

Church mourns death of popular nun in Meghalaya, North East India.



Sister Amalia Pereda Ortiz de Zarate was a pioneer of rural healthcare. Thousands of people are mourning the death of a Spanish nun, popularly known as the “Mother Teresa” of Meghalaya, who revolutionized healthcare in the rural northeastern state.

Sister Amalia Pereda Ortiz de Zarate “spent her entire life working for poor and illiterate villagers,” said Salesian Father Francis Cheeramban, who knew the nun for decades.

The Missionaries of Christ Jesus nun died at age 84 on Monday at Nirmali Convent in Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya state.

She was buried in the nearby Laitumkhrah Catholic cemetery yesterday.

Fr John Madur, vicar-general of Shillong archdiocese, led 25 priests at the funeral Mass.

Sister Amalia was renowned for having set up Shillong’s Nazareth Hospital, Meghalaya’s top healthcare institution.

She worked there as the superintendent and a surgeon for more than 25 years, said Sister Remo, her confrere, who works in Tura diocese.

Sister Amalia joined the congregation in 1946 and went to India 15 years later after completing her religious and medicine studies in Spain.

The surgeon nun headed a medical camp for refugees from East Pakistan and later Bangladesh from 1965-1977.

Sister Remo said Sister Amalia also provided medical care for hundreds of villages in Meghalaya with her mobile dispensaries.

“She not only treated patients by providing free medicines, but also taught them about health and hygiene,” the young nun added.

She visited many villages where not many people could go,” Fr Hilarius Lamare, administrator of Jowa,i recalled. “She had the spirit of Jesus. She was a missionary at heart.”

The nun also taught seminarians how to serve people in northeastern India, he said.

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