



Dear Sisters,

Today, July 24, 2019, at 3:00 PM local time, in the community of Mumbai (India), our sister passed to eternal life

SR. M. ROSA SEVERINE SALDANHA
born on April 7, 1938, in Bondel - Mangalore (India).

Severine entered the Congregation in Allahabad (India) on July 19, 1957, only a few years after the foundation of the Sister Disciples in that nation (1954). Thus, she may be considered among the pioneers. In some notes regarding her vocation she wrote: «Already at 10-12 years of age, I went to the parish church to pray to the Sacred Heart and said: *Jesus, call me to be near you.* It was my only prayer for many years. I always felt a lively desire to serve Jesus. I came to know the Sister Disciples through a flyer, without having any contact with the sisters. Truly the Lord enlightened and guided me. My father was against it, but after he saw Sr. M. Dorotea he changed his mind and said: *I saw the Madonna, go ahead!* I have always been content to be a Sister Disciple, despite many difficulties, always thinking: It is the Lord». In 1960 Severine was sent to Rome for her novitiate. She made her religious profession on May 7, 1961. In the reports for admission to the various stages of the consecrated life we read: of *good character*; regarding poverty: *for her it is always too much*; in obedience: *she is always available*; regarding the spirit of sacrifice: *it is noteworthy that she never complains*; and finally, regarding the apostolate: *she is generous and quick*. These traits characterized her entire life.

During her first years of consecrated life, she attended the triennial course of Religious Sciences at the Pontifical Institute *Regina Mundi* in Rome. After her return to India in 1965, she made her perpetual profession in Mumbai on May 7, 1966, and dedicated herself to various activities. In 1970, when the ministry at the Vatican telephone switchboard began, she was called to offer her collaboration, a service she would continue with great dedication for many years (1970-1987) and which she would frequently recall. From Mumbai she would write to Mother M. Lucia Ricci: «As I send my greetings to the sisters at the telephones in the Vatican for their 25th anniversary: February 1970 – 1995, I also express my thanks to you for having accepted this service to the Church. May the Lord bless these 25 years of service to the Church, to the Pope». After returning to India, she offered her collaboration in various areas; she was then invited to return to the Vatican, at the telephone switchboard, where she would remain from 2000 until 2013. In 2010 she sent her greetings to the Mother General: «40 years of service of our Congregation to the Church, to those who desire to listen to the voice of the Church, of the Pope! 40 years that make us express our gratitude to the Lord and that oblige us to improve our service, that it might be characterized by the goodness and patience of Christ the Lord. Our thanks to the Lord and to the Congregation, which sustains this service to the Church, to the Pope in Christ the Lord». She was known for her tact and gentleness in the fulfillment of this apostolate. From her transpired an obvious love for the Church, and she affirmed that she served under six Popes!

In the celebration of her 50th anniversary of religious profession (2011), she manifested her gratitude and joy: «I give thanks to the Lord for having guided me during this time with love and mercy. I thank you and the Congregation for the mutual love, the spiritual and material help in everything. Thank you for the prayer of all and for the gift of the 50th. May the Lord reward you with graces and vocations». This attention to vocations was a recurrent theme in her correspondence: she enthusiastically informed the Superiors, the recipients of her letters, of the number of new candidates.

Upon her return to India in 2013, she lived in Mumbai. The sisters bear witness to the fact that, in the community, she was a presence of peace, of serenity, and that she was always available. She gave clear witness of her love for prayer. In the morning she was the first of the Sisters to reach the chapel to greet her Master and Lord. The priority given to the adoration was also reflected in her daily life, in the various ministries that she fulfilled with fervor and responsibility.

Sr. M. Rosa left the sisters the witness of a person who was simple, austere, enthusiastic, welcoming and filled with love, "making herself all things to all people". Her life as a Sister Disciple reflected the love of God that animated her.

Regarding her health: she suffered from tuberculosis (2018) followed by a stroke; on April 4 of this year she completely lost the ability to speak. Her condition gradually worsened and thus she was gradually consumed like a candle, as affirmed by the sisters of India who lovingly accompanied her. «The simple and radiant light of this sister continues to shine for us in the presence of God in eternity».

Sr. H. Paolo Hancock