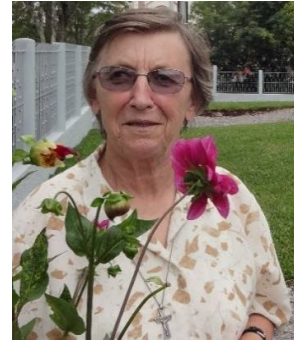




*"Faith in the resurrection
opens up fraternal communion
beyond the threshold of death ...".*
(RoL 24)



Today, 7 October 2024 at 6.55 am (local time)
in the community of Betania-Caxias do Sul, Brazil- our sister
IRACEMA Sr M. GEMA SIGNOR
has parted this earthly life.
She was 85 years old and 63 years of religious life.

The praise of the Lord remains forever! These words of the psalmist sum up the sixty-three years of consecrated life totally given by our sister Gema, who today was called by the Father to receive the reward as a good and faithful Pastorella.

Iracema was born on 29 March 1939 in Bento Gonçalves/RS (Brazil) and was baptized on 4 April of the same year in the parish of her hometown. She entered the Congregation in the community of Caxias do Sul - S. Leopoldo on 2 October 1956 and the novitiate on 1 February 1960. She made her first profession on 2 February 1961, taking the name of Sr Maria Gema. After her first profession, she was sent to the community of Fagundes Varela (BR), and in 1962 she returned to the community of Caxias do Sul - S. Leopoldo where she made her perpetual profession on 2 February 1966.

Sr Gema has lived an intense and fruitful pastoral ministry in various apostolic realities of Brazil: 1967 Porto Alegre - Partenon; 1968 S. Paolo - Jardim; 1970 Getulio Vargas; 1973 Caxias do Sul - S. Leopoldo; 1974 Cazuzza Ferreira; 1977 S. Paolo - Jardim; 1978 Cazuzza Ferreira; 1984 Caxias do Sul - S. Leopoldo; 1989 Caxias do Sul - S. Ciro; 1990 Cazuzza Ferreira; 1991 Redenção do Araguaia; 1993 Caxias do Sul - S. Leopoldo; 2012 Anastácio; 2013 Caxias do Sul - S. Catarina; 2015 Caxias do Sul – Cohab; 2017 Caxias do Sul - Terceira Légua and in 2018 she was welcomed into the "Betania" community of Caxias do Sul where she lived peacefully and joyfully until today, when suddenly she ended her earthly pilgrimage. We thank the sisters who during this time showed affection to our sister, as well as the personnel who took care

of her with dedication, and the family members who were always present in her life and mission.

The sisters describe her as a Pastorella who put her life entirely at the service of the pastoral mission, following the example of Jesus Good Shepherd. She did not reserve times or days for herself, but dedicated herself to people, taking care of them in times of need. Sr Gema was a missionary who loved God, the Church and the people of God. She did not mind her own strength to help others and build communities, especially in the most challenging and needy places where she lived. In the Congregation, she was always very generous, helpful and charitable with the sisters. She had a very playful and joyful character that won everyone over. We can call her the sister of Joy, and she did not like to see anyone sad. She made herself available for community activities, she loved taking care of the vegetable garden, the garden and nature. And she took care of everything and everyone with great love and kindness.

We can say of her what Pope Francis asked of the Pastors: "A Pastorelle with the smell of the sheep". She lived involving himself in the lives of people, communities, and the poor, with many concrete initiatives in health and pastoral care; she cared for the sick with passion, helped peasant families during harvest time, and was always present, bringing the life of Christ. Her presence, in fact, was a sign of the presence of God who cares for His people.

In recent years, already in the community of Betania, even when unable to walk, Sr Gema always asked to go to a mission community and until the last breath, she helped in everything she could.

Dearest Sr Gema, as we celebrate our 86th anniversary of Foundation, we entrust you to the Father's Mercy and thank the Good Shepherd for the wonderful gift of your pastoral zeal and for your joy in living as a Pastorella serving the most needy. We ask you to intercede for the gift of Peace and holy vocations.

Sr Aminta Sarmiento Puentes
Superior General

Mexico City, 7 October 2024
Feast of our Lady of the Rosary