



In Memory of

Our Sister Hildemut (Magdalena) Hemmerich OSB

Born on August 27, 1924 – died October 4, 2007

On August 27, 1924 Sr. Hildemut was born to the family of gardener Johann Hemmerich and his wife Lidwina, nee Kuchenbrod, in Schweinfurt.

In baptism she received the name Magdalena. She grew up together with four sisters and one brother, being herself the second-youngest. Though her father was a Protestant, he cared that all his children were baptized and educated in the Catholic Church. He even woke his children up for Holy Mass on weekdays.

Magda attended Primary School in Schweinfurt from 1931 to 1939. Afterwards she had a commercial training in a shop for leather-goods, which she successfully completed as a commercial clerk. Meanwhile World-war II had started with its tribulations and insecurities. Therefore, she was drafted for labour service right afterwards. After active service she was conscripted as clerk for the Siemens-Schuckert factory in Nuernberg. Finally, she was able to obtain a release and worked afterwards for a short time in the OT in Schweinfurt. Then she assisted a farmer's wife, whose husband was in the war in the management of the farm until the farmer was released from war captivity.

Meanwhile her parental home had been totally destroyed during the last bomb attack on Schweinfurt on April 11, 1945 shortly before the end of the war, and the family lost all its possessions. After the end of war Magda found work as a clerk in a construction company in Schweinfurt, where she stayed until joining the Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Tutzing in 1948. During this time she became a member of the Catholic Youth movement of her home parish with enthusiasm, where she was very active as leader of several youth groups. It may be that during this time her desire and longing to consecrate her whole life to God and his service was awakened and grew.

On November 4, 1948 she became an aspirant in Tutzing and started the novitiate on October 18, 1949, when she received the name Sister Hildemut. Her first profession was on October 19, 1950, and the final profession on October 19, 1953. From 1950 to 1959 she worked in the hospital administration in Tutzing, in between she made a course for Anesthesia.

In 1959 Sr. Hildemut was missioned to Tanzania, where at first she again worked in the hospital administration in Ndanda and Nyangao. Then from 1969 to 1993 she found her great mission field of work as Anesthesia nurse in the Ndanda Hospital. During this time she assisted many young people in getting a training, so that finally she was able to hand over her duties to local specialists.

Between 1993 and 2000 we find her in Mtwara, a new mission station, where with great love and consideration she assisted in furnishing and decorating a Vacation house at the Seashore, where the sisters could recuperate from the hot climate in Ndanda, and which still is very much sought after and appreciated today.

During her long life Sr. Hildemut often was afflicted with illnesses and had to return repeatedly to Germany for longer periods. Once she had to undergo a serious open-heart-surgery, and later on she suffered several bone-fractures because of progressive osteoporosis. Because of all these in January 2002 her transfer to Haus St. Benedikt in Tutzing became necessary. Also here she remained united with her mission country especially through prayer, but also through zealous correspondence. In addition she maintained contacts with her many benefactors as much as possible. She remained interested in all the mission-happenings and prayed especially for good religious vocations for Ndanda.

The last two years of her life were a real way of the cross for Sr. Hildemut with repeated long stays in hospitals, again as results of fractures and because of her sick, weak heart. But each time her will power won, and she was able to stand again on her own feet. Now she was again hospitalized since a week. She believed already that she was on the way to recover, and the sisters with her. Then God brought her life on earth to a sudden end through a severe pneumonia and called her home into his Kingdom of glory after receiving the anointment of the sick on October 4 at 5:35 p.m.

Sr. Hildemut completed her earthly pilgrimage on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, who at the end of the Hymn to the Sun sings about death, which also our Sr. Hildemut embraced in faith and in the fulfillment of God's will:

Praise to you, o Lord my God,
Because of our brother the physical death,
No living being can escape from him.

Blessed are those who fulfill your most holy will,
For they will not suffer the other death.

R. I. P.

Tutzing, October 7, 2007
Superior and community of Haus St. Benedikt