divine. It is the whispering of God. Sr. Elisabetta was a great musician. She would never compromise with the pitch, the rhythm, the note, the tempo and the tune; it had to be in perfect harmony. Her religious life too was perfectly aligned to the Will of God; it was indeed a symphony.

She was a woman of wide knowledge and perfection and her vision of life was to be a fervent religious. She envisaged her life as a pilgrimage during which her Heavenly Father took her to different places, halting at different shores for shorter and longer duration according to the need of the people and for His greater glory. Obedience was a highly prized virtue in her life.

A Poem by Gail Sayers aptly describes Sr. Elisabetta:

Exalt your name for your Exemplary Life
Lyric of God's Love and the Lover of Music
Impressive your ways they indicate your piety.

Zealot is you and your Zeal is highly appreciated
Affectionately you instill in others Ambition
Beacon of light, Bearer of good news
Elegant personality, Efficient educator
Tactful in moulding and Talented,
Testimonial and Tolerant, Amiable and Admirable!

Her tireless commitment to humanity was evident in everything she did, in the manner she lived as a faithful religious - in her assignment as Novice Mistress, General Councillor, Animator of Communities, and Head of Institutions to a Choir Mistress. Her charisma and eloquence was so remarkable that she literally held the young and old in her hand, with a formative influence on them leading them to God.

On 25th July, 2021 the hall at St. Ann's Home was full with Formees, Junior and Young Sisters celebrating the First World Day of the Elderly with our dear elderly Sisters when she spoke to them about her extraordinary passion in living her consecrated life joyfully and urged them not to grow old before time.

The funeral Mass was held on 15th November at St. Ann's Home at 3.00 p.m. officiated by Rev. Fr. Balaswamy S.J., the Parish Priest of St. Francis Xavier's Church, Alwal. Present were her niece Mrs. Crystal Morris, nephew Mr. Gorden Morris, grand nieces and nephews along with other family members, Sisters of the nearby Communities and Eastern Province of India, teachers and parishioners closely associated with her.

Here below are a few extracts taken from the condolence messages of our dearest Mother General and few others.

Mother Francesca Sarciá, Superior General:

With our hearts full of emotion and sorrow, we bid farewell to our dearest Sr. Elisabetta. It doesn't seem true that she is no longer with us. Humanly speaking we think that some persons should never die and the departure of Sr. Elisabetta, although she was advanced in years, seems to us to have happened too quickly and unexpectedly.

At the same time we raise our immense gratitude to God for the gift of this dearest Sister who has served the Congregation with great dedication, joy and love. Her openness of mind and heart, her welcoming attitude towards everyone, her optimism towards life, together with her humility and simplicity, will always be remembered. She sowed and spread infinite seeds of love through her presence and her service wherever obedience sent her, always working and offering sacrifices for the whole Religious Family.

In the person of Sr. Elisabetta, our Congregation loses a great pillar, a great point of reference, a light... but at the same time we gain a great intercessor and protector in Heaven. We are certain that she will be ever closer to us. She who on earth loved our Congregation very much, now from Heaven loves it still more, imploring abundant blessings for our Religious Family and for all her dear ones.

Fr. Julian Studden from Canada:

I will always remember her for smile and her spirit of Christian joy. She welcomed everyone with an open heart now may Jesus whom she served so faithfully as a Religious Sister welcome her into His Eternal Home, made ready for His faithful ones. She leaves behind an empty space but we will always

remember her love and devotion to the Lord Jesus and for all of us. Eternal rest grant to her O Lord and let Your perpetual light shine on her and may her soul and the souls of all our loved ones rest in peace.

The sad, sudden and shocking news of the passing away of our dearest Sr. Elisabetta, left me sleepless the whole night and I deeply regret not being able to make it for her funeral, but thanks to the link furnished I could still make it.

Mother Ernestine Fernandes, Provincial Superior of Eastern India:

Barely six months after my First Profession 1981, I had the great privilege and joy of working with Sr. Elisabetta, then Principal of St. Ann's High School, ISC. As a young Sister, I had lots to learn from her. I do believe we made a jolly pair regardless of the age barrier. I admired her for her deep love for the Congregation, her life of commitment and dedication. Always first in the Chapel for prayer, faithful for all the Community exercises, sensitive and attentive to the needs of others she made a loveable and lively Community member. Never gloomy or grumpy, always amiable and available she found herself always surrounded by friends both old and young.

She was loved, admired and appreciated by the staff, students, parents and well-wishers. Ever cheerful and charming she celebrated life, communicated God, radiated joy and inspired hope to all she came in contact with. Though initially, just for a year only with our dear Betha as she was affectionately called, I had chances to live and interact with her in later years too, when she was the Superior of the Juniorate Community at Mallapur and I used to go there to take classes for the Juniors. While I was in Rome she never lost an opportunity to write to me and keep in touch, always appreciating and encouraging me at all times and would be truly happy to see me each time I visited her at Bolarum. Thanks dearest Sr. Betha for being my wonderful Sister, friend and guide.

Fr. Glenn Morris O.P. (Nephew) from Rome:

Today we mourn not just the loss of a dear one, an aunt, a grandaunt, a great grandaunt, a Sister of St. Ann's of Providence, but we are looking at the remains of a person who for almost a century epitomized the life of a Religious and the life of a loving family member. It had been my secret desire, that when the inevitable should happen, that I would leave everything and be the celebrant at her funeral Mass. But with this pandemic, this was not to be, and aunty just did not give us a chance. Perhaps it was just her way of saying goodbye. Till the end, she did not want to trouble anyone.

Mother Francesca, your Mother General, condoling with me yesterday, mentioned that Sr. Elisabetta was no ordinary Sister, but she was a "pillar of the Congregation". Yes, a pillar that stood tall as a beacon of light illuminating the life of the community and the life of especially the younger Sisters of the Congregation. I only heard not just good but excellent comments about her. At your recent General Chapter, Sisters came up to me to express how much they owed to Sr. Elisabetta in their religious life. More recently, I visited many of the older Sisters in Turin, and it was such a joy to see Mother Clelia and Sr. Elisabetta conversing, via the internet, as if in the same room, though thousands of miles apart. Some of those Sisters belonged to the same batch as aunty and I realized that if ever I needed a passport or in these pandemic days, the famous Green Pass, to enter a convent of St. Ann's of Providence, all I needed to say was "I am a nephew of Sr. Elisabetta!!!" And it works!!!

Her "zest for life" was really catchy, especially when it pertained to the Religious Life. The more senior Sisters, and certainly the younger ones, will remember her for all her activities and responsibilities in

the Congregation. Her contribution to the Congregation is monumental and colossal. No one can deny that! More than that, no can deny that in all this she remained a simple Sister. Her serenity and dedication can never be doubted. She had no airs about her just because she was important or was doing something important for the community or the Congregation.

Like all things human, missing will soon turn to forgetting! But there lies the challenge: can we forget her? Can we forget the impact she has made on the life of each one of us, each of it in its own unique way? If not, then we have missed the whole point of this celebration. Because it is a celebration, a celebration of a life well lived, the celebration of a life of dedication, the celebration of a life that reveals that even today Religious Life has a meaning, that Religious Life is still joyful, that Religious Life is attractive and worth living.

Mr. Gordon Morris (Nephew):

My dear Sisters, Fathers, relatives and friends, we have gathered to bid farewell to Sr. Elisabetta fondly called Aunty Orië by her relatives gathered here and those who are unable to attend, many of whom are participating through the internet. Aunty Orië was someone we all loved and who has touched our lives in her own special way. Over the years she was the matriarch of the family being the last surviving member of her generation. She was a mother to many of us and someone to whom we could open up and share our deepest feelings.

My earliest memories of Aunty Orië goes back to the late 50s and early 60s and of her as a Sister, whom we would visit in St. Ann's Bolarum in what is now the Novitiate. What struck me then and it is something we will all remember her for is her smile and the inner joy she shared with all of us, which I would say was very infectious.

Though Aunty Orië spent most of her life as a Sister of St. Ann, we came to know and love her by our visits to her and more recently through her visits during her holidays and of course the mobile phone. I still remember her talking to her on the phone and her enquiring about the family. Aunty was one who was interested in every one in the family and how they were doing, and how happy she would be when she heard any good news. We were assured of her prayers when things were not going so well.

Aunty Orië was known to be a good teacher and enjoyed teaching in School and as a Formator for many years. I remember her teaching English to the Novices until a few years ago. She was very particular about grammar and spelling. I'm sure many of the Sisters here were her students at one time or the other.

I've been associated with the Sisters of St. Ann for many years and whenever I was introduced there would be a PS. Gordon is St. Elisabetta's nephew. It felt good to be associated and related to someone who was so loved and respected in the Congregation. Whenever I had a program with the Sisters, word would come back to Aunty. And the next time, I visited her she would say, "You know Gordon..." and then she would tell me what I said and did at such and such a programme.

All the family enjoyed the visits we made to see and meet Aunty. For me, it was much more, as a part from Ivy, Michael and Maria who encouraged me in my ministry, it was Aunty who was the solid pillar of prayer and inspiration for me. She wanted to know everything I did in my ministry in India and abroad and always encouraged me to do better. We often had a good laugh when she related how someone enquired about me and she would say, 'I don't know which part of the world he is in' then she would add, 'you were in my prayers'.

At this moment everyone would expect all of us to be sad, but I am not so sad as happy. Yes, sad because Aunty leaves us with beautiful memories, we will never see her smile or hear her having a good laugh. We will miss her but will always cherish her memories of love, simplicity and generosity.

I'm happy because Aunty has left this world of suffering and pain. We all know how her health turned after she broke her hip. In the last few years and more so during the last few months the pain she bore was severe. It must have been painful but she bore it with a smile.

We salute the memory of our dearest Sr. Betha, an exceptional Religious, known for her strength and her noble engagements which are far reaching. She leaves behind a solid foundation for young religious to build upon.

The footprints she has left will bear everlasting witness to a joyful living of our religious life. Her ardent faith in God, intellectual strength, sense of humor and her strong and genuine conviction and ability to engage and motivate others in a simple and straight forward manner will continue to inspire us.

What a gift God gave us in her! May she now enjoy a reward well-deserved: the fullness of her consecration in heaven, one with her Divine Spouse in eternal joy. And may she closely accompany each of us on this journey of fidelity and love.

Dearest Sr. Elisabetta, we miss you and we will miss you; your cheerful, peaceful and encouraging presence; your graciousness and good humor. Rest in the Lord's embrace. You are ever a part of our lives, and from our hearts we say: thank you, dear Sister.

On behalf of our dear Provincial Superior Sr. Jesintha Mariappa, who is away attending a month's Ignatian Retreat we offer our heartfelt condolences to all her family members who were present for the Funeral and to all the other members of her family specially to Fr. Glenn her dearest nephew. We thank Sr. Celestine Senna and all the Sisters of St. Ann's Home, Srs. Mamatha and Pusha for their nursing care, Srs. Reena, Nirmala S. and Lidwin for making all arrangements and to everyone who extended a helping hand and assisted Sr. Betha in her last journey.

We will be blessed in being generous with our prayers and suffrages for the repose of the soul of dear Sr. Elisabetta who loved our Congregation so dearly, and for the growth and sanctity in our religious family.

United in Prayer,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sr. Cicily Mathew". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Sr. Cicily Mathew
(Provincial Vicar)