



In Memory of Sr. Melchiora Kaspar OSB

September 5, 1913 – January 13, 2011

"We have seen His Star and have come to pay Homage to Him"

Because of her two names, these words have become the life program of Sr. Melchiora Kaspar. Like the Wise Men from the Orient, she too followed the Star in her life and let herself be guided by God.

Hedwig Kaspar was born in Schongau on September 5, 1913, as the daughter of the butcher and canteen owner Matthias Kaspar and his wife Maria née Socher. With her two siblings, an elder sister and a younger brother, she spent a happy childhood and youth on the small farm of her parents and learned soon the work to be done in house and garden; this was of great advantage for her in her later life.

During her stay in the home economics school of the „Armen Schulschwestern“ (Poor School Sisters) in Garmisch, while listening to a mission talk of a Benedictine Father, she conceived the call of the Lord to serve Him as a missionary sister. Thereupon, she entered already on November 18, 1933, in Tutzing, started her postulancy on June 28, 1934, and the novitiate on January 10, 1935 receiving the name Sr. Melchiora. Thus, by her two names, she was connected to the Three Holy Kings from the Orient throughout her life.

Right after her first profession on January 11, 1936, Sr. Melchiora received the mission assignment for South Africa to Eshowe, then seat of the priory. On March 10, 1936, she set out with two companions, and they arrived there on April 13, 1936. There she celebrated her final profession on January 11, 1939.

For 58 years, Sr. Melchiora worked zealously and tirelessly on various mission stations in Zululand/South Africa like Eshowe, Twasana, Inkamana, Nongoma and Fatima, in the kitchen, bakery, garden and house, for the welfare of the Fathers, Brothers and fellow Sisters. As driver, she was just as full of zest as for all her other services.

During these years, she could spend her home leave four times in Germany; thereby remaining in close contact with her homeland and her relatives, which showed until today in the repeated visits of her nephews and nieces.

Due to ill health, Sr. Melchiora had to return to Germany for good on March 9, 1994, and had to undergo serious stomach surgery. Thereupon she was transferred on September 7, 1994 to Haus St. Benedikt in Tutzing, our home for returning missionaries.

After some time of recuperation, she felt again strong and was eager to work, so that she could be active in house and garden for many more years. Her closeness to God was evident especially in her love of nature and for the garden. With interest she cared for the fruit trees

and the berry bushes, and only two years ago, she still joined a trip for the purchase of new seedlings, the growth of which she continued to observe. Also the famous „Rumpelkammer“ was her realm where in exemplary manner she regulated the disposal of the accruing garbage. All of these tasks kept her fit, so that perhaps the one or other younger sister envied her for her energy.

In December 2008, Sr. Mechiora had to go to the hospital for the treatment of a severe thrombosis. From that time on, her strength was broken; but she did not give in and was with her rollator almost as adventurous as before. She continued to join our common prayer and meals. However, in February 2010 it became obvious that she was turning weaker, and she entered a room in the infirmary. Yet as often as possible she still returned to her own room in the upper floor. At last, she could no longer leave her bed, and thus started for our Sr. Melchiora, who has always been so active and independent, a difficult time, because she had never learned to be patient. But she could still read, and this was a great consolation for her. She enjoyed telling the sisters visiting her about her sophisticated reading materials. It was particularly hard for her that her hearing capacity diminished so that conversations became very difficult. Thus God drew her ever more into his school of suffering in order to prepare her in prayer for his near coming. An increasing difficulty of breathing was ever harder on her. Till her end she showed her love for the community by sending greetings to her fellow sisters asking also for their prayers.

During this time, she enjoyed very much the visits of her nieces and nephews, and the exchange about the happenings in the family gave her always new strength.

In the course of the past months, Sr. Melchiora was several times so badly off that we counted with her imminent death, but these phases always passed and she became stronger again. On Epiphany she celebrated her name day comparatively well and alert and looked forward to the celebration of her 75th profession anniversary on January 11, 2011. This was the last highlight of her life, because soon after, she was only at times awake and could no longer take food. In the afternoon of January 13, she received once more the Sacrament of Anointing for the last stretch of her way, and, without any sign of shortness of breath, shortly before midnight, after her 97-years long life, she returned her soul into the hands of God.

May our gracious God, whom she served so faithfully and loyally throughout her long life, receive her into His eternal joy!

Haus St. Benedikt, Tutzing January 17, 2011
Superior and Sisters