



In Memory of Sr. Kriemhilt (Maria Theresia) Kreutter OSB

* 3. Mai 1925 - † 18. November 2010

"The beginning and the end – I am placing all into your hands!"

These were the last words Sr. Kriemhilt recorded in her personal history after she had returned to Germany in 1997 because of sickness.

Maria Theresia Kreutter was born on May 3, 1925 as fifth child into the farmers family August and Rosa (née Zeller) at Birkhäusle-Rechberg near Schwäbisch Gmünd. She was baptized on May 10 in the pilgrimage Church on the Hohen-Rechberg.

Her father, who had been working besides as a caster, died already in 1926 at only 41 years of age. The youngest brother was only born 6 months after his father's death. At that time Maria Theresia was just one year old, and she got to know her father only through narrations of her sister. Now the poor mother had to raise her remaining five children alone; one brother had already died at barely three years of age. There was much work and also many worries, and the children had to help from early age on with the farm work, especially during harvest time.

In later years, Sr Kriemhilt liked to tell that, in spite of all this, she enjoyed a happy childhood. Her valiant mother was a woman of deep faith who knew also to lead her children to God. Thus the eldest daughter chose the religious life and entered in 1937 with the Franciscan Sisters in Schwäbisch-Gmünd.

Maria Theresia attended the public elementary school for 8 years, then took a course in a home economics school. At the very beginning of the war, her two elder brothers were drafted to the army. The eldest never returned and was reported missing in Russia. Towards the end of the war, the youngest, too, was drafted, but was able secretly to escape and return home where his mother hid him until she got valid papers for him. The prudent mother advised her daughter to enroll in a school of nursing because thereby she would be dispensed from the Arbeitsdienst (Labor Service). Unfortunately, the School of Nursing at the Marienhospital in Stuttgart had been closed by the National Socialists. Thus Maria Theresia took the course in Bad Kreuznach which during that time was destroyed by bombing attacks. After her exam in 1945, it took her several days to reach home. Later she worked for 6 years as a nurse in Schwäbisch Gmünd.

During the celebration of the „Primiz“ (first Holy Mass) of a young priest, Maria Theresia perceived the call of the Lord to follow Him: „You, too, should follow ME!“ Thus, in April 1952, she courageously made the decision to enter in Tutzing. It was not easy for her to leave her old mother and her home, but she felt soon that she had found the right place. At her clothing on April 9, 1953, she received the name Sister Maria Kriemhilt.

On April 21, 1954, she celebrated there her first profession.

Thereafter, it was little more than a year that she spent in the Motherhouse, because on August 15, 1955, 12 new missionaries were announced, among them Sr. Kriemhilt who was full of joy. Then followed a brief visit at home with a hard farewell, that was very painful for her old mother and also for herself. Here again the generosity of her mother was demonstrated who bade her daughter good-bye with her motto: „in God's Name and His Holy Cross“. Already on October 16, Sr. Kriemhilt took the train to Rome and on October 21 boarded the ship in Napoli for Brazil, together with Sr. Edeltraut Lerch. On November 1, the steamer docked at Recife; Sr. Edeltraut had reached her destination, while Sr. Kriemhilt returned once more to the boat and arrived only on November 4 in Rio de Janeiro where she was welcomed by Sr. Fidelis, her new prioress of Sorocaba. How she admired the beautiful bays and rock formations in this grandiose City. But her journey had not yet reached its end. After a bus trip of more than 10 hours she finally arrived in Sorocaba, her new mission home. For 32 years she did her missionary service as infirmarian for the old and sick fellow sisters, as well as for the employees and students, with great love, readiness and fidelity; which was several times interrupted by severe sicknesses. Thereafter, she spent 10 more years on the farm of the sisters in Araçoiaba da Serra, again in the service of the sick „and with many other jobs“, as she remarked with her customary modesty.

She spent altogether 42 years in Brazil. When she felt that her strength was waning, she asked, at her next home-leave, to remain in Germany. It was her special desire once more to see her only sister who was sick. Thus she arrived on December 4, 1997, in Haus St. Benedikt in Tutzing, already bearing the marks of Parkinson's disease against which she bravely struggled in the past 13 years. How difficult it must have been for her by and by to give up everything, also not anymore to be able to play her beloved mandolin. As long as it was possible for her, she participated at our daily Holy Mass. She enjoyed singing together with other sick sisters, and she was happy about visits of fellow sisters, especially from missionary countries, of course, most of all if they came from Brazil. God gave her the strength to endure, also when she could no longer see and a fellow sister read something to her, every day. Through the radio she got information on all happenings in the Church and in the world. She also stayed in contact with her relatives and acquaintances and enjoyed their visits and phone calls.

Unfortunately, she suffered often from nightmares which frightened her very much and which seemed to her to be reality.

During the past weeks she became visibly weaker and finally could no longer eat anything. Fully awake she received once more the Sacrament of Anointing in the early afternoon of November 18, and at 19:30 o'clock, she returned her soul into the hands of her Creator, in the presence of her praying fellow sisters.

We thank God for the life, the service and the courageous endurance of our Sister Kriemhilt! God has relieved her from her long sufferings and we are sure that He has called her home into His eternal glory where now she intercedes for us and can say from the bottom of her heart:

INTO YOUR HANDS I PLACE THE BEGINNING AND THE END – EVERYTHING
R.I.P.

Haus St. Benedikt, November 22, 2010
Superior and Sisters