



IN MEMORY OF OUR

SISTER M. VERONICA MORDSTEIN OSB

born June 5, 1913, died January 28, 2006

“As now the fiery sun departs,
so shed your radiance in our hearts.”

God's sun shone brightly in the heart of our dear Sister Veronica while we sang these words of the hymn at Vespers. After her long sufferings she entered the eternal light as quietly and simply as she had lived.

Maria was born on June 5, 1913 as the first child of Oberstudienrat Friedrich Mordstein and his wife Maria nee Resch, in Ingolstadt, Diocese of Eichstätt. Seven years later she still got a brother to whom she remained lovingly close throughout her life and who also accompanied her faithfully through the time of her slow dying. Since 1917, the family lived in Munich.

Maria was a very bright student. After her elementary education she attended the humanistic gymnasium at the Anger in Munich until her Abitur in 1932. Then she moved on to the university where she studied ancient classic philology from 1932-37, concluding her studies with the state examination. From 1937-38 she did her practicum as secondary school teacher (Referendarin) and then passed the second state examination for secondary teachers.

Unfortunately, we do not know much about the time of her youth, but Maria's thinking and longing aimed at going to the missions. Already on May 16, 1938, she entered with the Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Tutzing, became a postulant on October 21 of the same year and started her novitiate on April 26, 1939 with her new name, Sister Veronica.

On August 10, 1939, still a novice, Sr. Veronica was sent to Brazil, where she concluded her novitiate on May 31, 1940 with her temporary profession in Olinda. On July 2, 1943, she pronounced there her perpetual vows.

Sr. Veronica had a brilliant mind, was rich in learning, and spoke seven languages – but in all this, she remained a very modest, simple, humble woman. Thus she captured the hearts of everybody, wherever she was.

She was such a good person, but this was an obstacle for her as a teacher in school, because she did not possess the gift of keeping the necessary discipline. While teaching, she must have suffered a lot from the impetuous temperament of the Brazilian youth. In our schools in Olinda and Recife she taught mainly Latin, which for many was anyhow a difficult and boring subject. So it could happen, once in a while, that she uttered a forceful Bavarian “Herrschafts-Seiten!” when her students became too wild.

For five years, from 1957-1962, she held the office of novice mistress. Then she returned to Tutzing where she taught from 1962-64 at an Oxford course that was being conducted there. On the side, she took a correspondence course in Theology.

From 1964-76 we find Sr. Veronica in Portugal, where she taught Greek, Latin, German and Portuguese in the upper classes of our school. There, too, she found it difficult to keep discipline, but her amiable kindness and goodness made a lasting impression on her students and she was loved by all of them. Even today people are still talking of her.

Sr. Veronica was always and at any time willing to fulfill wishes and to help wherever there was a need. Sometimes she considered her high learning impractical and felt it was useless. This may have been her consideration when she repeatedly said: "If I should come again into this world, I should become a shoemaker! Then I can contribute something useful, something sturdy and lasting."

Sr. Veronica was able to give much joy through her talent as an actress. Funny skits were her specialty and these would never be wanting during celebrations.

In 1976, Sr. Veronica was transferred to our Generalate House in Rome, where she arranged the library in a professional way, helped at the front office and telephone service and did many translations.

In 1994, when her strength was visibly failing, she came to Haus St. Benedikt. For some time and for as long as she could, she helped at the parlor, in the laundry and with the mailing of the periodical "Kontinente".

But then her Parkinson's Disease progressed and Sr. Veronica gradually lost her ability to care for herself, becoming more and more dependent on the help of others, until she could no longer speak and swallow. God alone knows how much she suffered in those last years, in her silent abandonment.

"Misericordia!" was her favorite often used exclamation. Now she can sing with joy:

"Misericordias Domini in eternum cantabo!"

We are proud of our dear co-sister and know that she is resting securely in God's eternal love.

Tutzing, January 28, 2006

Superior and Community of Haus St. Benedikt