

Life and Death of our



Sr. Rita (Maria) Mayer OSB

born 25.12.1913 –died 28.11.2009

Our dear Sr. Rita was born as a real "Christ-Child" on Christmasday, December 25, 1913 into the farmer-family of Georg and Josefa Mayer, nee Koch at Schratzenbach near Kempten, Diocese of Augsburg as the third of five children. Already on December 27 she received in Baptism the Name Maria. She grew up in a good catholic family, where two of the children chose to enter religious life. She survived all her brothers and sisters, among them Brother Fortunatus OSB, who worked for many years as a missionary at Ndanda and Sakarani/Tanzania. Throughout her life she had always a close relationship with him and the other brothers and sisters and their children. This showed especially during her home visits and the celebrations of her Golden (1986), her Diamond (1996) and her Iron Jubilees (2006). Some of her relatives visited her even in Africa and her cousin Sr. Marana Mayer, a Dominican, also working in South-Africa. Again and again her nieces and nephews found their way to Tutzing to visit their "Tante Maria"; and she had a very good relationship especially with her Niece Sr. Edith Mayer CJ, a Maria-Ward Sister. Some years ago she had the great joy to join in the celebration of the first Holy Mass of one of her grand-nephews.

After completing her primary education Maria trained as a seamstress, and afterwards on May 8, 1933 at the age of 19 she entered with the Missionary Benedictine Sisters at Tutzing. On January 10, 1935 at the start of her novitiate she received St. Rita as her new Patron-Saint. Her first profession was on January 11, 1936. Soon afterwards she received her mission-sending for South-Africa. Already on March 10, 1936 she departed by boat and reached one month later Durban. She celebrated her final profession on January 11, 1939 at Eshowe.

South-Africa became for the long time of 64 years her mission-field. There she found her apostolate first in different smaller Mission-stations, where besides sewing she was also responsible for the Sacristy and to care for guests. The longest period during this time, 13 years, she spent

at Entabeni, where for a total of nine years she served the community as superior. Then from 1962 onward she remained at the priory house of Inkamana.

Thanks to her good training and expertise sewing remained her main apostolate until her return to Germany in the year 2000. With great love and faithfulness she cared not only for her sisters but also for the monks; in addition she prepared many school-uniforms for girls of Inkamana High School. Sr. Rita was a very kind sister, always friendly and ready to help; because of this she was very popular in the community, and the sisters appreciated her humor through which she contributed to the amusement during recreation.

Sr. Rita was not spared of serious illness, which she was able to overcome with her usual readiness and patience. With her increasing age her hearing impairment became her big cross; yet in prayer she received again and again the strength to bear even this cross.

In the year 2000, when the Missionary Benedictine Sisters gave up their Inkamana-Mission Sr. Rita had to start once more totally anew and came to Haus St. Benedikt, Tutzing. Also here she did not want to be idle, and as long she was able, she helped in the sewing room and besides did small mending, and even found the time to do favors for other sisters, who could not do it themselves anymore. Her hearing-impairment increased, and since more than a year she became totally deaf. Also here her personal format showed itself: never did she complain. As a matter of fact she continued taking part in common prayer and gatherings of the community, grateful for receiving the conferences beforehand to read along. Reading books and magazines remained her great joy until the last days of her life. Here she found information and relaxation.

During all her life Sr. Rita has been a great praying person, and especially since she was free of work she could be found often in the Chapel in quiet prayer. Due to the increasing silence from outside she found more and more to an inner space with God. During the last few months her strengths decreased slowly, and she was grateful for the assistance she received in the Infirmary. By the daily Holy Communion and the anointment of the sick during the last week she was well prepared for the last stretch of the road home to her Creator-God. One day before her death she told some sisters: "Now it is time for me!" To all the sisters who visited her she waved with a smile. On November 28, Saturday morning at 9:20 her earthly life ended unexpectedly fast with a smile very quietly. The sisters sang for her farewell the "Suscipe..." So for her started the great Advent, and together with us she surely joined in the Vesper-Antiphon of the 1st Advent-Sunday, which we sang on this evening:

***Rejoice and be glad, daughter of Sion!
Shout for joy; see your savior is coming, Alleluia!***

We are grateful to God that we have known Sr. Rita and that we were allowed to live with her; and also for the example of her missionary efforts in South-Africa and in Tutzing during 73 years.

R.I.P.

Tutzing, December 1, 2009
Superior and Sisters
Haus St. Benedikt, Tutzing