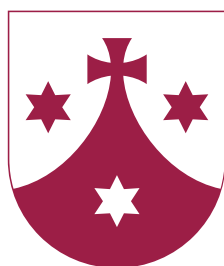


In Loving Memory of



Mother Theresa of Jesus OCD



Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Thiruvalla

St. Joseph's Monastery

JM + JT

Dear Rev. Mother and sisters,

With deep sorrow I have to conform you that mother Theresa of Jesus, one of the co fundresses of our community, passed away on 31 December 2007 at the age of 97 years were spent in Carmel. She lived a very exemplary and inspiring life and was a chosen instrument of God in imparting the spirit of Carmel to all of us. Our hearts are filled with gratitude of God for inspiring and guiding for the past 59 years, this community of St. Josephs Tiruvalla, by her gracious presence.

Sr. Theresa of Jesus was born on 1st November 1910 in a very traditional Syrian Catholic of Vilakkumadom in the diocese of Pala. Her parents, Joseph and Anna Kallivayalil, brought up their eleven children in deep Catholic faith and piety. She was the fourth child of her parents. Theresa had always been a very vibrant and fearless child. From her high school days she had the desire to be a religious. Probably reading the life of St. Therese of Lisieux, she was very clear that she wanted to be a Cloistered Carmelite. That time there was no Cloister Carmel in Kerala and there was only two in India, those at Mangalore and Bangalore. She wrote to both these Carmel through the help of her spiritual director and was refused admission on grounds of both the houses being full and few in the waiting.

Something within urged Theresa to wait on. She gave her consent for her younger sisters to get married. When she used to go to Church ladies used to pass comments as to why a girl from such wealthy family remains unmarried. In order to avoid hear people's gossip and to pass time fruitfully, she decided to continue her studies. She joined St. Theresa's College Ernakulam and completed her matriculation and graduation with flying colours.

In the meantime the Spanish Carmel opened a house at Kottayam and it became the talk of the town. Her father, unaware of her daughter's plans, commented "I have no daughters to be shut up in this cage" but later watched and fully accepted two of his daughters and two grand daughters entering Carmel. Initially her family had a lot of apprehensions about their daughter joining a group of foreign sisters. They concluded that either she will starve to death or soon return. In the end respecting her decision they consented.

Theresa joined the Carmel at Kottayam on 8 September 1935 and was vested on 19 March 1936. She was the second native to join the Spanish sisters. They had to face a lot of difficulties. They shared the anxieties of a new foundation getting established in a foreign land. Sr. Theresa who was professed on 10 April 1937 evolved as a mediator and silent leading force in getting the foreign mission getting established in the native land. She picked up Spanish and had excellent command over English and Malayalam and reduced the problem of communication. She was the right hand of the Mother prioress in matters of administration and formation. She picked up the spirit of Carmel with utmost sincerity and what she picked up was passed on to her companions and to each of us to her going home day.

Sr. Theresa was one of the eight selected for the unsuccessful attempt of a foundation in Goa and later in karwar. After a year of struggle they were invited back to Kerala for a foundation in Tiruvalla. This foundation has a very unique history of providence. The newly reunited Siro Malankara Catholics here were fervently praying for more than ten years of St. Theresa of Lissuex to have a cloister Carmel for the diocese of Tiruvalla. Our coming was for them a prayer answered and a dream fulfilled. Sr. Theresa was the moving force behind in getting the cloister ready. She found time for everything and the word impossible was not in her dictionary. She was a good administrator and an able communicator. She picked up from the Spanish mothers needle work, wood carving and many other hand works. The works of her hand is everywhere around the cloister as a mute testimony to her enthusiastic spirit. She was also a good cook. On Sundays and whenever possible, she availed herself to be in the kitchen to relieve the sisters. There was nothing that did not interest her.

Mother Theresa was first elected the prioress in 1957 and after that five more times she was elected prioress and had been several times the mistress of the novices. She was iron resolved when it came to the observance of the Rule and at the same times most willing to be guided by love. She practiced what she demanded from others. She had a good listening heart and when ever we approached her with our difficulties we found comfort and understanding. Once out of responsibilities, she evolved as a most comfortable person and a perfect example of growing old gracefully. Mother was completely docile to the superiors and infirmarians, always doing even the least thing with their consent. Although during the last three years her move was on the wheel chair, she did almost all her personal work herself and participated in the recreation and the other entire community act. She stitched the scapular till the end.

Mother participated in the Devine office fervently. Her loud and distinct voice made our choir sound solemn. Even when she could not attend the Devine office in the choir, mother was very faithful and recited all the hours with help of us in turns. 'I am surrounded with too much love' she often used to say with tears of gratitude welling up. Even the least act of kindness from any of us overwhelmed her with gratitude and we competed with each other to offer her help.

In 2007 March mother was admitted in the hospital with intestinal hemorrhage. After a few days she was with that same naughty smile as if to say that she is all set to score a century. After that however mother was growing weaker day by day. Often she suffered from chest congestion and sometimes struggled for breath. The doctor came home and had regular check up. In the night we used to take turn to sleep in her sell. In October, while fully conscious, mother received the anointing of the sick from Fr. Urban OCD, our chaplain.

On the eve of Christmas she took part in the procession as usual and was extremely joyful. The musical instrument in her hand made the maximum noise. On innocent day though she went to bed as usual when the youngsters of the community went around at 12 am singing the night sentence mother was fully awake. They made some noise in her room and she joined them with some joyful movements and sang alleluia. The following night she was very uncomfortable and was struggling for breath and asked for me and told me that she was going to die. She asked pardon from me for any lapses on her part.

on 30th morning mother was taken to Pushpagiri hospital and the doctors that she had a silent heart attack around ten days previously and had a block. They told that nothing could be done as she is too old. It had always been her desire to die in the convent surrounded by her sisters. And there she was slowly dying alone in the CCU, while I was waiting outside with another sister. Plucking up all courage, with help of our family doctor Dr. Dominic, Srs. Lissuex and Theresita, on 31st evening at 7.30 pm, we brought the drooping body of mother to the cloister. We hoped against hope that she may not die on the way. When mother was brought home she was fully conscious and participated in the prayers of the recommendation of the soul prayed by our Chaplain Fr. Urban OCD and Fr. Judson OCD. At 10.25 pm mother commended her spirit to God calmly and cheerfully surrounded by all of us as she always desired. We stood there dazed for we could hardly believe that our dear mother is no more for the end came too quick like a thief. We kept watch her in the night prayed the office for the dead.

The first requiem mass was said by our Chaplain. His Grace Thomas Mar Kuriakose, the arch bishop of Tiruvalla, His Excellency Mar Themothiose, bishop emeritus and several priests and religious belonging to all three rites came and offered prayers and condolences. His eminence Cardinal Varkey Vithyathil and our Bishop Rev. Sebastian Thekkethecherril gave their condolence as they both had ordinations and could not be present for the funeral. A large crowd of relatives and family members also poured in offering their prayers. The funeral mass was officiated by Rt. Rev. Dr. Peter Thuruthiconam the bishop emeritus of Vijayapuram and concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Jacob Palliparambil OCD, the provincial of Manjummel provinces and our General delegate, our Chaplains Fr. Urban Vallavanatt OCD, Cor Episcopa Cherian Ramanalil and several other priests. Fr. Urban gave a touching tribute to mother. After the mass the enclosure was opened and the bishop, priests and family members moved to cemetery and the mortal body was consigned to the grave.

Our special thanks to our chaplain and confessor Fr. Urban OCD who was always ready to assist mother in all her spiritual needs. We are grateful also to our provincial, Jacob Palliparambil OCD and all the fathers of the province who cherished her as a mother. We owe a lot to the Priests, sisters, doctors and staff of Pushpagiri Medical College who took her there especially during her last days. Thanks to Dr. Thomas Kalekkattil who was ready to help us at our beck and call. One couple whom we owe the most for the well being of mother is Dr. Dominic and Dr. Lissamma Dominic. All that we say is that they would not have looked after their mother better. May God reward their generosity.

Through we are confident that mother Theresa is enjoying the beatific vision we humbly beg you to add at your earliest convenience the suffrages according to our constitutions and whatever your generosity will inspire. Mother Theresa who was grateful for the least fervor done to her will surely repay you.

Humbly yours in Jesus and Mary

Sr. Mary of the infant Jesus

Prioress