



IN MEMORY OF

MOTHER MARIA LUCAS RAUCH, OSB

Prioress General from 1957 to 1967

*“Come, you who are blessed by my Father! Come, and possess the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”
(Mt. 25:34)*

These welcome words of Jesus surely met Mother Maria Lucas as she entered the heavenly court to meet her King and Lord on the eve of the Feast of Christ the King, November 19, 2005.

Eva Rauch was born on October 11, 1906 in Gruben, Gemeinde Hochstadt of the Diocese of Bamberg, Germany. Her father was Johann and her mother was Dorothea Vogel. Eva was the third child of 12 children, 3 girls and 9 boys. Three of the 9 boys died at an early age and two girls became religious, Sr. Leobalda (Congregation of the Divine Heart of Jesus) and Mother Ma. Lucas, revealing that Eva came from a very religious family. Because of the large family, Eva was brought up by a loving uncle and aunt who took good care of her until she finished her medical studies in Wurzburg and passed the State examinations in 1933.

Wanting to become a missionary, Eva came to Tutzing and studied in the Mission school for two years. Her desire was fulfilled when on January 9, 1935, she entered the convent of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Tutzing. Two years later, on April 24, 1937, she pronounced her first vows as a Missionary Benedictine Sister. Being a medical doctor, she received the name Maria Lucas. After three months, on July 16, 1937, she was missioned to Raeville, Nebraska, United States of America. On June 25, 1940 she committed herself for life as a Missionary Benedictine Sister in Raeville.

For 7 years Sr. Maria Lucas worked as a medical doctor in Lynch and in 1945 she was appointed Prioress of Norfolk. To be able to practice as a medical doctor in the United States, Sr. Maria Lucas had to become an American citizen. She received her American passport on May 16, 1944 which she retained until her death.

On December 9, 1947 she was called to serve the mission in Ndanda Priory. For ten years she served as a doctor in the hospital in Ndanda Priory, treating many natives who needed medical attention and surgery. In addition to her work in the hospital she was Subprioress for 5 years and in 1955 she again became Prioress but only for two years.

In 1957 she was called to Grottaferrata to be a delegate of the General Chapter. By God's providence she became Mother General until 1967. During those ten years of great responsibility, Mother Maria Lucas faced with deep faith the challenges and demands of her office. As she visited all the houses of the Congregation, she came to know the internationality of the membership and the different cultures and customs of the five continents. She was strict in the observance of what is written in the Constitutions and Customs of the Congregation.

During her term as Prioress General she opened a house in Bande, Portugal in 1961, which was the beginning of our Priory in Portugal.

Mother Maria Lucas was never a very healthy person. She was physically fragile but her spiritual stamina gave her the strength to overcome difficulties as the spiritual leader of an international congregation. Her goodness, kindness, understanding and care for each one's needs were very evident. What could be considered her forte was the power of prayer and humility of her service in the Congregation. Through her example she showed her genuine love for the Church and self-sacrificing love for the mission. She made of her life a journey towards total trust in God alone. Indeed she was a woman of prayer. Mother Maria Lucas practiced personal simplicity even austerity at times, sticking to only what is necessary. She has left us a legacy through the witness of her life. She took up the call of the Beatitudes seriously.

After her term as Mother General she was asked to serve the Congregation as Vicareess from 1967 until 1976. She also participated in 6 General Chapters, the last one in 1982.

Back to the ranks, Mother Maria Lucas remained in Rome for the rest of her life. She served the community in Rome as infirmarian, sacristan, teacher of foreign languages to sisters who come to Rome, and librarian. She also helped prepare the texts for special liturgies. In later years when her strength was failing, she took upon herself the important apostolate of prayer.

In 1989 Mother Maria Lucas was diagnosed to have a weak heart together with high blood pressure and for sometime she was anemic. In 2004 she suffered a fall which hampered her walking ability, and she had to use a wheelchair for moving around. But she still attended the common exercises in the chapel and refectory. Good Sr. Ancilla Casoni kept her company during the day. They prayed together and listened to good conferences over the radio. Her eyesight was also failing and Sr. Ancilla used to read the Sacred Scriptures to her, especially the readings of the day.



Several days before her death she started to vomit after meals and the doctor diagnosed it as coming from the bile. She was losing her appetite and ate only very soft food. In the morning of November 19 she was still up and could talk normally. In fact, S Ancilla remarked that she talked more than usual that morning. In the afternoon the doctor was called again and he said that her condition was not good. She had difficulty breathing and oxygen was given.

Just before Vespers some Sisters came around her bed praying and singing the *Suscipe* and *Salve Regina*. Fr. Peter Grand of the Missionaries of Mariannahill came to give her again the sacrament of anointing and the blessing. Somehow she seemed to rally. So the community went to pray Vespers but no sooner had they started the opening *Deus in adjutorium meum*, when the call came to come back to her room. This time it was very clear that the end was near. At about 6:20 p.m., with the Sisters surrounding her, Mother Maria Lucas gave her soul back to her Creator. It is as if she said, "I surrender all for my home is in heaven." In the midst of the first Vespers of the feast of Christ the King, she went home to meet her Lord and King.

The funeral was held Monday, November 21 after a day and a half of Vigil with her in the big chapel. Three Missionaries of Mariannahill--Father Yves La Fontaine, Father Wolfgang Zirrlein and Father Virgil Heier--concelebrated the Holy Mass, with Father Yves delivering a beautiful homily that was also a tribute to Mother Maria Lucas. The community accompanied Mother Maria Lucas to her resting place in the Campo Santo, the Teutonic cemetery in the Vatican, where she awaits the day of Resurrection.

May she now be our intercessor in heaven.