



Dear Sisters,

In the light of the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven, today, May 9, 2016, at 8:40 PM (local time) in Bangalore (India), at St. John's Medical College Hospital, the Lord called to contemplate his face forever, our sister

**SR. M. JOAN DHARMAI,
born in Bandra (Mumbai) on August 21, 1952.**

Her entrance into the Congregation at Mumbai on July 15, 1972, was cause for special joy for the community in Bandra because Joan was the first young woman coming from our parish.

Following the novitiate in Bangalore she made her first profession on May 31, 1975, and her perpetual profession on September 6, 1981. In her request for admission to the various stages of formation, and especially in her request for the perpetual profession, she manifested her joy for the beauty of consecrated life. She was happy to be able to dedicate her life to Jesus Master through the apostolate of the Sister Disciples. This conviction and joy in her vocation made her generous in every apostolate, capable of offering herself completely without measuring the sacrifice.

After the profession, she was at the Society of St. Paul in Mumbai, then in Allahabad and, once again, in Mumbai as cook. In a letter to Mother M. Lucia Ricci, the Superior General at that time, she wrote: *"I am happy to spend these first years of my life as a Sister Disciple at the Society of St. Paul in Bandra. I love this apostolate and I am happy to serve the brothers in the spirit of Mary Most Holy. I am well, even if there is a great deal of work"* (Mumbai, July 11, 1976).

In 1981 she was in Nellore, a community offering various services in collaboration with the seminary and with the Bishop. In 1983 she returned to Mumbai at the Society of St. Paul, and in 1989 was local superior in Nellore. Then in 1992, she was local superior for two terms in the house of prayer and the pastoral center of Kohima, in northeastern India, a land which may be considered mission territory for many of the Indian sisters, given the distance from the provincial house and the cultural differences. Here she manifested her great capacity for hospitality, cordiality, openness, attention to the persons and fostering vocations. In 1998 she was at the Apostolic Nunziature in Delhi, in 1999 in the embroidery workroom in Bangalore, and then at Mumbai. In 2006 she was local superior at Nellore once again.

In a recent letter, following her recovery from a major heart attack, she wrote to Sr. M. Regina Cesarato, the Superior General: *"The image you sent me is filled with meaning. The grain symbolizes the Eucharist, and Mother M. Scholastica is an example of one who lived like the grain of wheat until the end of her earthly existence and offered her life for us, for the Congregation (...) I, too, am called to be a grain of wheat and to die to myself each day so that Jesus Master may increase in me. During my illness the Congregation and the Province have done a great deal for me... I was not ready and the Lord gave me another opportunity to prepare myself for his coming"* (August 23, 2013).

For 17 years, in fact, she suffered from heart problems and was under treatment. Especially in the last two years, her health situation became more complex with diabetic, renal and cardiac problems. A recent worsening of the situation led to spending her last days in intensive therapy until the end.

The sisters of the community of Bangalore and her family accompanied her lovingly and prayerfully until her passage into eternal life. Now from heaven she continues to present to Jesus Master the intentions she already had in her heart: the Pope, the Pauline Family, the Congregation. She will certainly invoke the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the 9th General Chapter!

S. H. Paola Mancini