



Human Organization for Pioneering in Education
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Spreading H.O.P.E.

Founders Day Special Issue –August 2015.



“Lived to Love”

“From the unreal lead me to the real,
from the darkness, lead me to light and
from death, lead me to immortality”.



Dear Friends of H.O.P.E.,

Our dear Sr. Noelline Pinto, founder of H.O.P.E., has answered the final call of the Lord. After a long illness and suffering, growing old gracefully, the Lord has ended her earthly pains and called her to her eternal abode on 23rd of May 2015 in Inlaks Hospital, Pune, at 7.45 a.m.

Sr. Noelline suffered silently during the last days in the hospital. She remained strong in her faith and had a will to live. She had a sharp memory and an alert mind to the end. Today, 15th August, she would have celebrated her 88th birthday. She could not live up to it, but she is still here and is with us today and will be in the years to come. We celebrate this day in her honour, remembering her and her life that she dedicated fully to the underprivileged and hopeless. In this special issue of H.O.P.E. newsletter, we would like to invite you to share with us the moments of her life and work. As the editor of this newsletter and a person who has been loved, led, advised and formed by her, please allow me to end this editorial with a personal word to our beloved Sr. Noelline.

Dear Sr. Noelline, your life was a blessing. Your life was one of kindly deeds. A helping hand for others needs. Your memories are a treasure. You are loved beyond words and will be missed beyond measure. In Ps 103:15 we read: our days on earth like grass, like wild flowers, we bloom and die. Death is the reality which we ought to encounter one day, but we could face the death with faith and hope in the Lord.

We thank God for the glorious future that our Sr. Noelline is beginning to enjoy. We ask the Lord to reward her with His goodness and transfigure her to enjoy her true home land.

Sr. Flory

Sr. Flory Menezes



Sr. Caroline Fernandes
Provincial Superior,
Sisters of the Cross,
38 Sassoon Road, Pune 411001

***“BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT,
FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN” MT 5:3***

Life is indeed a journey between earth and heaven. In this life journey, empowered and enveloped with the love of Christ and filled with real compassion, care, love and concern, Sr. Noelline conquered the hearts of poor both young and old alike. Her entire life has been one of praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty. Every beginning entails a lot of hardships, challenges and struggles. One could see in Sr. Noelline, a heart and mind of a great visionary. She was indeed a spiritual person, had a strong will, determination, love for the poor, courage and valour in this enterprise. As the potter creates the masterpiece out of mere clay,

Sr. Noelline through her disciplined personality succeeded in transforming simple children into educated and responsible young men and women who hold respectable positions in society today.

By nature she was very active, vibrant, energetic, sociable, innovative, hospitable and sensitive to the needs of others. Her heart large enough to accommodate anyone who came to her dwelling. She believed in loving, encouraging and comforting the people she met. She connected with everyone, the young and the old, the poor and the rich, the sick and the aged. Her ready wit and amazing sense of humour always lightened the mood and endeared her to many. She wanted to give of herself to the very end, in spite of her frail and failing health. Her strong determination kept her going against all odds. In spite of her age, she was always concerned and deeply involved in the happenings of the community, mission and the world at large. She was well-read and could hold a discussion on any issues. She was like the walking dictionary. Her hallmark was her sharp memory even to the last.

She was and will always be remembered as a woman for others especially for the poor. Numerous are the persons whose broken lives have been mended by her ingenious and kind ways. With her timely and loving intervention she has helped many to stand on their feet by helping them in educational pursuits, seeking employment, providing a roof over their heads, seeking medical treatment when sick etc. Thank you dear Sr. Noelline for setting an example for us to live the Mission of Christ and the Charism of our Congregation in today's context. May you continue to live on in the hearts of us all who knew you, lived with you, worked with you and loved you.

Dear Sr. Noelline you have traced for us a path journeyed by a spirit- filled, committed, zealous religious. May your mantle fall upon us.

*The song ends and the melody lingers on...
Pain passes and the beauty remains.....*





“Lived to Love” *Sr. Noelline's Life*

“There are still promises to keep and miles to go before you sleep.”
“I have fought the good fight, I have run the race. I pass the baton to you.”

- Sr. Noelline Pinto, March 2014

Sr. Noelline was born on 15th of August 1927 to Mr. Joseph Pinto and Mrs. Leopoldine Pinto nee Lobo in Revora, Goa an erstwhile Portuguese colony and grew up in a Portuguese culture. They were six siblings. She was the third child in the family. To quote Sr. Noelline's words: “The faith and fire for social uplifting that burns in me even today is the legacy of my mother of happy memory. Herself a leader in community service, responding to the needs of the neighbourhood in all matters, she nurtured her six daughters in the art of reaching out to the needy.” After completing her high school she opted to join the religious Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod in the year 1946 as a postulant in Amravati. She entered the novitiate on 4th of January 1947, made her first profession on 4th of January 1949, and she vowed herself totally to God 3 years later, by her final profession in 1952.

17 Years of Teaching

In 1949, as a young sister, she started her teaching career for 17 years in the English medium high schools. In her tenure as a teacher she was fondly remembered by her students for her motherly care and concern especially towards the less-fortunate students.

The last posting in 1963 was as “Mother Superior” in Aurangabad. She had to oversee the construction of the school buildings. Here was a turning point in her life as she encountered poor men and women from the neighbouring drought prone areas seeking work. This exposure made her discover the real face of India. All her desires and dreams to alleviate suffering welled up in her. She approached the superior to release her from the education and propose her vision of social work which was not the traditional welfare and charitable type but a constructive one that would make the people self-reliant and agents of transformation. She was given an opportunity of a period of formation – two years in École de la Foi, Fribourg, Switzerland and two years in Applied Social Sciences in the Catholic University of Lyons, France in the years 1970-1974. Her vision became clearer, she felt equipped with the methodology and strategies to be followed in her new venture.

Start with Nothing but a Vision

Back in India she had to strike on her own, begin from scratch at grass root level armed only with her faith in God,

good will and a burning zeal and courage. It was on 16th of June 1974 that Sr. Noelline landed in Pune at the invitation of Prof. Dr. Father Francis D'Sa, S.J. (Co-founder of H.O.P.E.), professor of Philosophy in the Papal Athanaeum and other socially committed professors. From then on she lived among the poor and laid foundation of H.O.P.E.-Human Organisation for Pioneering in Education as a non-governmental organization (NGO) that is geared to social transformation through the education, emancipation and empowerment of women.

Sr. Noelline marvellously carried on her life knowing, loving and serving God in each and every step of her life. Her heart could not hold any longer, she had a heart that gave itself away to the end. She did not even have time to think about herself, about her own health and sickness. She never complained but cheerfully accepted God's will in her life. Thousand and more have walked through those doors with their tales of woe at any given time. No appointments, no phone call, no lunch break, no dinner break, no now its midnight we shouldn't be knocking on someone's door-people would just drop in, for the doors were always open.

41 Years of Never-ceasing Effort

No problem was too big or too small, everyone got a patient hearing. All which required the Wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job. She reached out to children of all ages, babies, girls and boys, men and women. Each had a different need, and she attended to their individual needs. Her personal touch, time and compassion for the people in need are truly admirable. Through thick and thin she has carried out this precious work, in imitation of Jesus Christ. As a result so many people in and around Pune have found their dignity, worth and happiness. In all this Sr. Noelline lived the charism of the Sisters of the Cross in today's context.





- "Sr. Noelline was a real woman of change, who lived far ahead of her times and gave a prophetic and visionary direction to religious life since the 70's. She was a pioneer of women religious committing themselves to the cause of women. Thank you Noelline for being an inspiration to so many of us!" -Kochurani

"I just wanted to say very grateful thanks on behalf of our family to you, and each and every one at HOPE, for looking after my Aunt, and for your love and concern especially after she got ill.

She was looked after with such loving and tender care and you really couldn't have done more. We loved our Aunt dearly and I have happy, joyous and beautiful memories of her. I have no doubt that she is with Our Lord enjoying abundant peace and grateful that she is no longer suffering. God Bless you all abundantly and with grateful thanks"

- Yvette, Yvonne, Yasmin, Yves and Families



"With deep sadness we join you and at the same time we are very proud of Sr. Noelline for her daring spirit and deep conviction of her Religious call and commitment. We pray that the Lord reward her eternal peace. May her noble soul rest in peace." - Sr. Alphy, S.H.Sp

"I often wondered how I had been able to meet a person of such a value, and every time I remember our meetings, I thank God." - Jacqueline and Marc

"Sr. Noelline was a very active member of ARC right from its inception. It was her conviction that brought H.O.P.E. to participate in all ARC programmes as she believed in working for the rights of the underprivileged women & children. I'm sure her inspiration will continue to impact the work of H.O.P.E." - Audrey & All at ISC

"Let me begin with a BIG THANK YOU for all the help and looking after our dear Aunt Susan. Although we are far away we will miss her a lot but always knowing the good work she did in her lifetime. We pray that God gives you the strength and conviction to carry on the noble ideals H.O.P.E. is founded on." - Rishad, Lily and Yves

"I have no doubt she is in the arms of the God she loved so courageously. What an incredible woman. I had the feeling I was in the presence of a truly great woman. She

shared her love of God, her brave journey in starting the work she dedicated her life to, her spiritual journey of treasuring the riches in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions whilst still maintaining her deep love for Jesus. I still clearly see the image that was brought to my mind of Jesus carrying the cross on his way to Calvary and Sr. Noelline watching him intently and going to him immediately, to help him carry his cross. And I felt that she had and was living out that image throughout her life. Intently set on relieving the suffering of people and working towards justice, not being a bystander and watching, but throwing herself into the mess of it and taking action." - Bernie Haven



"Marion told me a little bit about Sr. Noelline's last days and that she did not want to go. I guess that lies just within her personality. Giving up never was an option for her till the end. Even though I hope it was not too hard for her and that she left in peace. She achieved so many things in her life that I think if any life can be complete, hers must have been. I can imagine you might feel a bit lost in the big shoes she is leaving you. But you will grow into them soon. I'm convinced you got everything you need to continue her work with H.O.P.E. and develop it into the future". - Ariane Wahrmann

"Words cannot express how saddened we are to hear the demise of Sr. Noelline who had been our Mother, Grandmother to our children who called her lovingly, 'Nani' and a Visionary. She had been our Inspiration, Model and Constant Support for the last 26 years.

We learnt our life's lesson from her dedication, devotion and love for the poor, downtrodden and the marginalised. She always had interesting stories to tell us every time we visited her during her illness. Her memories continue to motivate us to work towards accomplishing her mission. - Antony & Shirly



