News
Q&As



Vincentian Sr. Teagon Andre Maria receives a cross from Bishop Paul Ponen Kubi at St. Patrick's Cathedral Church on June 24 in Mymensingh, Bangladesh, during her vows as a Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)



by Stephan Uttom Rozario

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Mymensingh, Bangladesh — August 20, 2024

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

In January 2020, Teagon Andre Maria participated in a "Come and See Program" with the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. Four years later, on Jan. 30, 2024, she formally joined the congregation.

Born on June 22, 1996, in the Meherpur district of the western part of Bangladesh, which is about 270 kilometers from the capital Dhaka, Maria is the younger of two siblings. Before joining the community, she obtained a diploma in nursing and later received a degree in introduction to theology for formation from St. Vincent School of Theology in the Philippines.

After overcoming various obstacles, Maria entered religious life by taking her first vows on June 24 at St. Patrick's Cathedral Church in the Mymensingh Diocese. She spoke to GSR about those challenges and how she overcame them to become a sister.

***GSR*: Why did you become a nun and why did you choose the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul?**

Maria: I heard during my childhood that one of my paternal aunts was a nun in the Mother Teresa congregation [Missionaries of Charity], but when I saw her much later, she was working outside the country. I had an uncle who was a priest. Since then, I wanted to be a sister, but at one point I wanted to get married and live my own life. Even after grade 12, I couldn't decide whether I wanted to get married or become a sister.



Sr. Teagon Andre Maria, center, poses for a photo with her fellow Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, along with her father and her aunt, a Missionaries of Charity sister. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

I started to live in Dhaka and one day after praying I wrote on one paper to be married and on another paper to be a sister and did the lottery myself. Unbelievable, but the truth is that "sister" came up after playing the lottery three times. It was God's will and God wanted me to be a nun.

Was that reason enough to become a sister?

Of course not. When I go to school or study nursing, I see many poor people on the side of the road. I see in the newspaper that many people are distributing at least winter clothes or food among these poor people. So, I felt good that some people were helping these poor people. At that time, I felt that when I did a good job, I would at least do something for the poor people.

In 2019, I completed my diploma in nursing as per my family's wishes. That year a priest came to my house and I asked him to give me some counseling. Although I was not so pious, I didn't know why I asked a priest for counseling. That changed my life.

He asked me if I wanted to be a sister. And without thinking in any direction I said in the flexion of the time, "Yes! I will be a sister." I was already a trained nurse then, but after that, I gave my opinion to become a sister.



Sr. Teagon Andre Maria takes her vows as a Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul June 24 at St. Patrick's Cathedral Church in Mymensingh, Bangladesh. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

You have passed nursing; your family may have expected you to support the family financially. But what was the reaction of your family knowing that you wanted to be a sister?

My mother was very surprised when she first heard. She wanted to know if I had made up my mind to become a sister. I answered yes.

I was afraid of my father, so my mother herself spoke to my father about the matter. My father wanted to see me in married life. But given my mother's words, my father asked me only one question, "Is what your mother is saying true?"

I just replied "Yes, Dad, it's true."

Then Father told me, "Your life is in your hands."

What kind of challenges did you have to go through before becoming a sister?

When I came to this congregation, the language problem was too much. I am a Bengali but the two sisters here speak Korean. And here the others who came to the formation house were all tribal and as a result they spoke their language, which made it very difficult for me to understand.



Members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul pose for a photo with Bishop Paul Ponen Kubi of Mymensingh, Bangladesh. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

The main challenge was people's various negative comments, such as I can't adapt myself to the foreign congregation, I won't have the same mentality as other sisters, etc.

Since I have passed nursing, many people have lured me by promising to give me government jobs. Again, many people said to leave being a sister and find a good boy and arrange marriage.

But I left myself completely to God and prayed when I was in a little doubt. I shared with the sisters and they understood me. Finally, I managed to overcome my challenges, thank God.

How did you come to this particular congregation where there are no Bangladeshi sisters?

I am encouraged by the work of the sisters here. Because I am a nurse, I wanted to work for the poor. And this congregation is doing the same thing.

Even from within this community, I don't feel like I'm outside the family, I feel like I'm in my family. So I decided to become a sister of this community.

Advertisement

What is the motto of your congregation and how do you reflect it in your life as a sister?

From the beginning, our congregation has been working with the poor. Only two sisters are working in Bangladesh, running a clinic and visiting villages every month to provide medical services. Doctors from abroad are also providing services through this clinic.

Since childhood, I also wanted to serve the poor and, finally, I feel like I got that chance. So I will work in my life to keep the motto of our congregation in front. St. Vincent always said you are the servant and the poor are your Lord. I will keep this

quote in mind and it will work. God gave me the opportunity and I will work for poor people. I think I am serving God when I help the poor.



Sr. Teagon Andre Maria delivers a speech after taking her vows as a Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul at St. Patrick's Cathedral Church in Mymensingh, Bangladesh, on June 24. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

You are a professional nurse. So how do you combine your nursing career and religious life?

Our congregation's main work is to provide medical services. And the good thing for me is that I am already a nurse. I believe God predestined me to become a nurse and now a sister, so I can use my education for people in my religious life.

However, the future is always uncertain and I will be happy to do whatever my congregation allows me to do.

You have become a sister of the congregation from Bangladesh. How do you play a role in spreading the word of God and increasing the sisters in

your congregation?

I know my community has high expectations of me. But I cannot do anything alone unless God wills it. God will also work through me and I will give my best for my community as God leads me. I will always try to spread my community across Bangladesh through my work.

- 

  A dance is performed after Sr. Teagon Andre Maria took her vows as a Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

- 

Sr. Teagon Andre Maria and other sisters and priests enter St. Patrick's Cathedral Church in Mymensingh, Bangladesh, before Mass on June 24. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

- 

A welcome procession enters St. Patrick's Cathedral Church in Mymensingh, Bangladesh, June 24. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

- 

Michael Mondol, father of Sr. Teagon Andre Maria, thanks God and the sisters from Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

- 

Sr. Teagon Andre Maria kneels in front of Bishop Paul Ponen Kubi during her vows as a Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul June 24 at St. Patrick's Cathedral Church in Mymensingh, Bangladesh. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

- 

Sr. Teagon Andre Maria holds a candle during Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral Church in Mymensingh, Bangladesh, on June 24. (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

- 

Sr. Teagon Andre Maria and Bishop Paul Ponen Kubi at St. Patrick's Cathedral Church in Mymensingh, Bangladesh (GSR photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)