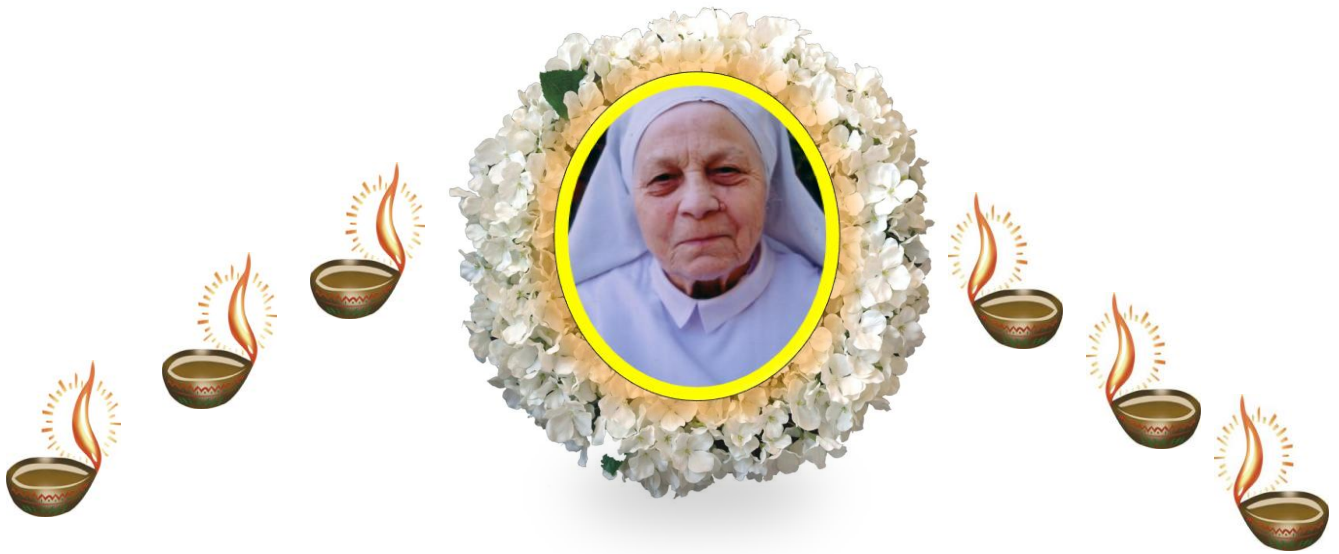


The Indian Provinces bid Goodbye to Mother Clare



Our dear Mother Clare went to her eternal reward on 5th August at 5:15 a.m. She had been growing weaker day by day in the past few months but in spite of all the pain she endured Mother had maintained a cheerful look. A few days before she expired, she had stopped taking any food and survived on liquids which too, at the end, she was unwilling to take. Seeing how weak she had grown we realized she would not be with us long but hoped to celebrate her 95th birthday on 8th August, an event, she too had looked forward to with her characteristic childlike joy. But it seems her friends in heaven were determined to celebrate it in the celestial abode. At around 5:15 a.m. when most of the sisters had gone back to their rooms to get ready for the Holy Mass, Mother slipped away quietly, with only Srs. Florine and Janet keeping watch over her.

With her passing away we have lost a Mother, a much loved and loveable one, the last of the German sisters who blazed a missionary trail a century and a half ago. It was with much sorrow and with deep gratitude that people- sisters, priests, friends and associates - flocked to '32' on hearing of her death. The funeral service held on 6th August at 10 a.m in St. Joseph's Cathedral was attended by numerous people from all walks of life. C .J. representatives from all Indo- Nepal Provinces and Regions were present for the funeral service. The church was packed to full capacity; our Bishop Rt. Rev. Isidore Fernandes and Rt. Rev. Raphy Manjali of Varanasi along with around 25 priests concelebrated the Holy Mass.

The introduction to the Holy Mass, given below, briefly sums up Mother Clare's legacy, the impact she had on the Province and on each of her candidates whom she nurtured, trained and formed:

Our beloved Sister Clare whom we affectionately called Mother Clare was born on 8th August 1916 at Rupholding, a holiday resort in Germany. She was the youngest of four children born to Mr. Benno and Mrs. Clara Hinterreiter. Marianna, as she was called, grew up in a close knit, affectionate family. But her childhood days were clouded with violence and insecurity due to the First World War which devastated her country, Germany. While her father was busy fighting in the war, her Mother, a staunch Catholic, brought up her children as good, devout Catholics. Probably it was her mother who sowed seeds of religious vocation in her youngest daughter. At the age of 22, Marianna entered our house in Nymphenburg as a candidate. Her love for the Lord and her passion for His mission prompted her to leave her family and homeland and set out for India in the same year, along with her companions, one of whom was Sr. Elizabeth whom some of you might remember. She made her first Profession on 8th

Sept. 1940 and her Final Profession in 1946 at Naini Tal. Mother Clare served the Congregation in a number of places and in varying capacities. As a young religious she was posted at SMC Nainital from 1940 to 1953, thereafter she was transferred to Jhansi where she served as a teacher till 1958. When the Provincial House was shifted to Allahabad in 1958 Mother Clare was transferred to Allahabad, where she rendered efficient and valuable services as Provincial Secretary, Province Procurator and Mistress of Candidates while at the same time seeing to the needs of the Provincial cum Novitiate House. She continued to serve the Province in these capacities for 20 long years. In 1995, when old age and ill health forced her to retire from active service she was brought to SMC 32 to spend the remaining days there. She spent 73 years of her life in India as a religious and 53 years in the diocese of Allahabad.

Mother Clare was truly an amazing person. We often marveled at the enormous and multiple tasks she did in her active days and that too with great efficiency, competence and dedication. It was she who taught many of us the rudiments of English language, pronunciation and diction, besides teaching us etiquette, deportment and helping us to acquire practical skills in performing daily house hold tasks. We sisters who received the initial religious formation under her careful and watchful guidance, owes much to her, a debt we can never repay. When she grew old and was no longer engaged in active service, she continued to teach and inspire us with her exemplary life. In spite of all the discomforts and difficulties of old age and ill health we have never heard a word of complaint from her. Whenever anyone asked her, "How are you?" her answer would invariably be, " Full of aches and pains but I am an old woman, over 90 years of age, still I can wobble to the chapel, to the dining room and sit and pray. What more do I want?"

Every morning, she would greet the priest cheerfully shaking his hands, wishing him a good day and asking for his blessings. Always smiling and cheerful, her heart full of love, warmth and concern for each one she edified her visitors with her outgoing, joyful and deeply caring nature. The young sisters in the community found in her a Mother and a companion, ready to laugh and to listen to their jokes, enjoy their company and share with them whatever she got, a chocolate, a picture or any little gift she had. When left alone, she would spend her time praying, the Rosary always in her hands. The Holy Eucharist was the centre of her life and until she could no longer lift herself, she attended the Mass daily, however painful it was for her to drag her swollen, arthritis - affected legs. The last phase of her life was full of pain, yet she suffered it all with great endurance. She greeted all of us with a smile of welcome and a blessing as long as she could raise her hand. Grateful for every little service given to her she would often assure us that we were all in her prayers daily. We were often struck by her optimism, her contentment and serene acceptance of life's ups and downs.

A true companion of Mary Ward, Mother Clare lived out the charism of the Congregation diligently and faithfully, living the mission to the fullest. With her passing away an era in the history of our Congregation comes to an end, an era of great German missionary enterprise. The story that began in 1853 with a historic bullock-cart journey from Bombay to Patna comes to the final chapter with the demise of the last of the Germans, Mother Clare!

Our Beloved Mother Clare, it is with grief and a deep sense of loss that all of us, on behalf of the entire Indian Province of the Congregation of Jesus, are assembled here to bid you goodbye. Thank you for teaching us valuable lessons of life by your simple, cheerful and inspiring presence. You have given us a better insight into what it means to live a truly meaningful, contented and joyful life. You were a gift from the loving Father to us and we feel happy and proud to have had you with us. The legacy that you have bequeathed to us will continue to challenge us and urge us on to live the heroic and generous spirit of our Foundress, Mother Mary Ward. Goodbye till we meet again in our Father's Home!



May Mother Clare bless all of us from her heavenly Abode!

