

“May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.” Ps 141:2



Sr. Albetina Tirkey: 3rd November, 1949

First Profession: 8 December, 1973

Perpetual Profession: 8 December, 1979

Silver Jubilee: 1999

Golden Jubilee: 2024

Written by

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Prologue: Sr. Albetina Tirkey an admirer of St. Joseph has a great confident in him. She imitates his virtues of silence and reflection. She loves spending time in prayer saying, “May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.” (Ps 141:2) St. Joseph the protector and provider for the Holy Family became her great intercessor in many occasions of her faith journey. She focuses on his steadfast faith, devotion, humility and obedience. She was inspired by him to live a life of quiet service, integrity, and trust in God’s plan.



Purpose of the Writing: This writing is assigned to us by Sister Provincial Sr.Sini Mathew to help the younger members of the province and the congregation to know the person of Sr. Albetina and her passion for Christ and his people in concise. Nevertheless, the writers develop a personal interest while penning down this humble task. All the more it is never a perfect writing because many of the past events could not navigate due to lack memory record. Hebrew 13: 16 says, “Do not forget to do well and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Life’s experience is not for self alone but it also meant to promote faith through sharing. No doubt “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35) Giving out life experiences is a great gift to others for it helps others to journey the similar encounters with creativity. Hence, writing the life story of Sr. Albetina gives us inputs and clarity on our own personal experience and growth.

Childhood Memories and Experiences: Nuzzled amidst rolling fields and lush greenery of a tea garden in Dangorikuma village attached to Barpatro of Soridew district, Namrup - Assam, Sr.Albetina was born on 3 November, 1949. She was blessed to be born into a devout Catholic family. Her loving parents Mr. Joachim Tirkey and Mrs. Leoni Minj were her first models in loving God. Besides her parents, she had her eldest brother Policarp Tirkey and her sister Rebecca Tirkey who modeled her dream of serving God. Her younger brother Dominic and sister Tersila taught her to be generous in sharing and giving. Being the middle child she receives love and care from both the eldest and the youngest. She loves to recall the happy memory of a united family sharing everything in common. All though her parents were a hard working farmer of tea garden but they never forget God. They fear God for they knew “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Proverbs 9:10) She stated everything was good and well in her early age because of her parents’ great faith and devotion. Her first catechism was from home, they taught her to love God and her neighbors. She learnt many things about God from them. She added her parents would take her to Church every Sunday and she would attend regular catechism classes on holidays, strict faith formation and discipline she received from home. Today, she is left with her only Sister Tersila. The two keep cherishing the type of formation they received from home that has shaped their lives till today.



Parents’ legacy

Personal Anecdotes and Cultural Impact on the Journey: A personal anecdote is shaped by cultural and environmental values. Sr. Albetina spoke highly about her village community. Every first Friday of the month the entire Catholic faithful of the village would leave their home and go to the Parish (Naharkatia) about 1 hour walking distance. They would attend Holy Eucharist, Confession, prayer and adoration. They spent the whole night in prayer and adoration and return to their home only the next morning. There was so much family spirit shared among the believers, they would share community meals, dance and get together on occasions of feasts and celebration. The community stood united and very supportive that has created a lasting legacy in her spiritual growth.

The Early Call: School days are steps towards readiness and building the foundation of the future. Similarly, Sr. Albetina was building her future as MSMHC during her school days. Her school and convent became her home. She spent her life mostly in the boarding with MSMHC Sisters. She was so steady and happy that she remained without changing schools from class 1 to Class VI in St. Mary's Convent, Naharkatia and from class VII to class X in St. Mary's Convent, Barpeta. During her stay with the Sisters in the convent she exemplifies the core values of the Sisters, their selfless service, deep faith and unwavering commitment. She also nurtures her love for Saints especially Saint Joseph since Sisters used to speak about the miracles through the intercession of the Saints. She explained they used to hang on St. Joseph endless petitions and he would answer them one by one. Today, this childlike confidence is no more visible in this contemporary world. Somehow spiritual essence has taken back seat.

The Moment of Discernment and Response to God's Call: Sr. Albetina praises the purity of life and tireless dedication of the Sisters she met in the boarding. She replied she was so inspired by the solid foundation and the divine touch she received from the Sisters. She remembers with gratefulness to Sr. Theresa Kunath who stood as a model of living her religious life today. Sr. Theresa K. was a simple teacher but spirited personality who captivated and won the heart of her students through her charitable words and deeds. Sr. Sabastiani Toppo another heroine in loving souls. She would not allow the boarders to wash the kitchen dirty towels; she would rub first and then permit them to do. I was much inspired by her love for the young and her selfless sacrifices. She recognized the face of Jesus in the face of the boarders "I have seen many Sisters likewise but with the exception of these two Sisters. They never show up in doing things, quietly but very inspiring. I would say they had helped me discern my call through their life of holy service," she added.

The Decision to Join a Religious Life: "The perfection of love consists in the union of our will with the will of God." (St. Alphonsus Liguori) This is true indeed thought Sr. Albetina when looking at the Sisters' way of life. She commended, staying with the Sisters was a blessing. She was inspired by the holy life of many Sisters she encountered at that time which inflamed her from within to desire to become a Saint. She said the Sisters often relate to them the life of the Saints that would increase their desire of becoming Saints "A Great Saint" noted Vererable Stephen Ferrando. She witnesses and narrates the simplicity and honesty of the Sisters. She never heard negativities from the mouth of the Sisters. They were very careful in displeasing the name of their community members to outsiders and boarders. "I saw they spoke with reverence to each other. Outsiders have only good things to say about Sisters" she explained. She experienced only their gentleness and kindness in the boarding. They bore up so much with us she repeats. When they gave corrections they displayed it with so much sincerity and truthfulness. "I could feel that they love and care for us children and that made me too desire so much to become one of them." she nodded.

Nonetheless, after having experienced the life of prayer and reflection in the convent, she wanted to join a Contemplative Order to give more time to prayer but her Parish Priest intervened. She then, decided to join MSMHC since she was already familiar with them and knowing them well. So, after completed her Metric Exam in 1970, she joined the Congregation of MSMHC whom she had known and loved from the very first day of her schooling. Her parents were very happy with her decision and give her full support.

The Initial Formation Process, Aspirant, Postulant, Novitiate and Temporary Vows: The initial formation are days of preparation to meet the Bridegroom. She was very attentive for the arrival of the Master. She said she was not the best in her batch or most capable one but her willingness to do any work made her Formators to be fond of asking her any work particularly in emergencies. She was always available and ever ready when asking any help. She said she couldn't do big things and she was not smart if compare to others but she wondered she was always called. Finally, she herself concluded may be they saw that I liked working. In this way her formative journey was serene and calm. She took her first profession on 1973.

The Sketch of her formative journey:-

1970	Aspirant	Barpeta
1971	postulant	Barpeta
1972-73	Novice	Peachland
1973-74	Juniorate	Peachland
1979	Perpetual profession	



Community Living, Prayer and Time Table:

Sr. Albetina developed the art of living community life of prayer and sacrifice from the boarding itself.

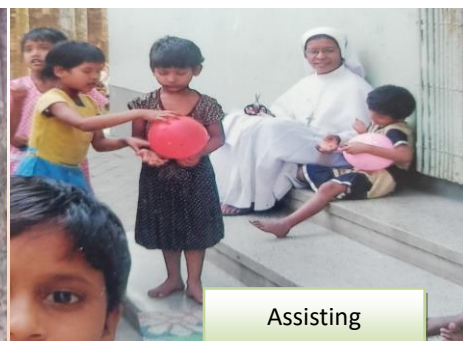
She is quite and recollect. She is at home with the atmospheres of silence and solitude. All though

there were temptation to desire to be more gifted to do things better in order to be more useful to the Mother Congregation but she wishes not to displease God by complaining. She recalled time table sometimes made the comfort zone difficult to get up in the morning yet thinking of meeting the Lord she always like to be on time for prayers. In this way she helps herself overcoming little temptations and difficulties. "Nothing is impossible in love" commended St. Therese of Lisieux. She believes that love makes every sacrifice and challenge bearable and that is alike with Sister.

A True and Committed Daughter of Msmhc: One of the shining and captivating virtues of MSMHC is simplicity. Sr. Albetina endowed very much with this virtue she remains simple till today. She was mostly assigned to take care of boarders but she did it with utmost care and tenderness. She was remembered for her selfless sacrifices in assisting the boarders. No matter the sleeplessness nights when children get sick, checking on their well being at mid-night, waking them up for toilets and getting up before them in the morning to assist them. She was not minding the climate changing but gave them invariable assistance with great esteem. She was very fond to recall with joy the many significant events of being with the children. One of those is the memory of planting and cutting paddy. Boys and girls were brightening up with happiness when these seasons come. The family spirit was so vivacious those days even in the boarding. She was swell up telling another great joy that is stitching the torn clothes of boarders, abled to give them advice, managed to wipe their tears and to console them, and when they behave well and bring good result.



Gardening



Assisting



Visiting & Catechizing

She was assigned with the following Responsibilities:

1973-74	St. Margaret, Peachland	Juniorate
1975-1977	Dibrugarh	Boarders Assistant
1978-1980	Chokihola	School Assistant
1881-1882	Doomdoma	Pastoral Visit (Arunachalist missing group)
1983	Barpeta Road	Teaching and Boarding In Charge
1983-1985	Bengtol	School Assistant and Boarding In Charge
1986-1987	Siliguri	Pastoral Ministry
1987-1991	Tetenbari St. Mary's	Teaching in the School and Boarders Assistant
1992	Bongaigoan	For few Months
1992-1997	Nimikal Andra-Pradesh	Teaching & Boarders In Charge
1998-2000	Shantipur Kanur District	Boarders Assistant
2001-2003	St.Mary's Kudda	School Assistant
2004-2008	Boropohari	School Assistant
2009-2011	Dhajea	Teaching in the School
2012-2013	Bandel	Children's home
2014-2016	Ranchi	Praying Ministry
2016-2018	Bandel	Praying Ministry
2018-2019	Boropohari	Praying Ministry
2019-2021	Siliguri	Praying Ministry
2022-2025 (At Present)	Oodlabari	Praying Ministry

Challenges: She is blessed with the spirit to be able to work with all those whom the Mother Congregation assigned. She was not remembered to have had a big challenges in her mission instead she experienced love and support from others which she considers as a rewarding experience of God to be able to feel others love. When asked about adaptability to new cultures and environment. Her response was very positive, she didn't have to struggle with languages and food habits because she spent most of her years in the place where she knew the language and her food. The one painful memory was the lost of her dear ones. The death of her parents' brothers and Sister brought great pain and lose to her. She has to surrender and pray.

Strength and Inspiration: She is very much inspired by the holiness of her Founder and Pioneers and Sr.Carmela Lakra her novice assistant. The reason of her tender love for Jesus was their great example. They are her guide and teacher to live a life of discipline and holiness. She listens to their teaching with immense reverence. She would never go to bed without completing her personal prayers. She is a woman of prayers in and out. She lives the tradition of the congregation handed on by the Founder and Pioneers to the mark. She is very polite and discipline in words and deeds. As an aspirant she was appreciated by her mistress for her cleanliness and tidiness. She keeps herself up to date. She is a thinker but seldom express only when necessary, "Be polite if you wish others speak well of you" she acclaimed.

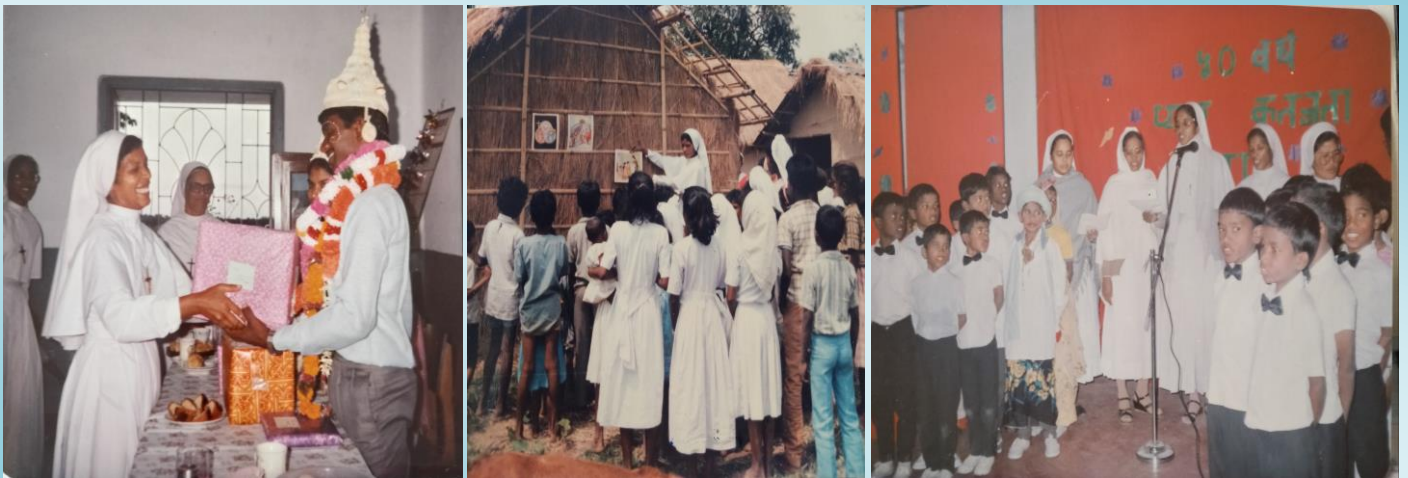
The Joys of Religious Life: Looking at Sr. Albetina one will be impressed by her serenity and calmness. She endures hardships without complaint, trying to live patiently without disturbing others. As a senior member she knows herself and her needs. As long as she is healthy she wants to manage everything by herself and that is her joy. She said one thing use to bother her that she should not give trouble to others in her old age. She is very joyful and happy to live together in community sharing everything in common. She likes learning different culture and enjoys the food habits of others in the community.

Spiritual Lessons and Passing down Traditions: She learnt from the pioneers traditions and spiritual way of looking at things. Pioneers were so dutiful and Saintly. They were very focus and they don't have the blame game nature. They never waste time. "I have seen how they struggle to do things without complaining. I remember some pioneers whom I have a chance to live with, were doing so much for us and the society, even when they have to be deprived of many equipment in the village. They were godly in all their conduct words and deeds. Partiality and special friend were not in their list. All could feel their love. Even when they give correction they gave with sincerity and truthfulness."

Live a Life of Purpose and Love: Sr. Albetina believes the most imperative quality for a religious and missionary Sister is purity of thoughts and intentions in being and doing. She expresses as a missionary she needs to see things with right motivations and take it rightly. She wishes for all, to love and respect one another. She recalled the olden times, where love and respect is seen everywhere, no one fears to travel anywhere whether by bus or train. In the community there is no looking down at any one. "We were taught to be true human being in front of God and others, but sad to see these days" she uttered, "people have lost the sense of respect for others."

Conclusion: Sr. Albetina continues to inspire others through her life of silence and prayer. She is feeling that God wants her to pray more. She added sitting in His presence helps her to understand herself and others better and to take things positively. She is fully enthused by the word of her Founder Venerable Stephen Ferrando saying, "the more you love him the more you long to be with Him, and the more you long to pray." The quietness often speaks about the reflection of the orderly and peaceful nature of God. Sr. Albetina is fashioned with quietness and calmness, tidiness and systematic. She keeps everything in order. She is gifted with the knack of cooking. She makes good and tasty chutney and her greatest joy is to see other enjoys eating what she makes.

We have many things to benefit from Sr. Albetina. She doesn't carry with her problems and difficulties because she has learnt to surrender everything into the hands of God. She never compares her life with others. In fact, she wishes she could have a gift of preaching to inspire people since she knows the language of the place but she considers the preaching as a gift willed by God. Although, she desires she is not jealous for those who have it instead she praises God through them. She is happy with what God give her and did her best in her capacity to love and care for others. It doesn't matter even if her job is little. She would love to be remembered as a good religious Sister. She realizes loving God has a great reward and doing things sincerely is a blessing especially when unseen by others. We need to do things for Jesus like Mother Mary did she expressed. We pray that the good Lord continues to journey with Sr. Albetina.



Rendered love and Service: *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" Mk 10:45.*

Then*Now*

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.” John 15:9

