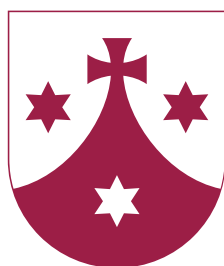


In Loving Memory of



Mother Maria Rosario of Jesus OCD



Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Thiruvalla

St. Joseph's Monastery



J. M. J. T.

**Discalced Carmelites, St. Joseph's Convent,
Thiruvalla, Kerala.**

Jesus

Ever with us Reverend and dear Mother,

With deep sorrow I have to inform Your Reverence and Your Community, how Our Lord willed to take from us our beloved Mother Maria Rosario of Jesus, the foundress of our Carmels in Kerala, at the age of 77, of which 59 years were spent in four Carmels, living a very edifying and holy life. She had finished her big mission. She had been sent to us by God, to teach us to witness Christ by being docile to the manifestations of His Will in the everyday happenings of our simple Carmelite life. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken her away!! Blessed be His Holy Name. Her life on earth was a slow martyrdom, attuned to the touch of the Holy Spirit.

On the 15th of January 1893 was born at Granada, Spain, to Don Jose Castillo and Doña Manuela Lopez, the ninth of their ten children, MARIA. These pious parents knew to bring up their children in the Love of God and in the practice of Christian virtues. All the members of the family loved their little Maria so much, that to the very end of her life, the affectionate correspondence of even the grand-nephews and grand-nieces with their Indian aunt ("tia India" as they called her) was indeed remarkable. Some incidents of her childhood reveal to us her happy, ingenuous, sportive and generous character. One day she went out to a public park with her cousin Juana and plucked some flowers. The guard in order to frighten them asked "Children where is your house? I have to charge you a fine." Very frankly the little Maria asked him to follow them and entering the porch of a neighbouring house, said to him: "This is my house, but for the present there is no one here." The guard was amused and understood the acuteness of this five year old girl. At this early age her beloved Father was called to his eternal rest. Her greatest delight was to make others happy even to the extent of giving



all what she possessed. On returning home from school she would run up to the balcony without being observed, to throw down ribbons and toys to her friends.

Observing the good dispositions and gifts of her daughter, her mother desired that these qualities should be developed by a careful education. Due to her failing health and unable to pay sufficient attention to Maria's education, she decided to entrust her little one to the dexterous hands of the daughters of St. Francis de Sales. Maria was about 11 years old when admitted to the cloister of the Visitation, in the street of St. Bernard, at Madrid.

The sight of these high cloister walls terrified her awfully and she longed to return home. We have often heard her relate in a funny and smart way, how she was looking for a hole in the wall or some other means to escape from that prison in order to be with her dear mama. But the loving attention of those good nuns helped little by little to get rid of her nostalgia. She used to tell us of an incident of that period. Everyday they were served buns at breakfast. She had a dislike for them; so, she would throw the crumbs behind an almirah. One day it was discovered by the mistress; but seeing that nobody confessed the fault, she threatened them saying that two horns would point out on the forehead of the culprit. Maria was taciturn — but on awakening every morning, she would pass her hand on the forehead to make sure that the horns were not pointing out. All throughout her life, Our Mother conserved a happy and grateful memory of those loving and saintly mothers who developed and refined her disposition of goodness, sweetness and charity as well as arts like painting, needle-work, domestic sciences etc.

At the age of 12, she had the terrible shock of losing her good mother, and finding herself so lonely she besought Our Lady to be doubly a Mother to her from thence forward. Her mother on her death-bed had expressed her desire that Maria should become a Discalced Carmelite. It was precisely at this period, that her little daughter had begun to read with enthusiasm the works of Our Holy Mother St. Teresa and the thought of becoming a Carmelite was ever haunting her. Even in dreams she would hear Our Holy Mother telling her "I want you among my daughters." Her mistress seemed to have had some prophetic vision about this child's future that she determined to try her like gold in the crucible; especially in the virtue of obedience and the

formation of her heart. The results obtained were excellent, so much so, that she was held as a model for the students of later years; which fact, can be clearly seen by the following paragraph from these saintly mothers "In truth, that God called this soul so holy to the Carmel inspite of her delicate health, was a thing very manifest, for the one who was her Mistress used to relate to us interesting incidents as to how her vocation was developing, which on the other hand, she (the mistress), at times of course inspired by God, was proving her virtue of obedience in difficult situations. With the forthcoming consequence of fulfilling the great ideal of her life, which was crowned by a life of so much generosity and rewarded by the successful establishment of the Carmels in Kerala."

Our Mother finished her course of studies at the Visitation by the winter of 1911, and with the approbation of her spiritual director, she arranged her entry into the recently founded Carmel of Escorial. Her brothers were anxious that their little sister should pass some months with them in Granada, but she did not want to endanger her vocation. So, taking leave of the Sisters she went straight to Escorial.

She was received in Carmel on 6th March 1911. Great was her happiness to find herself in the convent. Although she was the first postulant, very soon many others were to join her, and all being of the same jovial character and young, could enjoy, in a holy way to their utmost. Inclined towards everything that was noble and good, she was able to assimilate many beauties of nature in those panoramic landscapes of Escorial. From the very beginning she gave herself up wholly to whatever God wanted of her. The Community recognised in this young girl of great qualities, a really promising candidate for our Holy Order.

Two months later, on 11th May, she received the Holy Habit of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Her fervour was ever on the increase for this impetuous soul, knew of no half measures in her total surrender to God. Besides, her saintly mistress had taught her never to refuse any work under the pretext of ignorance, but to lay hands to the task at once. No doubt, she went ahead with all that was asked of her and moreover, found time to lend a helping hand to the overburdened. Time slipped by, and on 2nd July 1912 was fulfilled her heart's most ardent desire by consecrating herself to her Spouse through the Holy Vows. In the silence of the ensuing years the young religious was matured for

the new enterprises that God had in store for her. She imbibed the spirit of Our Holy Parents by an assiduous study of their works, so that, before leaving the Novitiate she had memorized all the poems of Our Holy Mother and Our Holy Father. She had discharged almost all the offices in the convent, especially those of the portress, laborera i.e. one in charge of the orders from outside, and infirmarian. In this latter, she had shown great aptitude, charity and self-forgetfulness, so that she passed one whole Lent isolated from the Community to look after her mistress who had erisipela.

Her desire for perfection and to do penance, in order to prove her love for her Beloved was very great, though it was tempered by obedience; still, she did a lot for Him. Our Lord deigned to give her a companion of her own dispositions. They began to devise new modes of corporal and interior mortifications and compose verses and hymns in view of some approaching feast. Our Mother chose as her motto—"To be hidden with Christ in God." Under the guidance of Fr. Juan Thomas and Rev. Fr. Torres S. J. they ran with gigantic steps in the way of perfection and new horizons of spiritual life opened before them. This intense interior life led by these two privileged souls was a real preparation for their work in future, as Foundresses of Carmels in Spain and India.

In 1923 at the age of 30 years, she was elected Sub-prioress and first Discreet. The reading of the chronicles of our Order had increased her longing to work for the greater glory of God and for Our Holy Order, and also the zeal of Rev. Fr. Torres S. J. and Rev. Fr. Mathew Crawley made a tremendous appeal on her soul. In 1924, through the designs of Divine Providence, she left the beloved cradle of her religious life with Mother Maria Josefa of the Heart of Jesus, Mother Maravillas of Jesus and Sr. Josefina of St. Teresa to the foundation of "Cerro de los Angeles," which was to contribute so much to the triumph of the Sacred Heart of Jesus throughout the Nation (Spain). The labours of this foundation as of any other were very great, but she put all her might and main till it was seen realized and flourishing. God alone knows how much she suffered then, with such arduous work and so few hands to do it; that in spite of her delicate health she gave herself up to all the offices entrusted to her with great generosity, charity and complete self-forgetfulness.

Though she was perfectly happy during the 9 years spent in total self-surrender in this holy house, still, deep down in her heart she could

feel the exigencies of divine love. Our Lord was exacting from this generous soul yet greater sacrifices for the extension of his Glory overseas even to the pagan lands, and her missionary spirit was bubbling within her unceasingly without knowing how to execute it. The obsession to live the Discalced Carmelite life of poverty and solitude away from her country and people was so great, that at the first occasion on hearing that the Mothers of Ponzano, Madrid, were going to the mission of Borneo she thought that the right moment had come to offer herself. But she was advised to drop the idea owing to various circumstances and inconveniences too, and to commit the matter to the Divine Providence. Obedient as she was, she gave up the idea and quite peacefully began her annual retreat during which Our Lord deigned to clear up the horizons by sending Monsignor Bonaventura to the scene.

It was in 1932 that Mons. Bonaventura Arana, a Carmelite Bishop from a Mission in India, Vijayapuram, Kottayam, visited them for the first time. He was inflamed with zeal for the salvation of pagans, and desired to put into effect the wishes which the then reigning Pontiff, Pope Pius XI, of happy memory, had made known of having contemplative Orders in the missions, to bring down unceasingly the Divine graces for the conversion of the infidels. The Mothers, on hearing of his projects of taking the Carmelites to his mission, thought it providential and called Our Mother (inspite of being in retreat) to the parlour, to have an interview with his Excellency and treat of the desired foundation. She accepted the offer with enthusiasm and began to organize the foundation without any hesitation inspite of so many unsurmountable difficulties met with.

On the 11th September 1933 Our Mother crossed the threshold of her beloved Carmel of Cerro with seven other sisters, Sr. Amalia of Jesus, Sr. Luisa of the Holy Ghost, Sr. Beatrice of the Mother of God (Solemn Professed), Sr. Elizabeth of Jesus Mary and Joseph, and Sr. Gertrude of the Angels (Simple Profession) Sr. Maria Teresa of the Cross (Novice) and Sr. Angels of the Sacred Heart, postulant. Many relatives and friends accompanied them to Barcelona where they had the happiness of being visited by the three would be Martyrs—Rev. Fr. Jose Vincent, Provincial of Castille, Fr. Lucas of St. Joseph, Provincial of Cataluña and Mons. Irurita, Bishop of Barcelona, who blessed their enterprise. Our Mother's family too, awaited her there. What must have been the mingled feelings of sorrow and admiration at this critical moment of their separation until death!.....Divine Providence accom-

panied them everywhere. Great was their surprise to find two Fathers of the same mission of Navarre in India for guardian angels during their voyage. At last "Fulda" left the pier and at that solemn moment when a march was played by the band of the ship, the eight pioneers of the Carmels of Kerala sang with all the energy of their souls the "Solemn Salve" thus placing the whole enterprise under the protection of the Queen of Carmel. It was followed by "Te Deum" Magnificat, Miserere and Nunc dimitis.

They had a pleasant voyage on board the "Fulda" and could assist many Masses of the missionaries who were going to different missions. They kept as much as possible the horarium and the recollection of the cloister. What was Our Mother's happiness to see the then Reverend Father General and her dear confessor Fr. Torres S.J. awaiting them in the ^{harbour} of Genova. Rev. Fr. General took them inside the cloister of the Carmelite Nuns of the spot, where they spent some hours. He presented them all with new Breviaries on learning that theirs were lost on the way. With his paternal blessing they continued their voyage. Fr. Zacarias dedicated few hours every day to teach them English, customs and manners of their new country. He gave them such interesting details of everything including the flora and fauna which they listened with wonder as children to the Arabian Night Tales. The services rendered by this venerable Father to Our Mother began then and were to last till his death in 1957. As the steamer passed along the coast of Mt. Carmel, they sang and prayed to our Most Holy Mother of Carmel to give them the spirit of the first Fathers of the Order. Hebron, Palestine, Egypt, Mt. Sinai all spoke to them of the history of God's mercy and Providence. When crossing the Red Sea they sang the psalm "In exitu Israel de Egypto, domus Jacob de populo barbaro."

At last, they landed at Tuticorin, India, precisely on 7th October, her onomastic feast. In the company of the Fathers, they reached Kottayam the next day (i.e. Sunday, 8th October) and were lodged at St. Joseph's Convent where they were welcomed by Mons. Bonaventura and the other Fathers of the Mission. Later in the evening, a grand reception was organized in the Cathedral by the people of the locality who received with enthusiasm the sisters of their Patroness, the Little Flower, whose feast they were celebrating on that day. Our Lord seemed to console them with the prospect of getting many good vocations, for on the very same day they were visited by their first postulant who was to be admitted into the convent before long.

After some day's stay with those good Sisters, they were shifted to their temporary residence "Summer Villa." In contrast with the big houses and convents of Europe, it seemed to them extremely poor but their hearts bounded with joy since for the love of God they were prepared for the worst. The place was solitary and silent near a river, and from the very beginning they followed their regular life. Mons. Bonaventura and the Fathers looked after their spiritual and temporal needs all throughout. Our Mother used to tell us often: "How much we are indebted to Monsignor. He is our Founder; he visited us daily, taught us English, was solicitous about our food, sleep etc. etc. trying his best to acclimatize us with our new environment." Our Mother, on her part, reciprocated his paternal solicitude by taking charge of washing and mending the clothes and vestments of the various poor mission churches without any remuneration; for her generous heart, all what was done for the missions seemed but too little.

At last, within eight month's time under the supervision of our good Fathers the new convent was finished, and on 14th June 1934 our mothers were shifted thither. The inauguration was made with great pomp and solemnity in the presence of four Prelates, clergy and a great multitude of people. The Fathers of the mission organized a procession of the Bl. Sacrament, from the Cathedral of Good Shepherd through well decorated paths, to the new convent chapel. As the new convent was situated in a lonely and somewhat elevated place, with good panoramic scenery, their souls seemed to be transported in God.

Together with the works of the new foundation, Our Mother took up in earnest, the delicate task of the formation of the first novices who were to be the pillars of these foundations. Forgetful of herself, she taught us more by her own example than by words what a Discalced Carmelite's life should be. She was all in all and the first to take up the humble works of the house. In the instruction of the novices, she was greatly helped by H. E. Mons. Bonaventura and Rev. Fr. Joseph Angel O. C. D. She was the soul of this Community of Kottayam, which she governed from 1933 to 1946, first as president and then as Prioress. Seeing that the vocations were increasing she desired to found more Carmels. In the begining of 1946, Rev. Father Teotonio O. C. D. visited Our Mother inviting her to make a foundation in Margao, Goa, offering a plot for the purpose. Our Mother accepted it with intense joy, Goa, being the place sanctified their compatriot St. Francis Xavier's incorrupt body. Negotiations were made and permission sought from the

Patriarch of Goa, who informed that it was already given to Our Mothers of Bangalore. So the idea of going to Goa was dropped. It seemed, there was possibility in Karwar, being a place of importance in the past history of Carmelite missions, and the Administrator (Apostolic) Fr. J Roncon was very keen about it. Nothing could stop her zeal and like Our Holy Mother St. Teresa, she would throw herself into the task without a single pie in hand, trusting solely in Divine Providence. By a letter dated 20th November 1946, Rev. Fr. Silverio of St. Teresa, Praeposito General, of the time approved the foundation. When we received informations from Karwar that our temporary residence was ready, Our Mons. Bonaventura gave the solicited permission to leave the enclosure (in his letter dated 29th January 1947).

Our Mother left Kottayam in the company of six sisters: Sr. Mary of St. Joseph, Sr. Serafina of the Infant Jesus, Sr. Carmen of the Holy Family, Sr. Ana of the Incarnation and this servant, taking along just the needful. The good-will of our various benefactors defrayed our journey and provided some fund to begin with.

Bitter trials awaited her in Karwar—we found no accommodation as was promised—except one poor house in the wild jungles. Worst still, there was no spiritual assistance not even a Sunday Mass. All the physical and moral sufferings corroded Our Mother's health considerably. We owe much gratitude to the Sisters of Saint Michael's who received us in their convent with open arms and provided for all our needs until we could find another house. After an year of tribulation, we had all the prospect of going ahead, when Mons. Bonaventura, fatherly as he was, called us back to Kerala offering us a house in his mission in Tiruvalla. Accustomed as she was to say "Fiat" to the Divine Will, Our Mother rejected all other plans and left Karwar on 25th February 1948. How those good friends of Karwar wept when Our Mother took leave of them! There, amidst the rocky woods, Our Mother kept buried a medal of her Father St. Joseph with the hope that in the nearest future he will build our Carmel in that spot.

Tired and exhausted we reached Tiruvalla on 28th February 1948 at about 11.30 A. M. The hospitable Sisters of Bethany received us in their convent with all charity, enthusiasm and attention. Meanwhile the clergy of the Siro-Malankara Rite organized a greater reception in the Cathedral. The people and clergy headed by his Excellency Mar Severios, the Bishop of Tiruvalla received us at the gate of their Cathedral

holding lighted candles in their hands. We passed with our faces covered as the procession moved on to the Cathedral. The children of Mary were giving us letters promising to supply us with oil and candles for the Bl. Sacrament. The solemn ceremony ended with an inspired sermon on the value and necessity of Contemplative Orders by Fr. Thomas Vadacherry and the Benediction of the Bl. Sacrament. After all the visits of the clergy and people, we took possession of the house prepared for us, called then Vijayapuralayam, at about 9 P. M. Seeing ourselves so poor and without anything for supper, we were reminded of the reception given to Our Lord on Palm Sunday in Jerusalem.

How much she loved that primitive lodging "la casita" as she called it; it reminded her of the house of the holy Family at Nazareth. How often she spoke to us with delight of the joy of living like Our Lady trusting solely on Divine Providence, that is, in effective poverty. Immediately, arrangements were made to accommodate it to our life of enclosure. Fencing was done with coconut leaves; in the choir and the parlour separations were made with lattice work, a window served for a turn and the halls divided with curtains and screens. The house was promised for five years and Mons. Bonaventura blessed it establishing the enclosure; meanwhile we were supposed to build our convent. Our first postulant was received on 16th May 1948 and two others were seeking admission. All of a sudden, Our Mother was shocked to receive a letter (dated 24th June) from Monsignor, stating that if within two months we could not give a guarantee of buying the plot and procuring a certain amount of fund to finish at least a part of the house, we would have to return to the convent of Kottayam and in the meanwhile, no aspirant was to be admitted. In fact, it was a grace in disguise, because from then onward no stone was left unturned, and thanks to God, many benefactors came to our succour. Our Mother was animating all of us to have unlimited confidence in God and if we happened to utter a word of distrust it sounded like a blasphemy to her ear.

Fr. Givargis, who was always on the lookout at last, found a plot, said to be possessed by the devils. Our Mother told him: "I would buy that one precisely, in order to drive the devils away from there." The plot was bought on 13th July, and the first stone was laid by His Ex. Mons. Bonaventura on 8th September 1948. The joy and solemnity of the day was redoubled by the reception of another postulant. The construction work was speeding fast and Our Mother took great care over the supervision because she was very particular that the house should

be poor but solid, well distributed so as to promote recollection, so very important for our life of prayer. Her experience in the other three former Carmels enabled her to make a suitable plan. Funds ran short at times, threatening the work to be suspended; but owing to Our Mother's unlimited confidence in St. Joseph, donations were flowing in, almost miraculously. Thanks, yes, infinite thanks to our benefactors of India, Spain and America; because, on 22nd December 1950, Our Mother could with much delight shift her small Community to the new dove-cot. The members who formed the little Community were 13 in all - Our Mother, Maria Rosario of Jesus, Sr. Elizabeth of Jesus Mary and Joseph, Sr. Maria Josefa of the Saviour, Sr. Serafina of the Infant Jesus, Sr. Teresa of Jesus, Sr. Carmen of the Holy Family, Sr. Maria Eugenia of the Cross, and Sr. Ana of the Incarnation (Solemn Professed), Sr. Maria Teresa of the Infant Jesus, Sr. Teresa Margaret of the Sacred Heart, and Sr. Martha of the Holy Ghost (Simple professed), Sr. Maria Manuela of St. Joseph (Novice) and Sr. Catalina of Christ (Postulant). H. E. Mons. Ambrose Abasolo O.C.D. accompanied by Rev. Fr. Felicísimo of the Holy Family, blessed the house and established the Papal enclosure. The Month of February of 1951 brought us immense joy when Our beloved Mother was elected Prioress.

While the masons and the other workers were hurrying on with the erection of our vaulted chapel, and other details of the convent, Our Mother with her daughters were busy working hard inside to furnish and give the final touches. How much correspondence, supervision of the work and continual consultations...in short, enormous work and time so scarce. Hence, often she had to remain late in the night to finish at least, what was most urgent. But every sacrifice was cheerfully accepted in order to establish one house for her good Father St. Joseph.

As in Kottayam, here too, she took upon herself the formation of the first novices appointing one of us to help her in this all-important task. She was very keen that this foundation should be well grounded in the spirit of prayer and mortification. At times she submitted their fidelity to severe and unforeseen tests especially in the virtues of humility, obedience and the recollection of the eyes, thus preparing to lead her daughters through the sure path of asceticism. To inculcate the true spirit of Carmel, she would encourage us to read the chronicles of our Order and the works of our Holy Mother St. Teresa and Our Holy Father St. John of the Cross. The weekly conference was dedicated to make commentaries on the Poems of Our Holy Father; and also, one letter of Our Holy Mother was read daily in the recreation.

Doubtlessly, her prayer might have been very sublime, yet her exterior comportment was so natural and simple, that one could easily approach her. She knew the weak points of each one of us and would admonish us very charitably. She knew to be lenient and strict when needed, as well as to wait for the working of grace, thus never being surprised by our failures. However, when grace had succeeded in conquering nature, then, like a real mother she would rejoice with us. Above all, she tried to infuse a great love for the regular observance, herself being first in all the Community acts emulating thus a holy competition among us. ^{always with a particular reward for the one who} Often she used to say: "Daughters, behold, Our Lord is first in all the Community acts."

How she found time to work so much is beyond comprehension!... Surely, she had well in mind what Lapuente says: "In a good distribution of time lies the secret of profiting well and multiplying it." So it was... By her fine taste and skill in needle-work, embroidery and painting she has left in the Sacristy very beautiful sacred vestments, tabernacle veils, ciborium covers etc. etc. And besides, wherever we turn, our eyes meet with her artistic paintings such as full-sized copies of Christ Crucified of Velazquez, Christ Expiring, Our Holy Fr. St. Joseph, the Samaritan woman, at Jacob's well, O. H. Father's death, O. H. Fr. St. Elias, O. H. Mother St. Teresa on the stairs with Inf. Jesus, Our Holy Mother writer and Maribobales peeping and various others. She used to say "it is not to display my talents that I paint, but rather, to help you to keep the presence of God and to make known O. H. Mother St. Teresa."

On 19th March 1953 the Church was inaugurated and by September of 1954 the erection of the tower was finished placing on the top a full sized statue of the sacred Heart blessing the whole of Tiruvalla; next, her thought was towards building the cemetery presided by a devout statue of our Lady of Sorrows. Our Mother spent the Lent of 1956 in painting the Statue and the hermitage in order to inaugurate it on the Friday of the Passion. No one noticed perhaps, how exhausted she was for she knew too well to make light of her pains and aches by putting on a cheerful and beaming countenance. On 26th March Palm Sunday, she had a sudden collapse. Doctor was called and he said it was a serious heart attack, urging her to take complete rest. She took a little more rest than usual, but during the Holy Week nothing would deter her from fulfilling with courage and heroic love all the offices which the Prioress had to do, including the washing of the feet and serving in the refectory on Holy Thursday — this until the end of her office as

Prioress. It was the year we began the new Liturgy of the Holy Week; so she was busy teaching us the new ceremonies and painting the new Paschal Candle etc. After Easter, she got another rather serious attack, and was given the last Sacraments at her request. Few days later, we got a surprising visit of Our V. Rev. Fr. General, Anastasio of the Holy Rosary, who visited her in the cell and was extremely paternal comforting and consoling the while.

Although she recovered somewhat from her illness, yet her legs were almost paralyzed, thus being impeded to walk about. So by means of a wheel chair, she was taken to various Community acts. Indeed, it did cost her very much to have to depend on others, she, who was so agile and active a person. But she was perfectly resigned to the Will of God.

In the Elections of 1957, Our Mother was unanimously voted and we were going to ask for the postulation, but she renounced it energetically alleging it to her lack of health. Hence, in the new election she had to be relieved of the office for a triennio, but was nominated Mistress of Novices. Thanks to God, in this interval she did recover considerably her impaired health, so that in 1960 she was again elected Our Mother Prioress to the great joy of all her daughters. In the beginning of the following year 3 more novices joined our convent; it was a great satisfaction for Our Mother, to see her Community complete the fixed number of twenty one.

In her great love for O. H. M. St. Teresa, in 1962 the 4th Centenary of the Reform, she wished, according to our poverty, to celebrate it so as to make her known and loved in this country. To this effect, with the co-operation of Rev. Fr. Angel Mary, a "triduum" was organized, inviting those of the Siro-Malankara Rite for the first day; Syrians for the second day; and the Latins for the third day; ending this triduum with a series of very interesting conferences, in which 4 Prelates, many Religious, Priests and laity from far and near took part, exalting the figure of Our Holy Mother St. Teresa and her great work in the Church.

In the same year she was celebrating the Golden Jubilee of her Profession, for which she prepared herself with a ten days' retreat; whilst her daughters were busy preparing some entertainments for this memorable day of 2nd July 1962. It appears, that O.H. Mother, then, obtained from Our Lord as a gift, still heavier crosses, more sufferings

which made her a real martyr until she died. How much we had to learn from her! Never a gesture of impatience! As years were passing by, her maternal love was ever more evident, so much so, that we can very well apply to her the words of Our Holy Mother St. Teresa to Mother Maria Baptista ".....Now I rule entirely by love....." Her maternal love and solicitude for the sick was remarkable.

Towards the end of 1963, she underwent an operation in her right eye for Glaucoma. Still, she could read, write and even paint; it was then, that she dedicated herself to type all the hymns and carols we are wont to sing throughout the year on various feast days, making small booklets to present to all the younger sisters. In spite of her advanced age and poor health, this year again she was unanimously re-elected Prioress, and in 1966 postulated. Her spirit was energetic as always, and her great zeal to extend Our order was urging her to found more Carmels. But realizing the weak condition of her body, she would ask Our Lord "Give me a little more strength to work for Thee", promptly adding, "however not my will but Thine be done." The other eye, too, was affected with Glaucoma having to undergo two painful operations which left her almost blind. God alone knows how ^{much} it cost her! so, from 1967 Our Mother was not able either to read or write; She who loved so much to pray the Divine Office had to give it up, too. "I never thought that our Lord would ask me the sacrifice of my sight." Little by little, she was reduced to impotence, having to depend on others for everything. And finally, her health reached to such a state that she had to desist from assisting the Choir, then the refectory where she hardly proved anything; in short, to have to abandon all the acts of the common life which she loved so much, really meant the greatest sacrifice for her. But her virile soul knew of no cowardice in giving herself fully, once the Holy Will of God was manifest. She had often expressed her desire to die as a subject which was granted to her; and she edified all of us by her perfect obedience, humility and docility to her superiors.

We have witnessed in her many and heroic virtues. One of the Prelates who had visited our convent when he was Papal Nuncio in India wrote to us after her death: "I have seen her only once, but I was so greatly impressed by her simplicity and resignation that I still remember her very clearly. I am confident that she will intercede for me also in heaven."

In truth how much she loved us. Every plank and panel of this house speaks to us of her at each moment. In spite of her infirmities

and occupations she was ever so attentive to us, that there was always an appropriate word of consolation for each one. She was always inclined to make others happy at any cost. How patient and forgiving *was she* with our faults. Withal, for her, there was none better than we, her daughters. In her illness, she who wished to be despised and forgotten, found herself surrounded by all care and attention that our poverty could afford; besides, her friends, outside were vying with each other to provide with whatever she needed more so, during her last illness. She would exclaim: "Enough daughters, you all love me too much." Understanding the appreciation in which she was held owing to her sanctity, she told us: "When I am dead don't begin to say 'Our Mother was a saint' but say the truth - that Mother Rosario was a hypocrite, she had deceived everybody."

Few hours before her death, when the doctor entered her room and all of us were awfully preoccupied about her gravity, the only one to whom it occurred to inquire about the sickness of one of our girls who attend at the turn, was Our Mother. All who came in contact with her for however short a time could never forget her goodness and sweetness of heart. The parents who come with deep sorrow for the entrance of their daughters, always, return home in great peace and joy after speaking with her. Her extraordinary meekness however never descended to the point of weakness, for she knew to be firm and energetic when it concerned perfection in Holy Observance; even in her last days, she corrected some faults which were not in accordance with our customs. Another aspect of her great heart, was her great interest for the poor and the needy. Her charity extended beyond the limits of the cloister, for many are the souls consoled by ^{her} prayers, alms and counsels—big or small, from every condition of life, for all found a place in her big heart—extensive as the sea-shore.

The sickness suffered in these last thirteen years were alone a mine of merits for so lively a temperament as hers. They only served as an incentive to give herself to God more and more with humility and confidence. Just think! Being Prioress burdened with labours and sufferings such as heart trouble, congestion of the lungs, high blood pressure, asthma, rheumatism, continuous headaches, earaches and stomach troubles which hardly admitted any solid food; so much so that the doctors wondered how she could live except by prayers. As an experienced soldier of Christ, she wanted us to be virile in our sufferings. "I do not like anyone walking about with an air of a victim. Those

who make crosses out of nothing, will always live crucified" she used to tell us. Her good humour was at its highest pitch in the recreation, at which, inspite of her ailments she always tried to be present, unless bed-ridden. Even then, she wanted us to have it near her cell. If the theme of recreation deviated into unsuitable subjects, then almost unperceptibly, she would change the topic by reciting some favourite poem of Our Holy Parents and asking us to repeat with her. At Christmastide, she would take the lead in singing the carols and dancing before the crib at the sound of musical instruments.

The CHURCH and Our Order were uppermost in her heart, and nothing seemed too much when it meant sacrificing herself for such a holy cause, especially, now-a-days, in the terrible crisis Our Holy Mother the Church is passing through. As a true daughter of O. H. St. Teresa, her purpose in coming to the missions was a concrete one: by unceasing prayer and sacrifice to co-operate with the missionary fathers in the conquest of God's Kingdom and its spread among the pagans; as the vanguard of the Church militant and to help a suffering world which is going to its ruin. With great joy she would tell us all the happy events in the Church especially concerning Our Holy Father, the Pope, for whom she professed a most filial love.

Our Lord in His infinite goodness, made Our Mother experience too, very intimate joys by snatching souls from the clutches of the wicked one. In the beginning when at Kottayam, a young Jacobite, no sooner had he come into contact with her than renouncing his heresy, joined the Catholic Church and later on became a priest and then a Bishop. This grace of re-union, he always ascribed to Our Mother's prayers and considered her always his spiritual mother. Majority of the workmen employed in the erection of her convents were either pagans or non-catholics; to think that their souls were groping in the shadow of death, grieved her very much. She was extremely charitable towards them and instructed them often of our religion and eternal happiness. On 21st November 1956, she had the happiness of seeing one of these men together with his wife and five children, re-united and received by the very Bishop who glories to call himself Our Mother's spiritual son. Again in 1966 she co-operated with our zealous chaplain Fr. Angel Mary O.C.D. by her prayers and alms, in the conversion of 23 families i. e. 110 souls. Though she was sickly she attended the long and solemn ceremony of ^{her} ~~his~~ baptism from the tribune, and afterwards a grand lunch prepared for

them. Surely, that day there was a great feast and rejoicing in heaven at the sight of so many souls won for Jesus.

Even though at present we have saintly Carmelite Prelate yet in view of a dubious future she subjected her convents to the jurisdiction of Our Order. Also, in her zeal to keep up the traditions, she introduced the holy customs of St. Joseph's Convent, Avila, the first convent of Our Reform.

The bitter chalice of tribulations, trials and misunderstandings with its consequences, which are so common in the lives of the saints were not wanting to her. It was then we saw her virtues more resplendent than ever—her charity and magnanimity—not only by doing all possible good in word and deed but also assuring us that in her heart there wasn't the least movement of resentment or hatred towards her neighbour, if not a real compassion for him, exhorting us to do the same.

Her way of prayer was usually and especially towards the end, by the obscure yet sure way of Faith, and Love. In her longing to be hidden, she destroyed all the spiritual notes and letters of her spiritual directors who were all very saintly. She did her utmost to promote recollection and solitude by every possible way; indeed, great was her joy when at last, we could purchase a piece of land thus enlarging our enclosure with the view of having some hermitages, where the sisters could retire some times, in accordance with Our Holy Mother's wishes to have prayer. Formerly, i. e. before getting sick, she would spend many hours of the night before the Bl. Sacrament kneeling. On the night of Holy Thursday she would not go to bed, but later on to obey the infirmarian she did go, then she would remain watching in bed.

Among the mysteries of the Most Sacred Humanity of Our Lord which gave her most devotion was the Bl. Sacrament, His Sacred Heart and the Sacred Passion. There was hardly any Friday in which Our Lord did not regale her with a share in His Passion in the form of some physical pains. She had besides very particular devotion to Our Lady of Dolours, Our Lady of Fatima, to Our Holy Parents, an unlimited confidence in St. Joseph and Holy Souls in Purgatory.

Even when she was bed-ridden, her cell was the centre from whence all the activity of the convent radiated; for she was giving all the directions to the Community and nothing was done without consulting her. All her daughters had full confidence in their incomparable Mother,

that, to the very end, all their troubles and worries to her would they confide, receiving in turn a word of encouragement and comfort

Among her gifts of nature Our Lord had endowed her with a wonderful disposition for governing with extraordinary tact, facility to write and a brilliant intelligence that her writings revealed at once her great common sense and genius and had been admired by eminent persons. She had much ability in the management of kitchen where she used to intervene animating the sisters with the words of Our Holy Mother, "Our Lord walks among pots and pans."

In the beginning of this year, 1970, although she appeared very exhausted, still we hoped she would recover as on many other previous occasions. The whole Community had influenza, not very strong; at last, she, too, caught it very strongly complicating into Pneumonia. Hardly had she recovered from it, but the doctor on noticing some alarming symptoms wished to take an XRay, and found that she had cancer in the stomach (already advanced) together with jaundice due to secondary causes. With this diagnosis of the doctor and his opinion that she would not live more than a month, we prepared her for the Last Sacraments. Our Mother, as she was always so spirited and accustomed to continual sufferings, could hardly believe in her gravity; but, however, from the beginning of this year she had some presentiment that Our Holy Fr. St. Joseph would take her to heaven before his feast.

On 15th January, her 77th Birthday, she received a statue of St. Joseph, the Worker, carrying in one hand a pitcher of water, in the other a loaf, and at the feet an axe. On seeing it she at once, in her usual funny manner said: "Look! Our Holy Father St. Joseph is already coming to take me home, with bread and water for the journey and the axe means ...that..... is to be cut."

On 9th February when returning from the hospital after the XRay, the doctor told us her case was very serious and would not even live a month. Naturally, with such bad news we were extremely sad. She, on perceiving this unusual sadness in our countenances, said to me "Our Mother, is my condition very serious? What did the doctor say?" I had to tell her the truth, how serious her case was; and to animate me she said, "Our Mother don't be sad: you will see how well Our Lord arranges everything. We have begun the 7 Sundays in honour of St. Joseph, and I have always obtained some favour before the fifth

Sunday. This time too, it will be so. Besides, I can hardly do anything for you here on earth. I will be able to help you all, more from heaven."

Our Lord gave her a great consolation to treat of her soul very often with Rev. Fr. Felicísimo O. C. D., missionary Father, who was Our Vicar Provincial many times, confessor of the Community now for many years since and still is at present; and with whom her soul found rest and peace. So, on 12th February at three o'clock in the evening the said Father entered to administer her solemnly the extreme Unction and Holy Viaticum. It was most impressing to see her follow everything with such edifying fervour, without showing the least sign of weariness during that long ceremony. To comply with her desire, at the end of the Viaticum we sang "I am Thine and for Thee was I born," an offering of Our Holy Mother St. Teresa to Our Lord. From then onwards, she wished to be left alone with her Beloved, although, she was always very attentive to those who visited her. For each and everyone she had her last loving maternal advice to whisper. The doctors and the Regular Superiors who visited her, admired the serene peace and tranquillity of her countenance. Often, on being asked if she had any trouble or wanted to see any father, her invariable answer was "I have no worry, I am in peace; my only desire is to go to heaven." The sisters were keeping watch day and night by her bedside. What sleepless nights she passed! She spent them repeating many ejaculations, some of which were "My Jesus, bid me to go to Thee!", "My Mother, my Hope", "All for God, for the Church, for Priests, for Our Order especially for Our Holy Father the Pope." There was a special memento made for the dying. At times, she would divert herself by composing verses, among which were the Stations of the Cross, the last 7 words of Our Lord, etc. and jotted down by the infirmarian as she recited them. I had informed Our Very Rev Father General of Our Mother's illness, who had the kindness of writing her a most touching letter expressing much gratitude for all the services Our Mother had rendered to Our entire Order specially in Spain and in India. We too, are extremely grateful to his Reverence for procuring the Apostolic Blessing for Our beloved Mother from His Holiness the Pope. Can imagine with what joy and emotion this true daughter of the Church received this telegram!

The ensuing days her condition seemed to be improving somewhat, and we hoped she would recover again. On 23rd February Our Father Delegate General visited her in her cell and prayed "Preces pro infirmis" On 24th she noticed from her cell that our recreation was not

as lively as usual, and guessed it was on account of her sickness. What was not our surprise and how joyful the acclamations on seeing Our Mother enter the hall accompanied by her two infirmarians, greeting us with her wonted humour "Pax Vobis." Though she tried to put on a beaming face, now it was not possible. We were all alarmed to behold her face so yellow, her vague look—hardly able to open the eyes. At once she was taken back to her cell, which is always kept dark to prevent the light from hurting her eyes. Her state of health was going from bad to worse as the days were passing by; and we could realise more clearly than ever that Our Lord was asking us the greatest of sacrifices—the inevitable separation. There was no other way about but to humbly adore God's designs over us and say "Fiat." The doctors who were visiting her daily said that the jaundice was affecting her head, and that was the reason why sometimes she was delirious.

On 27th she called us all to her cell during the noon recreation, and made us sing some of the hymns which she liked most, such as "Let mine eyes see Thee", "I am already given" of our Holy Mother, "Hail Mother", "Hail Joseph", "To the Virgin of Carmel" etc. This last hymn she liked very much, because its last stanza treats of the departure to heaven. It goes thus: "Little bell, little bell when will you ring a peal of bells, announcing with your sound then, my flight to Heaven?"—on reaching these lines she was making gestures of ringing the bell, in a very gracious manner.

Many times she asked us to read the recommendation of soul in Spanish; on 28th morning the Holy Communion was given earlier than usual because Our Mother felt it was like agony what she was going through. Though she had full consciousness till the end, yet now she would utter only some disconnected sentences with an expression very celestial: "Superexcellent!", "How beautiful!", "St. Joseph how much he delays!" At 3 P. M. Our Father Chaplain Fr. Ambrose O. C. D. was called to say the prayers for the sick. When he asked Our Mother whether he should make the recommendation of the soul, she in a clear voice replied "Not yet, Father."

At 7.30 P. M. we assembled for recreation; I had just left Our Mother's cell leaving Mother Sub-prioress with her, when she came to tell us that Our Mother wants to say something. We all hurried to her cell and then without opening her eyes she said three times "Adios hijas" i. e. "Good-bye daughters." Our Father chaplain was immediately

summoned to recite the prayers of the "recommendation of the soul." We sang the Credo and when the Father finished the last prayer, Our Mother gave up her precious soul to God like a child, it was about 9 P. M. Her mission on earth was accomplished. We stood there as if dazed and could hardly believe our eyes, for no one thought it would be so soon; for her death was accelerated by love rather than by sickness. To put it in Our Holy Father's words "When the soul is perfected here below it may not stay long either in this world or in the next before seeing God face to face." All around, there was an imposing stillness, no sob nor a sigh was heard. Such a serenity and peace reigned in everybody's heart that the profound silence was interrupted only by the singing of "Libera me" and the death knell. We firmly believe, that this special strength felt by all in the midst of such intense sorrow, was a grace she obtained for us from Our Lord, for she used to say "when I die, be valient and don't begin to cry." She had also given us all the instructions as to how to shroud a corpse, seeing we had no experience of such things and she being the first to take the lead. Four of us remained to arrange our beloved Mother's corpse, whilst the rest of the Community went down to recite the office of the day and then to prepare the choir. We took her to the Choir in procession singing "Libera me;" then we sang the Office of the Dead and kept watch all through the night. The heavenly beauty and peace which enveloped our departed Mother infused into our hearts a profound veneration.

The following morning, 1st March Sunday, a great concourse of people of all Creed and state bringing wreaths and bouquets of flowers with which she was covered filled our chapel; thus showing their veneration for the hidden missionary who sacrificed herself for all. The sister portress was kept continuously occupied by the people who brought rosaries, medals, pictures etc, to be touched on her smiling mortal remains and from which emanated a gentle majesty of holiness as it laid there in the choir. A great number of priests, religious, seminarists and lay people were praying continuously for the eternal repose of Our Mother's soul. At 4 P. M. 12 fathers entered the enclosure to sing the Vigil and the burial service, in which our Fr. Felicisimo O. C. D. officiated. To all, our most sincere thanks for participating in our grief and the great comfort which they gave us by their presence. Now Our beloved Mother rests in our little Cemetery, presided by the devout Statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, where we have the consolation to visit her frequently, begging her continual protection "Respice de caeloet vide.....et visita vineam istam"... We have the certainty, even

proofs that she will watch over her Carmel of predilection and surround it with her maternal solicitude. When the burial service was over it was the usual time of praying the 7 'Sundays' devotion to St. Joseph; and precisely as was predicted by Our mother, by the 5th Sunday her good Father had granted her what she most desired — to go to heaven.

We shall never be able sufficiently to repay the debt of gratitude we owe to our confessor, Rev. Fr. Felicísimo of the Holy Family O. C. D. and our chaplain Rev. Fr. Ambrose O. C. D. who made our task light by being occupied at the Telephone and Telegraph informing our Fathers, acquaintances and arranging for the burial, till 2. 30 A.M. Thanks are due also to our doctors for the kind attention with which they treated Our Mother throughout her prolonged illness. May God reward them and all those benefactors and friends who prayed and offered Masses for the repose of her soul.

Our Mother is dead; but her spirit still lives and dies not. So we may apply the words of Sr. Theresa Benedicta (Edith Stein.) "When His activity is actually manifest in shaping this or that life, He leaves more behind than a remembrance or picture of the past. He remains as a secret presence, hidden like a carefully guarded spark, that by the least living breath is fanned into flame. When we approach with a longing soul these greatest figures of the past, soon will a little of that fire which consumed their souls pass over into our souls." May the fire of the Holy Spirit which consumed her ^{soul} ~~sole~~, inflame ours, too.

Though we believe that Our Mother's soul is received by the Merciful God into His eternal mansions, on leaving its terrestrial abode; nevertheless, we humbly beg Y. R. and the Community to apply the suffrages according to our Constitutions and whatever your generosity will inspire—if anything remains yet to be purged. For Our Mother, who was always very grateful, and could never be outdone in generosity, will most certainly repay you from heaven. Begging your prayers for this Community and especially for me, that we may live and die following the example which Our Lord set before us in our beloved Mother Foundress,

Your humble sister and servant in O. L.

Teresa of Jesus.

Prioress.