

OBITUARY

Sister John Marie Lacson, CPS

JULY 20, 1946 – APRIL 2, 2023



“Lord, make me an instrument
of peace.”

This simple and, yet, profound prayer summarizes so well the life of our dear Sr. John Marie. Released to God’s loving hands on the morning of Palm Sunday, Sr. John Marie made her final journey. We would agree that Sister’s Holy Week, which was lived over many years, was complete and Sister John Marie could finally take her rest.

Elly Lacson was born on July 20, 1946 in Manila, Philippines, into a large, loving and faith filled family. As time passed, little did Elly know how much her life would change and bring her to different countries and situations where her ability to be an instrument of peace would find expression. Elly entered the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood at St. Bernard's in Toronto, Canada on September 15, 1973. Sister's Profession of Vows were celebrated also at St. Bernard's. Sr. John Marie's Perpetual Vows were especially meaningful on August 15, 1981. Sister was the first young woman to enter our Congregation from the Philippines. Although Sr. John Marie valued her Canadian citizenship, she was a true daughter of her home country. On her holidays, Sister always took time to help with the care of the poor and needy. This attitude of caring and of responsibility was deeply engrained in Sr. John Marie and, indeed, in her entire family. Sister deeply treasured her close family bonds.

Sr. John Marie used her chemist training right up until her death. Whether in East Africa, Philippines or Canada, Sister's notes or recipes were faithfully written in chemical formulae. She would often need to translate her recipes into an understandable language for the many non-chemists among us. Sister's joy was to take care of and feed others so she was often looking for new recipes which came mostly from her family.

From 1981 – 1998, Sister shared her caring spirit and talents in East Africa. Sr. John Marie liked to share stories and her story telling skills would release laughter within her listeners. Behind the good humour, caring heart, and generous spirit, it became obvious over time that Sister's health was suffering. She ministered over her religious life in Canada in Mariann Home, St. Anne's and especially left a deep impression as she welcomed guests of all ages to St. Bernard's. Stories still circulate about her willingness to make sure that no one ever went hungry. Sister's quiet spirit, was also filled with strength and resolve, and she was quick to unmask whatever was hurtful to others.

Sister's attentiveness extended beyond humans to God's animal creatures and to the care of plants. During her final weeks, Sr. John Marie found joy and solace in her many guppies and the orchids that she faithfully tended.

On the eve of Sr. John Marie's death, she spoke with her sister, Estie. Sister thanked Estie for the sacrifices she had made to bring her to Canada. It seemed a fitting way for Sr. John Marie to wind up a life of concern for others.

Sister often spoke about her dear family and the upbringing that they had in faith, and in assisting others. No one in need who came to the family home left empty handed. It was this same strong sense of service that lasted right up to the end of Sr. John Marie's life. Her last night, as usual, Sister visited some retirement residents leaving a treat, a hug and wishing a "good night."

That same day, Sr. John Marie mentioned that her heart pain was getting worse and that she prayed God would come for her before she needed to be bedridden and helpless. God was listening and merciful. Sr. John Marie died sitting in her chair ready for the day. Quietly, and without fuss, which was her favourite way, Sister returned home to the God she loved and served so well.

Dear Sr. John Marie, we your community and family, thank you for your presence in our lives and for your selfless witness and your good humour even when you were in pain. You began every day with prayer, with many little services to community and with your ever ready question. "Do you have something for me to do?" In remembrance of you, we will continue to do whatever we can for others, especially for those most in need. In your own uncomplicated way, you always worked to bring order and peace. Please continue to pray for us who miss you very much that in this time, desperate for peace, we may be instruments of God's holy peace.

Your CPS Sisters.