

Eternal Rest Grant Unto her, O Lord



SR. ANITA TOPNO MSMHC

(1971 - 2024)

Born on: 25.08.1971

Professed on: 08.12.1995

Died on: 18.07.2024

*"We are confident, I say, and would
prefer to be away from the body
and at home with the lord"*

- (2 Cor 5:8).

GOOD BYE DEAREST SR. ANITA TOPNO

(19.07.2024)

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

1 Peter 5:10

Dear and Rev. Fathers, Sr. Sini Mathew the Provincial Superior, the Provincial Councillors, sisters, family members, parents, brothers, friends and relatives of our beloved Sr. Anita Topno, I stand here deeply saddened by the departure of our beloved Sr. Anita Topno to her eternal reward yesterday morning! I wish to share with you our heartfelt condolences and prayerful accompaniment of the entire General Council and every member of our Congregation to all of you who mourn the early demise of our dear Sr. Anita Topno.

Having been blessed with a natural inclination towards caring for the sick and elderly, Sr. Anita dedicated her life to the service of the Church and the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians. Throughout the 29 years of her religious life, Sr. Anita remained steadfast in her faith, found solace in prayer and nurtured a deep love for the Eucharistic Lord. She lived out the values of the congregation, lovingly learning the languages and cultures of those she served, ensuring that everyone felt valued and cherished in her company. Her love for people knew no bounds and she endeared herself to all with her approachable nature and welcoming presence. As a devout missionary and compassionate nurse, she put others before herself and her life was a living testament to spiritual selflessness, unwavering faith, deep compassion, and boundless enthusiasm for missionary work. She had a special grace of devoting herself to serving others, and dedicated her life to spreading the message of love and hope, especially among the sick, the poor and the forgotten.

Sister Anita's commitment to her vocation was exceptional. She embraced challenges with grace and met them with determination, inspiring all who worked alongside her. Whether teaching, or nursing, or pastoral care, she always filled it with an abundance of kindness and offered solace to those in need. Her profound love for God and humanity shone brightly in every task that she undertook, leaving an indelible mark on everyone she encountered. In addition to her missionary zeal, Sister Anita possessed a gentle spirit and a warm heart that endeared her to both young and old. She was a beacon of light and a pillar of strength within our congregation and beyond.

As we all know, for the past five years, Sr. Anita was battling with cancer. But she did it bravely with unwavering faith and a never fading smile. She faced her illness with grace, never complained, and as an ideal nurse, cooperated totally with the medical procedures. Even amidst the crucial moments of her health crises, Sr. Anita's commitment to her spiritual practices was inspiring. She remained faithful and punctual to community moments of prayers and meals, leaving everyone in admiration for her disciplined and faithful spirit. She loved her community and the inmates, especially the elderly at Nirmala Niketan, Kerala and was there with them to the very end. All the sisters who lived with her, testified to her loving and daring spirit, and her ability to smile amidst pain and to spread love and joy.

Sr. Anita Topno's life resonated deeply with 1 Peter 5:10 "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." Throughout her battle with cancer, she demonstrated faith and service to others, enduring suffering as embodying the promise of God's grace, restoration, and strength. She leaves behind a legacy of love, faithfulness, and trust in God's eternal glory through Christ, inspiring all who knew her to persevere in faith and service despite life's challenges.

Beloved Sr. Anita, the Lord willed to call you home from amidst us, maybe because you were ready and fully resigned to His holy will and eternal plans. Though your time with us has been too brief, you have gone before us without regrets, having lived a life of profound purpose and devotion. You have touched

countless lives with your loving and caring demeanour. Your infectious smile, brought joy to all who had the privilege of knowing you.

It is true that we mourn your loss deeply, but we also celebrate your remarkable life and the profound impact you have made on the world around you. Beloved sister Anita, as we bid you farewell today from this earthly life, we find solace in knowing that you have found eternal peace in the loving embrace of your Heavenly Father. May your soul rest in that eternal bliss. As we lay your lifeless body to rest, we are united with you, thanking the Lord for the precious gift of you to us and the invaluable lessons you have taught us by your life and suffering. Pray for us dear Sr. Anita, that we all have the grace to love the Lord and to trust him with unwavering faith. Do continue to inspire and guide us all.

Holding dear the cherished memories of you, we bid you Goodbye with love, until we meet again, in the eternal abode prepared for us before the foundation of the world. May you rest in peace our beloved sister. Eternal rest grant upon her O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon her...

May she rest in peace, Amen.

Sr. Christine Mynsong

Superior General

MSMHC Generalate, Guwahati



FUNERAL ORATION FOR SR. ANITA TOPNO

(19.07.2024)

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me". (Psalm 23:4).

The words of Psalm 23:4 is very much alive in the person of Sr. Anita Topno who lived her life in complete surrender to the will of God, an embodiment of versatility at all times. We have gathered here today in deep sorrow to honour and remember Sr. Anita Topno a devoted servant of God who has left us to join our Heavenly Father. This gathering is not only a time to mourn our loss but also to celebrate the beautiful life, Sr. Anita lived, a life dedicated to faith, service, and love. She was a remarkable person whose life touched each of us in unique and special ways. Sr. Anita departed from our midst yesterday on the 18 July 2024 in the presence of our dear sisters leaving behind a legacy that speaks volumes of her holiness of life. She is indeed a beacon of grace, known for her unwavering faith, diligent spirit, and gentle demeanour. Born into the devout family of Mr. Joachim Topno and Ms. Flora Bage of Kamdara Village, Jharkhand she is the only daughter and one and only sister of her two elder brothers, and we are glad that both of them are present with their families to bid farewell to their dear younger sister. We appreciate their being there with us also the presence of Fr. Florence Demta sdb and other relatives. With a profound sense of mission, she responded eagerly and wholeheartedly to God's call to bring His message of hope and comfort to those in need. Throughout her life as a dedicated religious and a professional nurse Sr. Anita tirelessly ministered to the poor and the sick offering them the invaluable gift of God's presence and healing love.

As I stand here, it is difficult to find the right words to express the depth of our loss, for words fall short in describing her person. She is known for her enduring capacity amidst trials and tribulations. True to her name Anita which means “grace” in Spanish, she was a source of inspiration, a shining light and a constant presence of warmth and kindness. She possessed the rare ability to make everyone feel valued and loved, and this gathering is a testament to the many lives she has touched. Her memories are etched in our hearts as we have witnessed the heroic life of Sr. Anita Topno. We all have our own memories of our dear Sr. Anita, the moments that we will carry with us for the rest of our lives. Some of us remember the laughter we shared, the adventures we embarked on, and the quiet moments of understanding. We recall the wisdom she imparted, the support she offered during tough times, and the joy she brought into everyone. These memories are now treasures, remains of Sr. Anita’s spirit that live on in each of us.

Sr. Anita devoted her life to serving others with a sense of total commitment and great love. Her journey was marked by profound humility and an unshakeable vow to the values she held dear. She is a model of hard work and responsibility, diligently carrying out her duties with quiet determination. Her days were marked by acts of kindness, compassion, and a steadfast devotion to her religious calling. She approached every task with meticulous care, incarnating the essence of conscientiousness and reliability. She worked in various communities in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. As a nurse, she cared for the sick with tenderness and skill, easing their suffering and bringing them solace. As a superior, she led her community with humility and grace, fostering an environment where all felt welcomed and cherished. As a touring sister, she travelled far and wide, spreading the Gospel message through her words and actions. And as a teacher, she imparted wisdom and faith to her students, nurturing their spiritual growth and guiding them on their own paths of service. Sr. Anita was a dynamic and itinerant missionary, echoing the spirit of our founder Ven. Stephen Ferrando in her tireless service and perpetual motion. She embraced her calling with fervour, traversing distant lands and taking on diverse groups of people with open arms and a heart full of empathy. Her enthusiastic spirit mirrored her profound belief in the universality of God's love and the boundless reach of her mission. Her journey was one of trust and confidence in God. She carried with her the light of faith and the warmth of her compassionate soul. Her encounters with people from all walks of life left an indelible mark, inspiring many to embrace the values of love, humility, and service. Though her earthly journey has come to an end, Sr. Anita's legacy as a roving missionary continues to resonate through her enduring impact of spreading God's love to the far corners of the world.

Endurance was the hallmark of Sr. Anita's expedition in her life and mission. Through the trials and challenges that marked her alleyway, she remained steadfast in her commitment to her faith and Vocation. Her spirit was indomitable, drawing strength from her deep-rooted trust in her Divine Master. Her every action and decision were guided by this love, which illuminated her calling and infused her service with kindness and fondness.

Throughout her battle with cancer since 2019, Sr. Anita's faith in God never wavered. Her relationship with her Divine Master deepened, becoming a source of comfort and guidance during her most challenging moments. She faced her illness with remarkable grace and fortitude, never, once allowing her personal struggles to overshadow her commitment to her vocation and faith. She bore the physical test of her illness with a silent strength, hope in God and resilience that inspired all who knew her. Her enduring spirit was an inspiration of optimism and verification to the force of faith in overcoming adversity. She made no complaints about her declining health. Her focus remained steadfast on serving others and fulfilling her religious duties with keenness and love. She approached each day with a serene acceptance of God's plan for her life, finding relief in prayer and drawing strength from her deep spiritual convictions.

On 6th July 2024 she was brought back to Bandel from Kerala owing to her deteriorating health and she was surrounded by our sisters, family and friends. Ever since her arrival to Bandel she was found with difficulty in movements, breathing and was becoming weak. Yet, Sr. Anita remained calm, serene, deeply grateful to the congregation, her superiors, and the dedicated medical professionals who cared for her with compassion and skill. She expressed her gratitude with humility and sincerity, recognizing and cherishing the support and care she received with a heart full of appreciation and was well prepared to be in the embrace of her beloved, Jesus.

Sr. Anita lived her life with a sense of purpose and passion that was truly inspiring. She had a way of seeing the best in people, encouraging us to strive for our dreams, and reminding us of the importance of love and

kindness. She bore witness to the passion of Christ in her body through the sufferings she underwent while she possessed an enduring smile and her lips moved in constant prayer to God in praise and supplications. Whether through her prayers, her acts of charity, or her gentle words of encouragement Sr. Anita was a beacon of light and hope for all who knew her.

As we move forward, let us carry her spirit with us, striving to live our lives in a way that honours her memory and the values she held dear. We are confident that she continues to intercede for us, praying for our holiness and well-being, guiding us from her place of glory.

I am reminded of the words of John Donne from the poem “Death be not proud.”

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee,

Mighty and dreadful, for thou are not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,

not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Death opens a space in which a different kind of talk is possible, a different kind of remembering and a different kind of thinking are possible. As we continue with this memorial, dear Sisters and brothers, let us share our stories, our tears, and our laughter. Let us remember Sr. Anita, who is known for her, vibrant spirit, loving nature, and a person possessing extraordinary qualities within. May the beautiful soul of our dear Sr. Anita Topno rest in God's abode and may we find peace in the knowledge that her spirit will always be with us, guiding and comforting us as we continue on, our own journeys of faith. Rest peacefully, dear Sr. Anita, in the presence of the Lord, whom you loved and served so faithfully.

As we celebrate this Eucharist, we commend your soul to the Lord and pray that he clothes your soul in the garment of salvation and give you a rightful place to dwell with him forever in the heavenly mansion. Intercede for us before Jesus, beloved Sr. Anita Topno.

Sr. Sini Mathew MSMHC

Provincial Superior

Mary Immaculate Province, Kolkata



FOND REMEMBRANCE

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (2 Tim 4:7).

The words of St. Paul are very much true in the life of our dear Sr. Anita Topno. She knew very well that the blessings she looked forward to had been provided, as she held on her faith in the one to whom she committed her entire life. Sr. Anita was an amazingly brave woman, who faced all difficult situations of life with undaunted courage and faith. She had the ability to endure hardship without bitterness or despair.

It was in May 2019 Sr. Anita was diagnosed colon cancer. The news was shocking, as she was the first person in the province to be diagnosed with cancer. As she travelled to Kerala with this fatal illness, none of us knew that she will stay on in Kerala and become part of Nirmala Niketan community. She co-operated well with her treatment and happily responded to the care given to her. She was gentle, calm and generated joy around. She lived in joyful surrender the last five years of her life, because she knew the purpose of her life. Her unfailing faith in God and to the Superiors was very visible in her life journey. The joyful acceptance of sickness proved that she was preparing to meet the Lord.

We, the members of the community of Nirmala Niketan would like to express our sentiments of gratitude for all what she had been to the community and mission over here. Sr. Anita could manage any area of work, in spite of the language barrier and ill health. From the moment she felt better, after the first phase of treatment, she had been very active in the community for almost three and half years. She was everywhere, cleaning the house, helping in kitchen, helping in Parish for weekly cleaning and decorations, welcoming guests and preparing their rooms, etc. Her presence brought in much relief and comfort to every member in the community. She also found joy in maintaining the flower garden and did as much as possible to add beauty and colour. In every way, she made effort to contribute to the community and all the inmates.

She was very friendly with the parish people and was able to communicate God's love through her few words of Malayalam and smile. She took pain in learning Malayalam. She was able to read to certain extent and by hearted all the possible prayers. Many people kept enquiring about her health condition when she was unable to go for Holy Mass. Her friendly and compassionate nature with the senior citizens in the house was very much appreciated. She spent time with them listening and doing little things for them. She was with senior citizens daily an hour of adoration and Rosary. Her active participation in adoration and rosary is very much valued and our senior citizens enjoyed her presence. She knew very well the medicines of each of them and she could easily dispense those. She was available even at night to assist the inmates who were sick. She also taught sisters to be more organised in maintaining the medical record and follow up the medicines of each of them. She really practiced the fifth Gospel, even though she was not familiar with the place and language.

She foresaw the needs of others and reached out to all in need. She thought of the comfort of others and went many extra miles with her love and kindness. She was energetic and enthusiastic, vibrant and young in spirit, courageous and optimistic. Her conversations were always encouraging others to think positive and to do good in life. She always spoke the truth in love, expressed her opinions firmly, but gently, and always with respect.

Dear Sr. Anita, we treasure the time we spent with you in the community and thank God for the blessings He showered upon us through you. Your life of fidelity, commitment to your mission, unfailing devotion and your loving nature, will continue to inspire us.

Adieu dear Sr. Anita till we meet at Jesus feet

Sr. Molly James

Superior

Nirmala Niketan, Kerala



WE WILL MISS YOU DEAR SR. ANITA TOPNO

"Come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest" was the invitation given by our Lord to Sr. Anita Topno at the early dawn of yesterday (18.07.2024). Sr. Anita literally received this invitation of our Lord, and flew to heaven silently free from all her pain, and struggles of life.

With heavy hearts and tear-filled eyes, we received the news of the untimely passing away of our beloved batch mate Sr. Anita Topno. Yes, the Lord who was the author of her life called Sr. Anita back to himself, who was her sole companion during her last 5 years of extreme lone journey of life.

On behalf of my batch mates 52 of us, I stand here to accord our heartfelt love, prayers and gratitude to Sr. Anita Topno for being with us during the last 29 years of her life as a true friend to each of us and the unceasing prayers she had offered for us especially during her last 5 painful years of her earthly sojourn. Today as we stand before her lifeless body, we treasure the sweet memories of our living together and with deep sorrow we raise our minds and hearts to God in prayer for the repose of her soul.

Bloom where you are planted is the beautiful song of symphony comes to our mind when we remember our dear friend Sr. Anita Topno. She bloomed to the full wherever she was sent and emanated the fragrance of God's love to everyone around and whomever she served. She was a person of deep faith and full of indomitable courage. She lived her commitment wonderfully well till the end.

We knew the untold suffering she was going through these past 5 years of her life, yet we never heard a whisper of regret or complain about her illness instead she faced it bravely and thus, today she stands as a model for all of us. After knowing fully well the seriousness of her fatal illness she was more fervent and sacrificing in carrying out her responsibility and being faithful in living her commitment to the full. Her fight against cancer was marked by incredible strength and resilience. Even in the face of immense challenges, Sr. Anita remained positive and hopeful, becoming a source of inspiration to us and to all who came into her life. Her courage and determination to suffer for the sake of Christ were truly reflected in her silent suffering. She was ever ready to meet her beloved Lord. We were professed 65, and sad to say that Sr. Anita is the 3rd member to succumb to this fatal illness Cancer.

In God alone she sufficed. And this she proved through her very life of involvement in the daily chores of her community activities cheerfully and welcomed each day as God given opportunities to be battled with in the midst of pain and helplessness. In Sr. Anita we lost a genuine friend, an authentic missionary above all a beloved batch mate of 29 long years of our togetherness. Yet, we feel proud today that she has gone ahead of us to meet her Lord in heaven to intercede for us.

With deep sentiments of sorrow, we cherish your sweet memories of cheerful life and bid you good bye dear Sr. Anita till we meet again in the kingdom of God.

Sr. Ancy Joseph
Batchmate of Sr. Anita (1995)







**“In this life we cannot do great things.
We can only do small things with great love.”**

- Mother Teresa