



OBITUARY TO SR. LEELA MATTAM

25th February 2023

*“Carve your name on hearts, not on tombstones.
A legacy is etched into the minds of others and the stories they share about
you.”*
— Shannon Alder

Dear Fr. Herald Pinto, and all the concelebrants, Sr. Leela’s Sisters Mary, Sr. Elsy, Lovely, Lilly, Rixy, onlyher only brother Roy and sister-in-law Sophie,her nieces and nephews, relatives, friends known to Sr. Leela, the many girls and women whom she cared for, Fathers, Sisters from different Congregations and our Good Shepherd Sisters from Various communities far and wide, doctors and nursesof our hospital,

We the bigger family of Sr. Leela have come together to thank God for the lovingand the very human person in Sr. Leela and the goodness and mercy she spread all around where ever she moved and whomever she came in contact. At an unexpected hour she gently accepted the invitation of her Lord and Master to be united with Him more closely in the rest of her life. Sr. Leela with a cheerful face and a smile on her lips touched many lives, brought life and hopeto thousands of people during the last 51 years of her service in the vineyard of the Good Shepherd.

I would like to convey to the sisters and brother and other family members of Sr. Leela, heartfelt condolences and prayers from Sr. Lissy Chacko our Province Leader and her team who are unable to be present here now. Kindly accept their prayers and condolences.

Sr. Leela Mattam was born on 7th June 1947 in Palai, Kerala to a devout catholic parents - Late Mr. Abraham and Mrs. Anna of Mattam family. They had six girls and one boy as their children. Sr. Leela being the eldest daughter to her loving parents was brought up with tender loving care by her parents and grandparents. They willingly offered two of their daughters to follow religious life –one being Sr. Leela to our Congregation and the other Sr. Elsie to Augustinian Congregation. After her schooling Sr. Leela decided to follow Jesus the Good Shepherd and made her first commitment on May 30th 1972 and her perpetual commitment on 31st October 1979 at Good Shepherd Convent, Bangalore. She celebrated the golden jubilee of her consecrated life just last year.

As a young sister she was sent to do Diploma in Theology at Sudeep institute Bangalore. Later she did her bachelor's degree in social science from Bhopal University and Master's degree in Sociology from Animalia University. Jesus the Good Shepherd is the true model whom we must endeavor to imitate, in order to acquire the perfection of our holy state. He is the divine original that we must strive to reproduce in our whole conduct Says our Foundress St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier.

Inspired by the life of our Foundress, Sr Leela had the attraction and commitment deeply rooted in the Charism of our Congregation in reaching out with compassion and mercy to girls and women in distress. Her 51 years of selfless service wide across our country is well known and acknowledged by all whose lives she has touched. Whether it is to the children and women in rural areas or in the structured set up of the urban life, she displayed the qualities of the Shepherdess by seeking the lost and the least and caring them so lovingly and tenderly. That is the hall mark of Sr. Leela.

Sr. Leela, affectionately called as Leelaji, was a person who really lived the Charism of our Congregation. People who interacted with her have known her always as a compassionate and merciful sister. Her ability to get connected with people and keeping up the constant contact with them is remarkable.

Any Rural mission entrusted to Sr. Leela would reach great heights always. Her contribution to the Manvi, Garratola and Vizhinjam missions are beyond words to narrate. She was even able to raise funds those days for the projects merely through her good interpersonal relationship. She would make people feel that they are loved, cared and respected. She was a great listener. She would sit hours together listening to the problems of the other. Many a times, she had no solutions with her for their problems. But they would always leave the place being comforted and consoled. Language was never a barrier for her to communicate with anyone, especially the different tribes of Garratola. It was her heart that would

engage when she interacted with the people. She knew well the language of love which made a difference in the lives of many. It was her initiative that she got the funding agency of HCDI for Garratola mission that helped us to launch in to many income generating programs for the native tribes that definitely brought about tremendous progress in their lives.

In Manvi, being one of the pioneers, people's "Doddamma" or Ammanavaru was much loved by everyone. She left no stone unturned to eliminate the unjust "Devadasi" System existed in the northern part of Karnataka. She helped the women especially the Dalits, Tribals and Devadasies through forming Sanghas and empowered them to demand their rights thus giving them hope to live a better and dignified life.

In the last few years, she was fully engaged in the lives of the fisher folk community at Vizhinjam fighting for their basic human rights. She held them to her heart in alleviating their pain and agony. She was indeed a true missionary. Besides being at the service of the people at grass root level, she also held various important responsibilities in the province. She was part of the province Leadership team for six and a half years and very specifically coordinating one of the sectors of the Province. She also held responsibility as Superior of communities in Karjat, Garratola, and Manvi.

If you always love one another, if you uphold one another, you will be capable of working wonders says our Foundress. Sr. Leela was a very good community sister true to the spirit. Whether Junior or senior she would always take the whole community with her and kept them as a family. She created happy communities and allowed them to flourish through selfless service of the entire community. She enjoyed life and she made others too to enjoy it. There was always a smile on her face and no one will forget her hearty laughter. She could lift up the sorrowful hearts, understood the unspoken words and emotions of the troubled. She would stand with people in times of their trials.

She lived a simple life, no great needs, satisfied with the minimum. She was humble enough to ask for help, to learn new things, and to update herself. She was in union with her creator in word, deed and in being. She accepted the challenges of everyday life gracefully.

She was a strong believer of indigenous medicines and tried them generously on her until it would not work any longer and she had to resort to allopathic medicines which she could not accept. Since few years she was under regular medication for

diabetes and hypertension. Last year she underwent a major cardiac procedure at St. Martha's hospital and recently she was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease and underwent few cycles of dialysis. On the afternoon of 23rd February while undergoing dialysis, suddenly her sugar level went down and had to shift immediately to MICU for further monitoring. We were with her till 6 pm in the MICU. Later at 7.30 pm suddenly she went in to bradycardia causing cardiac arrest. At that moment too her Cousin Sr. Valsa was at her bed side talking to her. Our doctors and the team tried their best to revive her but could not succeed and at 8.20 pm they declared her departure to the heavenly abode. Yes, she silently slipped in to the hands of her Father.

She was patient in her sufferings which God had permitted in her life. A true disciple of Jesus, she left everything and everybody, to gain hundreds of dear ones from different parts of India. She would keep in touch with them all without failure. Excellent communicator. Today Leelaji would tell like our mother Foundress; "I had no great talents, I only loved, but loved with all my heart".

We the Good Shepherd family express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved sisters, brother and other family members of Sr. Leela. Deep sympathies to the many girls and children who loved her so much. We will dearly miss our Leelaji, for no one can replace her.

We thank Fr. Herald Pinto and all concelebrants in joining us to offer this Eucharist for the repose of the dear soul of Sr. Leela. Thanks to our medical fraternity who cared for Sr. Leela with such commitment and love at various intervals that she needed the medical intervention. Thank you Sr. Shobha and the staff who cared for Sr. Leela. May God bless all of you.

Thank you Mr. Benedict of IBC world news for making it possible for many to attend this service from far. God Bless.

We love you Sr. Leela and we believe we have one more angel in heaven to intercede for us and the mission entrusted to us. Adieu till we meet again!

Sr. Gracy Thomas
Sister Superior
St. Martha's Hospital