



In Memory of Sr. Andrea Haver, OSB
01.01.1930 – 20.01.2011

In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul portrayed our Christian way of life in short: “Our home is in heaven” (3:20). Our dear Sr. Andrea was granted the gift to take her final dwelling place in “the house of the Lord”, on the past 20th of January. Whenever praying her favorite Psalm 22nd, she expressed that longing for coming “home”: *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing” – My home: the house of the Lord.*”

To come there, Sr. Andrea wandered a long way, rich in curves, unexpected events and - especially during the last 30 years - filled with pain and bodily frailty. On the 1st of January 1930 she was born in Oelde-Keitlingshausen, Diocese of Münster, into a Westphalian family, deeply rooted in faith, devoted to the Church and with firm principles of moral and life. Her father, Mr. Goswin Haver, was a blacksmith, her mother, Mrs. Anna Haver, born Schiren, cared for her family as a resolute, competent housewife and loving mother. Sr. Andrea was baptized on the 6th of January as “Katharina”; together with one sister and five brothers she lived a joyful childhood in her parents home. Historically, she grew up in a time of turmoil in Germany: it was the upcoming Nazi-Era, with the beginning and end of the World War II. She always said that in spite of the difficult war situation, they had a happy family life. The bonds of friendship and common faith, built up that time, held for her whole life. She remained closely related to her family, which she could visit several times and her home parish always supported her mission projects, since she came to Namibia.

The war and post war situation prejudiced strongly her youth. After visiting the Primary School in her home town, from 1936 until 1944, she rendered the then compulsory “year of work” in a farm household. The complete bombing of her preferred school in 1945 made a continuation of her studies impossible. Instead, she started a practical formation as an X-Ray Assistant. But already after one and a half year it showed, for the first time, that her tall and seemingly robust stature obscured the state of her physical condition: she fell seriously ill and had to interrupt her formation for more than one year. When she had recovered, her mother, in turn fell ill and Sr. Andrea had to care at home for her family. In her free time, however, she finished in a local convent her training as seamstress and acquired the knowledge and skills that helped her to be active and caring until the very last weeks of her life. For two more years she improved her practical expertise in the Hospital kitchen of the ‘Marien Hospital’ in Oelde, learning cooking and diet cooking. Afterwards, her Mother still wished her to practice her knowledge during another two years in a household.

Only then, in 1952, she was finally “free”, as she herself said, to realize the dream-plan of her life. Until 1955 we find her at a Hospital in Bielefeld in Nursing Studies which she concluded with the Diploma as a Registered Nurse. Then she returned home and prepared for her entrance into the Congregation of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters at Tutzing on August 1, 1956. At the beginning of her Novitiate she received the name of the Apostle Andreas (Andrea). On February 6, 1959 she made her First and on February 6, 1962 her Perpetual Profession. Three years later, on July 11, 1964 she received her mission to Namibia, by then ‘South-West-Africa’.

On the 10th of January 1965, she arrived in her Mission country, where she lived and worked for the next 45 years. She started nursing in the RCH Windhoek and from 1969 to 1974 in Andara/Kavango. Her work there was interrupted for two years, when she was trained as Midwife South Africa in our Congregations' Mission Hospital at Nongoma/ Zululand. Until the end of her life she was proud of having had Sr. Reinolda May, OSB as her excellent tutor. She venerated her very much and trusted unshakably in her help until her last day.

In 1974, she was called to work in the Antonius Hospital in Swakopmund where she served the patients of this town until 1981. Her patients remember her as a caring, friendly and competent nurse. With the year 1980 started her long-lasting way of illnesses and sufferings, partly through her hip-problems, which required four severe surgeries in Germany. For receiving better help she had to move to Windhoek. In-between her several treatment she continued working, first nursing in the RC hospital, later, with waning strength, for six years in the hospital pharmacy. In the years until 2005, she also helped out occasionally in Bunya, Windhoek-Subiaco and Inkamana. In 2000, she moved to the new Priory House in Nubuamis and started working mainly in the Sewing Room, where she did so many "Liebesdienste" to her petitioners. Many of our young sisters appreciated her as a benevolent, friendly "seamstress mistress" and praised her for leading them to prayer and stability in their religious life. Sr. Andrea could combine her very charming and joyful capacity with true westphalian calmness and firmness.

In 2005, a severe cancer forced her to accept surgery in Germany which brought her close to death; it was considered a little 'wonder' when she could, once more, return to Namibia. She was happy about that, although her strength was obviously broken. Slowly her forces went down. She herself wrote about this period the words of her Profession "Suscipe": *"Take me Lord, according to your word, that I may live; and do not disappoint me, Lord, in my hope"*

On December 20 of last year she was brought from the Priory House to the RC Hospital, because her normal bodily functions started failing. She slightly recovered over Christmas and regained hope in a cure. However, things didn't go so well and after three follow-up surgeries, at the beginning of January - which she herself had wished expressly - she went to the worse. Very much she had to suffer for more than a week. Still, she herself wanted another abdominal surgery that was done in the afternoon of January 20. But Sr. Andrea did no more recover from that intervention. In the ICU her pilgrimage "homewards" came at 23.05 peacefully to its end, while some sisters accompanied her with prayers and the "Suscipe" +.

On the 12th of January she had received the Holy Sacraments, fully conscious and ready to surrender to God's will. Since then, she could no more receive Holy Communion. Her last words were always: "I am so tired, I am so tired." We are sure that she lived during this last week of her life intimately united with Jesus Christ in his agony at the Cross and completed thus her missionary life and service in Namibia in the most blessed way possible.

On January 27, we celebrated, together with our Archbishop Liborius OMI, five priests, sisters from all communities and many friends, the Eucharist of Resurrection for her and laid her to rest at the Mission Cemetery in Döbra.

We thank Sr. Andrea for her mission life, for her friendly services and for her sufferings. We pray that she found her home in a very joyful and painless life in the presence of God!

R.I.P.

The Windhoek Priory Communities,
Namibia