



**In Loving Memory
of Our Sr. M. Gemma Rodrigues, CPS
Who Departed This Life On 12th January 2023
at Panjim Goa India**

It is hard to believe the truth that Our Lord called Sr. Gemma (Graciana) Rodrigues home while on her home leave in Panjim Goa India on 12th January 2023 at 11 am. Indian time.

Sr. Gemma Rodrigues was born on February 21st 1944 to the late Mr. Miguel Francis Rodrigues and the late Maria Cajetana Po' in Wete Pemba, Zanzibar. She is the 5th born among her 10 siblings- four boys and six sisters. Loving sister of late Sr. Isabel CPS, Lilia/Late Antonio (Portugal), Fernando/Felicidad (UK), William/Late Waheeda, Late Antonio/ Philomena, Late Alzira/Late Caetano, Jose/Maria Graca, Bella/Late Joseph, Goretti/Late Joffre.

She sat for her primary certificate in a catholic mission school in Wete Pemba in 1959 and in 1960 took a certificate in shorthand and typing in Pemba. At the age of 15 Years, Sr. Gemma was employed as a typist in one of the Government departments. Besides office work, Sr. Gemma used to help her mother with the housework and also in making dresses for her sisters and so on. During her teen years, she used to take a keen interest in games and singing well. "I should say they used to be my hobby", she used to sing in the church choir and participated in concerts. She was a member of the Legion of Mary "I just couldn't keep away from this society as I liked it very much". As time passed, she had to give a serious thought about her future, and what she intended to do. It was at the age of about 12 or 13 that she made her first intention of becoming a nun and at the age of 21 her dreams became true and she joined the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood on the 20th of November 1965 in Kifungilo, Tanzania. She entered the novitiate on the 2nd of February 1967, in Riruta, Kenya. She made her first profession on the 2nd of February 1969 and her final vows on the 15th of August 1975 in Riruta, Kenya.

Sister's first missioning was in Precious Blood Girls Secondary School Riruta where she served wholeheartedly for 17 years (1969 -1987) as a school secretary and as a matron, from 1987 -1993. Sr. Gemma served in the house and kitchen of various stations in East African Province - Kifungilo, Kilungu, Machui and Polisingisi. From 1994 -2000 she worked as a school Matron and in charge of the boarding at Kalimoni. She was later transferred to Welezo Old Age Home in Zanzibar from 2001-2004, Riruta from 2005 – 2009 where she worked as an assistant house superior and again to Welezo Old Age Home from 2009 - 2019 where she worked as the Administrator.

In 2020, Sr. Gemma retired at the Provincial House Riruta Kenya to take up the prayer ministry. Although not a healthy person for years due to diabetes, she carried all these challenges bravely without a complaint.

On 16th October 2022, she left for her home leave in Panjim Goa India, where She took ill and was admitted to the Hospital. She was later discharged though her condition was still not good. She died peacefully in the early hours of January 12th,2023, giving back her soul into the hands of God, whom she loved so ardently and served so faithfully.

Sr. Gemma was a valiant woman, who surrendered joyfully to God's guidance relying solely on Him throughout her life. She was a woman of deep faith and wisdom. She was hardworking and did her work diligently. She was true to mother Paula's word "Neither work nor official duties in themselves make a life meritorious, but the attitude with which they are taken up and carried out." She was an all rounded person, she gave her best in what she did and was ready to be sent for mission wherever she was needed. When she could no longer take strenuous work, she bore her suffering and pain with patience and love and honour and glory of God. This has been witnessed by her family members in her last days of life. She appreciated all the services that was rendered to her and was peaceful to the end. When she could talk, she joined her sister and nieces in singing the songs to our lady.

Sr. Gemma was very fond of her family. She kept in touch with them and was deeply concerned about their welfare. She prayed for them and kept the sisters in Riruta well informed about her family. We as East Africa Province are sad that we will not have an opportunity to celebrate her final journey, but we are very grateful for the kindness shown to her by the family during this time of her illness. God in His own ways has allowed it, she will be laid to rest with her family members. The bond she created will remain forever. May she now enjoy the promise made to her by her spouse in all eternity.

Thank you, Sr. Gemma, for what you have been as our fellow sister and for what you did for the Congregation and the Church. May you now experience the fulfillment of your longing and be forever secure in God's love.

"BEHOLD, I AM THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD; MAY IT BE DONE TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD' (Lk. 1:38)