



Dear Sisters,

Today, February 5, 2024, in our Guru Yesu Bhavan Community, Bangalore (India), at 5:20 PM, the Divine Master called to eternity our sister,

SR. M. NIRMALA – TERESA CHOWATTUKUNNEL

born on June 1, 1948, in Thiruvambady, Kerala (India).

The penultimate of seven children, Teresa met the Sister Disciples and entered the Congregation at Mumbai on September 5, 1965. At the conclusion of the novitiate she made her religious profession in Mumbai on July 16, 1969, and received a new name: Sr. M. Nirmala, which in Hindi means “pure”. On April 18, 1976, always in Mumbai, she made her perpetual profession.

After completing her studies and providing various services in the communities in India – Allahabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Nellore – she was sent to Rome. From 1981 to 1986, she offered her apostolic contribution in some Italian cities: Camaldoli, Centrale di Zugliano, Ariccia, Altavilla. She then undertook a long period of academic studies that concluded with the Licentiate in Liturgy at the Pontifical Institute of Sant’Anselmo in 1992. The title of the dissertation for the Licentiate, prepared with Fr. Ildebrando Scicolone osb, as the Moderator, presents the reason for our specific vocation in the Church: *«Eucharist: “Culmen et Fons”, of the life and mission of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master according to the teaching of Fr. James Alberione»*.

Upon her return to her homeland in 1995, she fulfilled various roles and responsibilities in governance: Local Superior in Mumbai (1995-1998), Regional Councilor and Secretary (1997-2000), and again Regional Councilor until 2004 when, following the constitution of the Region into a Province, she was appointed Provincial Superior (2004 – 2008).

In 2009 she was sent to the Gesù Maestro Community in Jerusalem, to support the mission of prayer of intercession in the Holy City. She remained there for one year, making use of this time also for her spiritual and biblical formation. Upon her return to India, she continued to fulfill her apostolate in the Pauline spiritual animation, and especially as superior of the communities of New Delhi and of Calicut. Due to health reasons, in

these last years she asked to be relieved of the responsibility as superior: she experienced increasing tiredness and fatigue that did not permit her to carry out the duties she had undertaken.

Sr. M. Nirmala Chovvattukunnel is characterized as a woman of silence, to the point at times of appearing introverted and taciturn. A lover of the prayer of adoration, she believed in the power of the prayer of intercession for all of humanity. She was reserved, a sister of few words, quiet and meek. At times she seemed serious, almost rigid, but she had a great heart, a gentle smile, a brilliant mind and she was always ready to help anyone who asked her. Sensitive and humane: she loved the poor and cared for the sisters entrusted to her responsibility, whether as local superior or as provincial superior. She was direct and courageous in supporting apostolic initiatives for the Province. Her witness of religious life as a Sister Disciple was contagious, in her family, for Sr. M. Cicily Vadakkedath, the daughter of her sister.

On October 26, 2023, she was admitted to the Nirmala Hospital in Calicut for 15 days, at the end of which she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, that had already metastasized. Therefore, she was quickly transferred to Bangalore and admitted to St. John Hospital, where she received all the necessary treatments. Watched over day and night by the nurses, her condition progressively worsened. Surrounded by the Provincial Superior, her family members, and the sisters, she took her last breath, in peace.

At the conclusion of the Centennial of Foundation of the Institute, we think of you, Sr. M. Nirmala, as united with the large crowd of Sister Disciples of the Divine Master who are part of the Pauline Family of Heaven: intercede for us, for the novices and juniors who are at the vigil of their consecration to God that they may be faithful and generous, like Mother Scholastica Rivata, to the praise and glory of the Most Holy Trinity.

Sr. M. Michaela Honeth