



“Well done good and faithful servant” Mt.25:21

Sr. Joanita D'souza

1930 – 2024

Province of St. Francis Xavier

India Centre





**“ The eternal God is your
refuge, and his everlasting
arms are under you...”**

Deut. 33:27



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Nine Decades of fidelity to God - M. Joanita

Born into a faith-filled Goan family, Sister Joanita's upbringing was rooted in discipline and prayer. These values became the foundation of her remarkable life, dedicated to serving others. Her family's emphasis on faith instilled in her a deep devotion to God, which guided her every step.

Sister Joanita's teaching ministry, spanning almost five years in Ranikhet and Mahim, was marked by dedication and passion. She nurtured young minds, imparting knowledge and values that shaped future generations. Her love for education was evident in the many lives she touched.

As a community leader, Sister Joanita served with compassion and wisdom in Bangalore. Manickpur, Arpora, and Olaulim. Her leadership was an inspiration to her sisters and the community, fostering their growth and unity. Her pastoral work in Shankerpura, Galgibaga, and Arpora further demonstrated her commitment to spreading God's love and care.

Beyond her spiritual endeavors, sister Joanita possessed exceptional talents. Her tailoring skills, honed in Belgaum, enabled her craft exquisite veils and garments. Even in her final days, she strove for perfection, reflecting her dedication to excellence. Her culinary expertise delighted many, as she cooked with love and finesse, spreading joy through the simple pleasures of life.

Sister Joanita's remarkable life was marked by vitality and humor, even at 94. Her presence illuminated community meetings and recreations, filling the air with laughter and



warmth. Her love for community was palpable, and she cherished every moment spent with her sisters.

During her final days, sister Joanita faced struggles and pain with courage and resilience. Surrounded by her community members, other sisters, her loving brother and sister-in-law, she endured a stroke and chest congestion, yet remained semi-conscious until she met with her end at Holy Family Hospital, Bandra. Though her body weakened, her spirit remained unbroken.

As she approached the end of her earthly journey, sister Joanita's faith shone brighter. She often expressed her longing to return to her heavenly Father's house, where she would finally find rest. Receiving the Sacrament of Anointing several times, she was at peace with God and her community.

As we bid farewell to this humorous sister, we ask sister Joanita to intercede for us. May her life of service, faith and love inspire us to follow in her footsteps.

Rest in eternal peace, dear Sister Joanita. Your life will forever be etched in our hearts.

Sr. Audrey D'Souza
(Province Leader)





Sr. Joanita D'Souza

The contacts I had with Sr. Joanita always brought to my mind, what an example she was of true Canossian Charity! She always welcomed anyone and everyone who approached her, especially our own sisters, who visited the community. She went out of her way to make everyone feel “at home.”

I remember, when I was with her for a few days at “Prema Mandira” (the old house), in Bangalore, while I was studying for my B. Ed in 1978, - having been sent there to be with her, since her two companions had gone for their retreat, during the Diwali Holidays - how she took care of me like a loving sister and friend.

Everyday was spent in an interesting way. In the morning, we went to the parish church for Mass. An appetising breakfast followed, we would then attend to some household work together, after that I would do my ‘home-work’ (some projects for the B.Ed. course).

The evenings were ‘special’. At 5.30, she would take me for ‘an evening out,’ the destinations being – The Asian Trading Bookstall, St. Paul’s Book Centre, a Park, the Bangalore Flower Show, The Cathedral, St. John’s Medical College or a stroll down Brigade Street (the shopping hub of Bangalore, where we did only “window shopping”). This was learning Bangalore’s historical places practically and leisurely. Call it practical learning for a B.Ed student!

My contacts with Sr. Joanita, were later reduced to, brief visits to the community of Canossa Mahim. She served in that community as member of the local council, craft teacher in the school and pastoral work. As she grew older, she was a wonderful and welcoming sister of the community. Every sister who arrived at Canossa, Mahim, would be greeted and welcomed by a smiling Sr. Joanita, who would accompany her to the refectory, for refreshment. She would sit and talk to the sister, while the latter waited to carry out the task she had come to fulfill.

This welcoming attitude remained with Sr. Joanita even in her old age. Though she failed to recognize persons or call them by name, she would smile, welcome them and lead them to the refectory! Not only that, she would enquire about their health as well. Habits die hard! Who would not feel “at home” with such attention given?

Now in Heaven, the Lord may be pleased to set her apart as a member of the “Heavenly Welcome Group” to greet especially the Canossian sisters as they enter Heaven and show them around! Dear Sr. Joanita enjoy your stay with the Lord!

Sr. Rose D’Souza
Canossa Niketan





Life is a gift

The greatest gift that one has received is the beautiful gift of life and what we make of our lives is our gift to God.

Today with grateful heart I thank God for the precious gift of life that brings such an abundance of the choicest of God's blessings which our dear Mother Joanita was opened to. Her gracious presence with us was very inspiring and delightful. I have learnt from her how to live joyfully and grow old gracefully. We were all attracted by her humorous ways and charming personality.

Mother Joanita was a person with a deep spirituality. The daily Eucharist was part and parcel of her life. She was always available for "community acts". Her age was never the impediment to do any work. She had great zeal and enthusiasm in all that she did. She was joyful. We always enjoyed her company especially during our community recreation.

Mother had a special love for the young sisters. She would sit with them for their Spiritual Readings and explain to them our charism. At times she would go to the kitchen to cut vegetables and the kitchen girls would enjoy her company because of her broken Hindi.

One thing made me happy that she always appreciated me for reaching out to her and seeing to her needs. She would always assure me of her prayers.

She was young at heart. As far as possible she loved to be independent and self-reliant. she did all that she could by herself.

For me she was an exemplary model to follow. I thank God for the gift of her in my life. May she intercede for each one of us and may Mother continue to experience the beatific vision of the Risen Christ.

Sr. Cecilia Lopes

Canossa Convent, Mahim.



She Could See God

On 4th September 2024 , M. joanita thoroughly enjoyed her 94th Birthday together with her brother Avito and sister-in-law Alzira, who came from Goa as well as with relatives from Bombay, and with all the sisters of the community. That would be her last birthday celebrated on earth!

Let me share how we remember her now!

Her wit!

Jovial as she was even in her pain and acute sufferings, Mother Joanita cracked jokes and everyone around her burst into laughter. She knew how to answer a question with clever wit & a punch!

M. Joanita had seen all the beautiful beaches in Goa, but her favourite one was Calangute beach. Asked the reason for it, Mother said that, it was at that particular beach she had tried to learn to swim, but never did! I wanted to learn to cut my own grey habit. M. Joanita was not only an efficient tailor but also a good

teacher. She made me cut the pattern on a sheet of brown paper. When I made some mistakes she would make me repeat the pattern. "You are the

daughter of a tailor! They will laugh at you if they see such a shabby item on you!", she said once, and made me open out everything!

Her watchful eye!

She would look around and see that the sisters had their fill. She would often ask me, holding my left arm "Did you get this? And did you get that?" As her concern was great, she made me sit next to her and eat!

M. Joanita always read the newspaper, especially the sports section. She knew all about World Tournaments in Cricket & in football!

Twilight Years!

In the twilight of her life, as her eyes dimmed, she could not read anymore, but M. Joanita could see God clearly and communicate with Him freely! She would spend hours on end in deep prayer. She seemed fully soaked in God's Presence! As Jesus says in Luke 10:23, "*Many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, but did not see*". M. Joanita could hear the Voice of God which could be noticed in her sweet and simple smile.

Radiance of countenance is a sure sign of encounter with God!

We rejoice that M. Joanita is now reunited with the Love of her life! I am Grateful for the legacy she left us.

Sr. Fatima Rebello

Canossa Convent, Mahim





Joyful Joanita

**Today well lived, makes tomorrow a dream of joy
and peace!!!**

On the Staff at School

I remember M. Joanita in her younger days, when she was teaching at Canossa Mahim for a short while. At that time her younger sister, Augusta was also a teacher in the middle school. There was always good laughter in the staff-room at the lunch-break and after school. By nature she was “*witty Joanita*” and always on some topics she would make us laugh heartily.

As Superior

I met M. Joanita as a superior at Bangalore for a short time then as a superior at Arpora house. She was always cheerful, jovial responsible, and caring towards the sisters. When I used to come to Mahim from Belgaum or Dhule she always had a kind word for me. Her concern about our food and rest was touching. Truly, she was very sensitive! - an extraordinary sister for Hospitality.

A sister among sisters

I was with Mother Joanita for the last two years. She always had a good word for me. She specially admired me for keeping my white habit so very clean and in good condition. M. Joanita used to wait for us to come home and to hear some news of the day from us. She used to take part in

everything: prayer, meals, recreation, and all that we did. She enjoyed singing too.

The last lap

M. Joanita lived to the ripe old age of 94. She was always cheerful and used to share delightful old stories with us. Towards the end she suffered much, but was not able to express it. At about 6:30 a.m. on 9th Nov., M. Joanita slept in the eternal company of all the Canossians in Heaven, and with her beloved family. She longed to meet her mother.

May all your hearts' desires be finally fulfilled dear M, Joanita. RIP!

Sr. Maggie Vaz



Some fun filled, joyful memories....





Srs. Joanita, Ita & Neeta



community outing



with loving sisters



**"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." –
Philippians 1:21**

As St Paul says: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7), so our dear Mother Joanita accomplished the mission the Lord entrusted to her, participated in the pain and agony of the Lord and when the Lord beckoned her to Himself to receive the crown of glory, she peacefully winged her flight to the heavenly Jerusalem on 09th November 2024 at the Holy Family Hospital, Bandra.

Mother Joanita came across to me way back in 1995 my first community in Canossa Mahim, as gentle, kind, soft spoken and polite and she greeted everyone with a sweet smile and a cheerful countenance. She was always a very good person, very prudent, very humble, very simple, and a great lover of the poor and of her community. A woman of prayer and of an intense spiritual life, she always was what I would say a genuine follower of St. Magdalene, a true Daughter of Charity, an example and reference point for all of us who knew her and had the joy of living with her. As a Superior at Arpora, as people who knew her used to say she involved herself actively in the parish apostolate, visiting houses and spreading the Good News, besides animating the sisters of the community. Mother Joanita was indeed a great missionary and an eager pioneer in some of the convents where she worked for the Lord and his people with great love, commitment and enthusiasm.

I thank God for his steadfast love which Mother Joanita experienced for the past 64 years of her religious life. She glorified God through her life of love and service in the Congregation and the Church. Her life of prayer, endurance in

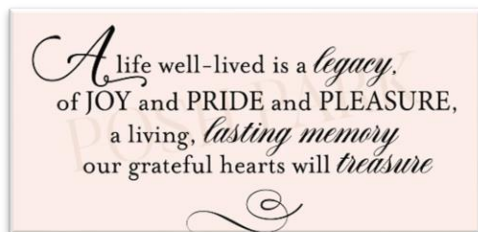
suffering, spirit of sacrifice, hard work, simplicity, humility, love for the poor, kind and gentle ways have been an inspiration to me. Her total surrender to God's will and plan was revealed on her serene face which was an expression of 'God's all sufficing love' for her. It was such a privileged moment that we the Sisters at Arpora had when she came for her bother Avit's Golden Jubilee celebration at their home in Carazalem.

When I took charge as local animator in the community of Arpora, she told me "Jovita, do all that you can with your given abilities and leave the rest to God. Take care of your health, then only you can serve Him wholeheartedly"

Mother Joanita made a difference and I cherish this memory. May you rest in peace, good and faithful servant, as I thank God for your life

Sr. Jovita Mendonca

Arpora





A loving person!

Mother Joanita D'Souza has been a great Gift of God to me. A loving Mother, an exemplary Sister and a friend to guide me in my young age and on whom I could rely. A close bond was created even with her family members. I have lived with her for some years in the communities of Mahim, Arpora, Arambol and Manickpur.

Mother Joanita was a kind, loving and sociable person, sensitive to the needs of the sisters and others. She took extra care of the young and elderly sisters. Mother also took keen interest in the family members of the sisters. We always felt very much at home with her.

I learned much from her and I am very grateful to her. She was a person of prayer and deep faith, dedicated and committed to her responsibilities, rooted in our Canossian Charism and Spirit.

Now, our dear Mother Joanita is surely enjoying the Beatific Vision!

Intercede for us to the Lord dear Mother!

Sr. Lily Carvalho

Shirlaiwadi



A loving and caring person

Mother Joanita was a very prayerful, loving and caring sister. As a junior sister, I lived with her in the community of Arambol and also one year in the Mahim community when I did my B.Ed.

She was a model for me in my earlier days. She was very concerned about my health and my spiritual life. When I had dental problem she took me to her home for a night. We had a good time with her in the Community. I thank God for giving me an opportunity to live with her, to learn good values from her which I always cherish and I also learned to give priority to My spiritual life.

Dear Mother Joanita Intercede for us as you are enjoying the Beatific Vision of the Lord.

Sr. Faustina Mascarenhas



A Treasure of Love: Remembering Mother Joanita

When someone you love becomes a memory, that memory transforms into a treasure. Indeed, though Mother Joanita is no longer with us physically, she has left behind an enduring treasure in the memories etched deep within our hearts.

From the time I first encountered her as a young college girl in Olaulim, Goa, in 1994, to the day she departed for her heavenly abode, she radiated the essence of a true Canossian. Her simple, loving, and humble ways drew me, and countless others, closer to God.

Mother Joanita was not only an exemplary Canossian but also a woman of many talents. Her sumptuous cooking and skilled tailoring were widely admired, yet it was the personal touch she infused into every task that made her truly special. She lived by the motto of glorifying God through a life of simplicity, embracing every responsibility with grace and dedication.

She was more than a spiritual guide; she was a constant source of care and support. She prayed for me and my family, often inquiring about our well-being, showing a heart that overflowed with compassion. Even in her final months, as her memory began to fade, her golden heart remained unchanged. She had a word of concern for everyone and a knack for infusing humor into her conversations, leaving us with smiles even in challenging moments.

Mother Joanita's captivating smile and boundless warmth will forever linger in our minds. Though she has gone to her eternal rest, she has left us with a legacy of love, humility, and faith that will continue to inspire.

May she be embraced by heavenly bliss and eternal peace. Rest well, dear Mother Joanita.

Sr. Vailankani Fernandes
Canossa Mahim





A Pillar of Love: Remembering Mother Joanita a pure soul...

Mother Joanita was more than just a caring soul; she was a beacon of love, kindness, and warmth. Her presence in my life was a blessing, and her memory will continue to inspire me as well as others.

Though advanced in age, Mother Joanita's heart remained young and vibrant. Her love for the young ones who entered her life was pure and selfless. She had a unique ability to connect with people of all ages, making everyone happy with her talk and smile.

"Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope." - Maya Angelou

A gentle soul, a loving heart,
Mother Joanita, a work of art.
Her kindness flowed like a stream,
Touching lives, a precious dream.

With a smile so warm, and eyes so bright,
She lit the way, through day and night.
Her love for young ones, pure and true,
Inspired us all, to see this through.

Though she may be gone, her memory stays,
A reminder to love, in every way.
Mother Joanita, a treasure so rare,
Forever in our hearts,
A love beyond compare.

Rest in peace, dear Mother Joanita. Your love will never be forgotten.

Sr. Mamta Avare

Arambol

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Mother Joanita – An inspiration to me

"Memories fade over time, but our Mother Joanita isn't a memory although she is no more, rather she is a part of us."

Mother Joanita's life was a testament to the power of prayer and her prayerful nature inspired all including myself to deepen my faith. Till the very end of her life she was moving about. With a heart full of compassion and a spirit that sparkled with joy, she spread love and laughter in our community especially during recreation.

Her selfless concern for others was indeed a hallmark and she was willing to share her words of wisdom whenever needed.

Her inspiring presence and soft spoken words helped me to spend time with her, listen to her and also felt free to be with her. Mother truly had a special love for young sisters.

I will Miss you mother. May you intercede for us and shower blessings from heaven so that we can live our vocation as true Canossans in loving concern for others.

Sr. Jenisha Dinis

Canossa Convent, Mahim

We miss Mother but heaven is so lucky to have her back Home.

It was a moment of joy and happiness being with Mother Joanita. Just for few days but it was my joy being with a special person like her. Mother was always a welcoming person, her sweet smile and tender touch brought added joy to us.

The one thing she often said “don’t imitate us we are all weak, imitate Him, He is perfect...” gave me a deep sense of comfort to remain faithful to my vocation.

Thank you Mother for your zeal and enthusiasm to share Christ with the poor which has been a source of inspiration to me. Pray for us Mother that we may be channels of God’s love.

Rest in peace dear Mother.

Sr. Tressy

Canossa Convent, Mahim



A life lived together, memories forever.....!

Out of thirteen years of my religious life, I lived nine years with Sister Joanita. In-fact I know Sister Joanita from the time I entered the Convent as a Candidate at Mahim. She took our English classes and took good care of us all.

As a Junior sister once again, I was placed in the same Community and I had the opportunity to live with sister Joanita.

She was a great support and help to me. I could easily approach her for any kind of help. I would go to her for reading practice, prayer service and Evaluation correction etc.

I admired her qualities of faithfulness to God and to the Canossian family; her strong faith, gentleness and compassion. She would notice during recreation, if any sister is not keeping too well or is tired. She would say “you are not looking ok, go to sleep” that was her sensitivity towards all the sisters. And her jovial nature made everyone happy and comfortable in her presence.

I would like to highlight this characteristic though I was a junior sister, sister Joanita along with other elderly sisters, never made me feel, that I was just a Junior sister in the Community. Infact they loved and cared for me and helped me to grow, by encouraging me. Hence, I enjoyed my community life with them.

Surely, I am going to miss her presence, but the wonderful memories left behind, will always be cherished in my life.

Rest in peace, dear Sister Joanita. And intercede for us to the Lord.

Sr. Nainita Kankad.

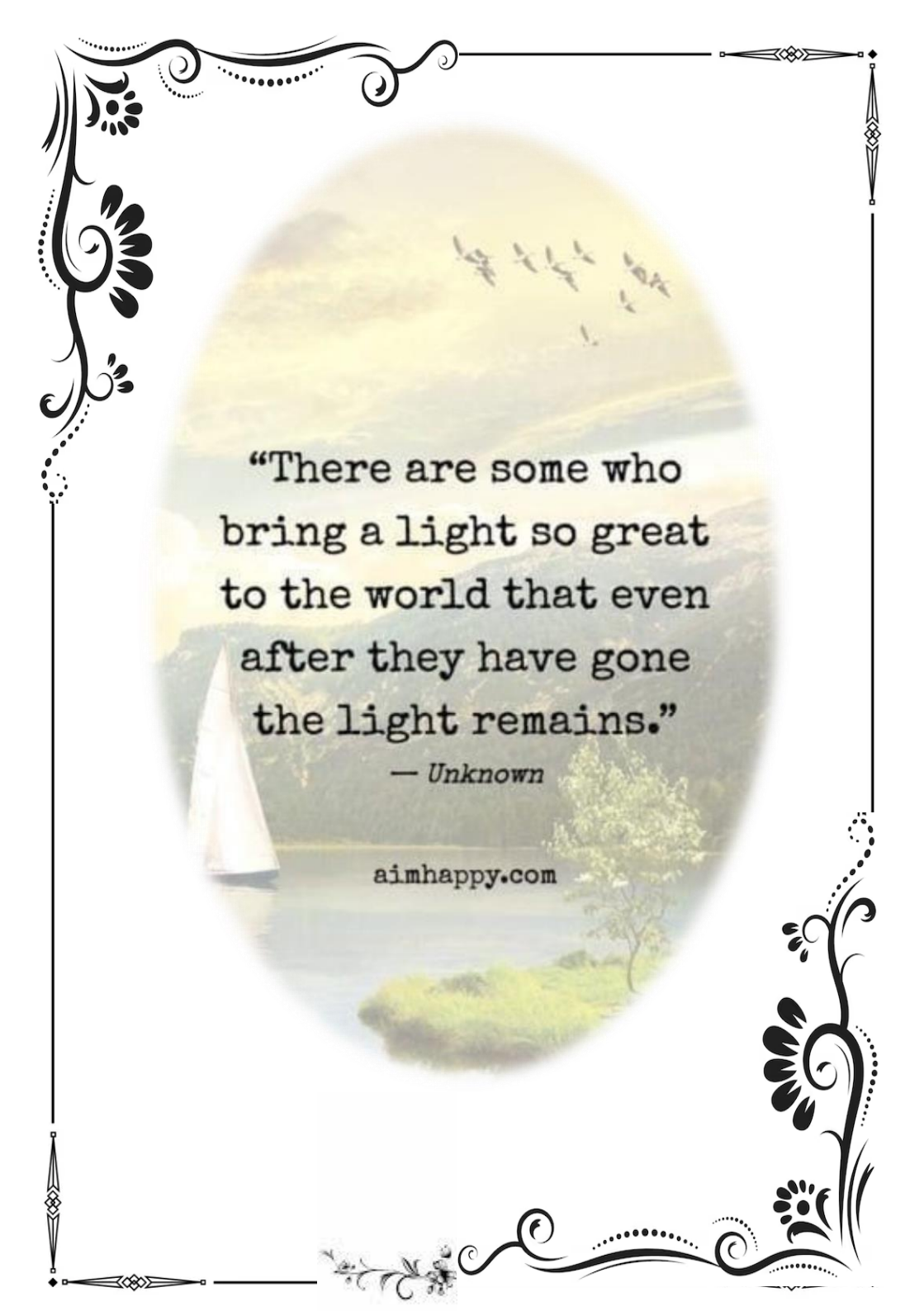


Memories....



Diamond Jubilee celebration!





“There are some who
bring a light so great
to the world that even
after they have gone
the light remains.”

— *Unknown*

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