



*Dear Sisters,*

On Friday, May 7, 2021, while at the request of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), the Indian people spent a day of prayer and fasting to obtain liberation from the Covid-19 pandemic, at 8:30 AM at *Mercy Hospital* of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary in Jamshedpur (India), Jesus Master went to meet our sister

**SR. MARIAM – FLORENCIA MARIAM XAXA**  
**born on December 22, 1962 in Rengarbaher, Odisha (India).**

She was born on Saturday, during the Christmas novena, and entrusted from the first moments of her life to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. She was brought to the baptismal font on January 6, 1963, as the Christian community celebrated the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, and received the name Florencia Mariam. She is the second of six children. She grew up in the village of Rengarbaher, belonging to the parish of Kesramal, in a family educated in the human and Christian values under the care of her mother Anjela and father Anthony. After having completed a *Bachelor of Arts*, she met the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master and, at just over twenty years of age, she left everything to follow Jesus who called her to a life of religious consecration.

She entered the Congregation on June 13, 1985 in the Divine Master Community in Mumbai. Upon completing the novitiate in Bangalore, on December 8, 1989, on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, she made her religious profession. Later, on December 8, 1995, she made her perpetual profession in Bangalore.

She received the opportunity to prepare herself with various studies. She received her baccalaureate in Religious Sciences. She participated in the Course for Formators and the Formation Course on the Charism of the Pauline Family, held in Rome in 1998-99.

She offered her services in the Province as Provincial Secretary, Provincial Councilor, Novice Mistress, Local Superior, and currently taught the students at the hostel, offering them courses in English and education for life.

She was a vocational promoter in Odisha and encouraged many young women to undertake the formative journey to religious life: many of them became Sister Disciples of the Divine Master.

Sr. Mariam spent her apostolic life in numerous communities of the Province: during the Juniorate in Nellore DM and, for a brief period, at the Society of St. Paul in Bangalore; in Guwahati DM and in Tura DM, at the Provincial Community in Bangalore and finally in Jamshedpur.

She is remembered as a sister who was good and joyful, friendly and laborious. Through her presence of prayer and apostolate, she was able to live the essential aspects of our charism, which was also assimilated and transmitted to the new generations in the various cultures, of which the Indian nation is rich. One of her desires was to learn continually. She wrote in her autobiography at the end of the Juniorate: *«I have the desire to learn, to understand the Sacred Scripture and to live according to the Gospel values. I want to grow in my vocation and to serve the Lord and his people in the days to come; I want to give glory to his name and proclaim his message to others»*.

Unfortunately, she suffered from an acute form of diabetes: although she was aware that her health was seriously compromised, she did not take much care of herself, giving precedence to the apostolic commitments.

She went to be with her family a short time before for vacation, and had the joy of participating in the wedding of a relative. Last April 22 she returned to her community. Immediately she began to complain about pain in the legs and other symptoms: difficulty breathing, chills and fever. The result of a Covid test was positive.

On May 3 she was admitted to the hospital of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary where, with great difficulty, they were able to assure her that there was an available bed. Each day Sr. M. Celine Cunha, Provincial Superior, called her and received her reassuring confirmation that she was doing well. Despite her will to fight the virus and face the course of the disease with a positive attitude, the compromised state of her general health gave the advantage to the virus, leading to her death.

The small DM community of Jamshedpur, in this sorrowful moment, also received the support and fraternal solidarity of the Jesuit Fathers for the final farewell to this sister in the burial and prayers of suffrage.

Grateful for the strength of fraternal communion in the Church and in the religious life in India and in the world, we live in solidarity with all of humanity which cries out and moans, invoking liberation from this terrible pandemic.

May Sr. Mariam Xaxa, who has preceded us with the same sickness, in the faith of the Risen Lord, intercede for all of suffering humanity, and especially for the Province of India.

*Sr. H. Michaela Honeth*