



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Soci t  de Marie
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July 8, 2024

Biography of Death Notice N. 8

The Region of India recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Oscar KERKETTA**, of the Maria Nivas Community in Budakata, Odisha, India, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on June 23, 2024, in Odisha, India, at the age of 52 with 26 years of religious profession.

Bro. Oskar Kerketta SM was born on August 8, 1971 in Bihabail Village in Tainser Parish in Simdega District of Jharkhand State in India. Bro. Oscar Kerketta is the son of Hilarus Kerketta and Catherina Saseng Kerketta. Bro. Oscar Kerketta's father was a farmer, and his mother was a housewife. Bro. Oscar had four siblings: one sister and three brothers.

Bro. Oscar Kerketta's early education started late due to his family's financial

struggles. He started studying in the village school in Bihabail at the age of 12. He studied from 1st grade to 5th grade in Bihabail village and studied from 6th grade in Saint Joseph Roman Catholic Middle School, Tainser. While studying in 6th standard, he was influenced by Father Augustine and had a desire to become a religious, but he did not reveal it to anyone.

He completed 7th and 8th grade in Kalyan High School, Tainser and his 9th and 10th grade in the Government School in Kersai in 1993. He completed his 11th and 12th grades at Kurdeg Inter-College, Labdera in 1995. In 1995, Mr. Sunil, a close friend of Bro. Oscar from the Kerketta's village, had returned to the village after participating in a vocation camp at the Marianist community in Ranchi. He told Oscar about the Marianists and about their community life. Then Oscar met Bro. Ananias Tete, another Marianist religious from Oscar's village. He contacted Bro. Ananias and sought his assistance so that he could attend the second vocation camp that was conducted in the same year. "In the same vocation camp, I was accepted to begin my Aspirancy program." When he spoke about his vocation story before his Jubilee celebration in February 2024, Oscar said: "It was difficult for me to go to Ranchi in a very short time and to leave the house for the first time. My sister helped me, and I went to Ranchi for the first time in June 1995. There I entered the Aspirancy program as a candidate in Gyan Deep. The hope was that I would become a priest or go back after studying for some time. God's will was different and I happily spent 25 years as a Brother".

His religious life began with his initial formation at Gyan Deep, Lowadih in 1995. He was then accepted to begin his novitiate in 1996. He had gone through his novitiate formation from June 1996 to May 1998 at Nirmal Deep, in Ranchi. After completing 2 years at the Marianist Novitiate in Ranchi, he professed first vows on May 1, 1998 at Soparom Church, in Ranchi.

After professing his first vows, he was sent to Chaminade Nilaya to have a community experience for a year – 1998 to 1999. During this time, he was actively involved in various aspects of community life and ministry. After this one year of experience at Chaminade Nilaya, he began his philosophical studies at UD (University of Dayton program), at Deepahalli, Bangalore from May 1, 1999 to 2002. After completing his studies in philosophy, he worked as a teacher in Prabhat Tara Middle School from 2002 to 2004 at Singhpur, Ranchi. Meanwhile, on October 12, 2003, he professed his perpetual vows at Prabhat Tara School,

Singhpur, Ranchi. After professing his perpetual vows, he served as a missionary in the Philippines from September 23, 2004 to 2013.

He has served the Society of Mary in India since his return from Philippines. He was appointed as formator in the Aspirancy program in Bangalore and also served at Asha Deep Community in Binda in RC Middle School, Roro for a year from September 3, 2013 to 2014. He was an Assistant Scholastic director in Bangalore from May 2014 to 2015. After this appointment, he was appointed as the director of the Aspirants from 2015 to 2017. In 2017, he had the opportunity to go to Chicago, USA to continue his training as a formator.

After completing his studies in the USA, he was again appointed to work with the Candidates and Pre-Novices from September 2018 to 2020. At the end of his term as Aspirancy director, he was asked to teach at Prabhat Tara Middle School in Singhpur, Ranchi. He served there as teacher from July 2, 2020 to June 13, 2022. From there he was assigned to Barh Marianist community to teach English at the Institute. In June 2023, the Institute at Barh was closed due to various reasons. Bro. Oscar was assigned as director of CRDP program at Budakata in Odisha. At the same time, he taught at St. Joseph School, Budakata. It was during this time at Budakata, he became ill and was admitted in the hospital at Nuwagawn. He died at this hospital on June 23, 2024.

Bro. Oscar was known for his humility, gentleness, and profound joy and happiness, which he used to inspire and educate those around him. Beyond his life as a committed Marianist brother, he has touched the lives of many people who met him. He leaves behind a legacy of faith, service, and love that will endure in the hearts of all who knew him. He followed the footsteps of Blessed Fr. Chaminade and lived his life till the last breath for the growth and development of the Society of Mary in India. He taught people by his words, deeds and gestures of love.

He was humble like Our Mother Mary in accepting the plan of God. He had wonderfully followed the teachings of the Lord and run his race faithfully. Fr. André Joseph Fétis, SM., Superior General of the Society of Mary wrote in his letter to the Region, "We all knew him as a brother full of life, enthusiastic, positive, joyful and very fraternal. That's what always made him so pleasant to be around. Beyond the always mysterious moment of the unexpected death of a loved one, we want to remember above all the gift that Brother Oscar was for

each and every one of us. We want to remember his generosity, which led him to serve not only in India but also in the Philippines, where he stayed for almost ten years and where his presence was particularly important. We also knew him as a formator, attentive to the first stage of formation, that of the Aspirancy.”

Bro. Oscar was a man of conviction, who was happy in his vocation. He wrote in his request to ask for Perpetual Vows, “Now, I feel satisfied and convinced that God has called me to be a Marianist for the greater glory and honor of God and his people.” He was truly a brother who was content in his life and has made people happy who were around him. May his soul rest in peace!
