



*"Faith in the resurrection
opens us to fraternal communion
beyond the threshold of death ...".
(RoL 24)*



Today, 9 June 2017, at 5.00 a.m. (Brazilian time)
in the community of Querência do Norte/PR
SR SELMA DAS GRAÇAS ANTUNES BRANCO

went back to the Father.

She was 66 years old and 38 years of religious life.

"I feel it's worth to donate life to the service of the Kingdom," in these words of Sr. Selma, we find the synthesis of her life all endowed in following Jesus Good Shepherd, who suddenly called her to himself while she is in full swing in the pastoral ministry.

Selma was born on 11 June 1950 in Campo Belo do Sul/SC. She would be celebrating her birthday on Sunday, Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, in whose bosom she is now welcomed joyfully, as she was welcomed on 19 October 19, 1950, the day of her baptism.

Educated in a large family where the faith was breathed through the simplicity of everyday life, Selma was the youngest of ten children and learned to love the Lord through her relationships with her brothers and sisters.

She matured her religious vocation in the family context and entered the Congregation on 18 March 1974 at Caxias do Sul/RS where she lived the period of her initial formation: Postulancy from 1975 to 1977 and entered the Novitiate on 30 January 1977.

She made her first profession on 6 January 1979 at Caxias do Sul and was sent to the apostolate at Porto Alegre/RS - Murialdo until 1981. In 1982 she was at Bento Gonçalves/RS and then returned to Caxias - Cohab from 1983 to 1988. On 1 January 1986, during her stay in this community, she made her perpetual profession, taking upon herself Psalm 23, as the Psalm that paced the steps of her whole life.

Sr Selma manifested openness to God's plan for her and was always available wherever she was asked for a service. Joyful and enthusiastic about the mission, she loved the sisters in the community and knew how to foster a peaceful, fraternal climate. She cultivated a profound spiritual life and kept alive the sense of belonging to the Congregation. Always very welcoming and respectful to everyone, she knew how to donate a smile which led them to open their hearts, especially the little ones and poor she met.

She lived the pastoral ministry with great commitment and dedication, and carried it out with simplicity and faith in all the pastoral realities where she worked.

Sr. Selma placed her gifts both in the pastoral mission and in the needs of the Congregation with great availability. From 1989 to 1997 she was sent to Vera Cruz do Oeste/PR, then to Caxias - Cohab and Caxias - São Ciro, where from 1991 to 1996 she served as Formator, first to the aspirants and the postulants and then to the novices. From 1993 to 1996, she was the Provincial Vicar, an evangelical service of authority and lived it with a mother's heart.

In the mission she carried out between 1998 and 2015, in the communities of Bodoquena/MS, Campo Grande/MS (2004 and 2015), Santana do Livramento/RS, Caxias do Sul – Santissima Trindade, Campo Belo do Sul, Sr. Selma dedicated herself in the catechetical coordination both in parish and diocesan levels, in the formation of leaders, in the animation of ecclesial communities, in the youth ministry seeking to promote professionalism, helping teenagers and the youth get out from drug addiction, in the health ministry and in liturgical animation. She loved the Word of God and strove to attract persons to it, forming biblical groups with families.

From 2005 to 2006 she devoted herself to the formation of the Juniors and for a year she also served as Provincial councilor. In several communities: Campo Belo, Caxias-Cohab and Bodoquena, Sr. Selma as the animator wisely coordinated and carried out this service with great care, discretion, cultivating the life of prayer and an open ecclesial vision and in solidarity with the most marginalized.

In 2016, Sr. Selma enthusiastically welcomed the mandate of opening a new community in Querência do Norte/PR, a very poor mission and needy of evangelization. And it is precisely here where, due to a heart attack, the Good Shepherd gave her the appointment to bring her to his Kingdom. It is the dawn of a Brazilian day where the Church celebrates the Memorial of St. Ephrem, hymnographer of God, to whom our sister united herself to sing forever the wonders of the Lord.

Thank you Sr. Selma, for your life joyfully donated to the Lord and his people. Thank you for bequeathing to us the example of a Pastorella who was able to reveal the face of the Beautiful Shepherd with the simplicity and joy of one who had encountered Love and had not abandoned Him anymore.

Intercede for the journey of our Religious Family and in particular for the sisters who will shortly be convened to celebrate the 9th General Chapter.

Sr Marta Finotelli
Superior general

Roma, 9 June 2017
Memorial of St. Ephrem