



Obituary of
Sr. Deocara Rink, OSB

born 12 August 1913, died 31 January 2011

Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace!
(Luke 2, 29)

Late in the evening, on the 31st of January, our dear Sr. Deocara was called home by God after a long life of 97 years. She served the Priory of Peramiho for 73.

Sr. Deocara was born on 12 August 1913 in Unterhaerprechts in the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart. She was baptized and received the name Maria on the very day of her birth. Her parents were Melchior Rink who was cheese maker and Agatha Rink nee Bareth. She was the fourth of fifteen (15) children. Shortly after her birth, her mother fell seriously ill. Therefore a sister of her mother took the child and raised her in a village not far from her home. Thus, she was able to see her parents and brothers and sisters often. Her aunt taught her everything that was to be done in house, garden and field. When Maria was 10 years old, her mother died and her father married a second wife. All of the brothers and sisters loved each other and lived together in harmony. When one of her cousins entered the convent Maria began to think about such a vocation for herself. Whatever she would choose she wanted to go to Africa.

On the 3rd of March 1936 she joined the Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Tutzing. Two years later, on the 27th of April 1938 she made her first profession. Her whole family was able to celebrate this day with her. Only a few days later, she was called by her superior and told that she was chosen to take the place of another sister and go the missions. Later, she frequently told the sisters that she did not have the solemn mission rite as others had. She began her journey on the 10th of May in Tutzing together with Sr. Rigomira and Sr. Maria Bertram and arrived on the 14th of June 1938 in Peramiho.

Her first assignment was Uwemba where she helped in the hospital. She would have liked to become a nurse. But then she was transferred to Mango. For twenty years she worked in Mango – in the sewing room and in the laundry, she taught needle work in the domestic school and helped wherever help was needed. Because of the conditions of World War II she was not able to make her perpetual profession in Peramiho. Instead, the 27th of April 1941 became a great feast day for all people in Mango. From 1953 to 1959, she was the superior of that community.

Then she moved to Mahanje. In 1961, she had to go to Tutzing for health reasons. An infection in her right shoulder caused a paralysis of the arm. In the course of time, the condition worsened and caused her great discomfort.

Upon her return in October 1962, she became superior in Matimira. She stayed there until 1972 when she came to the priory house in Peramiho for good. She continued to work in her unassuming way in the sewing room for many years. She was always of service for the community.

During her last home leave in 1990 she had an eye operation. Also, her hearing diminished and she became increasingly forgetful. With her faithful helper, she could continue to work until 2006. Then she moved to the infirmary. There we saw her knitting socks for the leprosy patients in Morogoro. Many people from Mango, Mahanje and Matimira remembered her and asked for her who had always been good and friendly to them.

Sometimes, this modest and quiet sister surprised us: One time, an old photograph was found which showed a sister on a motorcycle and two others with her. We did not know who this sister was. Then she took the picture and said, "This is me in Mahanje." None of us would have ever thought her capable of driving a motorcycle to find women and girls in the surrounding villages and teach them how to sew.

Another incident of her life we learned one day when we were in Mango. We met a man who did carpentry work for the parish. Gabriel was an orphan and raised by Sr. Deocara. She saw to it that one of the Benedictine Brothers taught him to become a carpenter. He learned more than work with wood and until today he has not forgotten the selfless service of the brothers. In turn, he handed on what he had learned by gathering the out-of-school boys, asked them to help him and thus, teaching them carpentry work. Of course, he asked for Sr. Deocara and remembered her in gratitude.

On the 18th of January 2011, she fell when she wanted to get up in the morning and fractured her right femur. Because of her age she was not operated on. The pain was excruciating although the infirmarian did everything she could possibly do to relieve that pain. She was now confined to her bed. On Sunday, the 29th of January, she received the sacrament of anointing in the presence of many sisters. From then on, we kept vigil with Sr. Deocara – day and night. One of these last days, she was unusually talkative. She mentioned the names of her relatives and of people whom she had been close to in her life and asked for her habit and veil which she wanted to put on for a great journey. Thus, she reached the evening of the 31st of January. At 10 o'clock she surrendered herself totally to God.

The following day, Sr. Deocara was laid to rest in the cemetery of the Peramiho Mission. Archbishop Norbert Mtega, the Abbots of Peramiho and Hanga and many Benedictine Brothers and Sisters were at the funeral because they had come already for the celebration of the "Consecrated Life" the next day.

May God whom Sr. Deocara has faithfully served throughout her long life be her light and her eternal peace.

Peramiho, 01 February 2011

Sr. Rosann Ocken, OSB
Prioress and Sisters