

SISTER ADRIANA SIMONS (ANACLETA)

Deceased on the 28th March 2022 in Boxtel, The Netherlands

At the age of 91

She was born on 16th December 1931 in Helvoirt, The Netherlands

First Profession on 11th February 1955 in Esch, The Netherlands

After an unfortunate fall, Jeanne unexpectedly passed away after two days on March 28th 2022, in the presence of some sisters. We remember her as a loving and caring sister and she was the last Regional Superior in the Netherlands.

Sister Jeanne, as she was called, was born on December 16th 1931 in Helvoirt, as the fifth in a farming family with seven children, 4 girls and 3 boys. Her parents were deeply religious and together with the good relationships in her family, these two facts were the foundation of my vocation, she later said.

Despite the crisis years, there was always food on the farm. During the war, her mother became ill and was for three years bedridden. This quickly gave the children responsibilities. Her mother eventually got better and was even able to walk again. Jeanne has always admired her courage.

Because of the war, Jeanne had only attended primary school and a domestic science training. She later caught up with this by doing a Social Work study and other additional training.

At a young age, Jeanne already knew that she wanted to go to Africa with the desire to help the less fortunate. She felt called to become a religious missionary. "Christ has called me in ordinary ways", she would say, "and during my life I discovered Him more and more."

In March 1953 she entered the Postulate of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters) in Maarn. After her Novitiate, she took her first vows in Esch on the 11th February 1955.

The first of May 1955, she went to "Sainte Marie", our Mother House in Algiers, for a year of further formation. After this year, Jeanne came back to the Netherlands for work in Boxtel and Maarn and did training courses in Tilburg as a basis for further studies. In 1961 she made her Eternal Vows. She then left for Liverpool to learn the English language.

In May 1962 the time came for her to go to Africa and she left for Kashi, Tanzania. Here she learned the local language, Kihaya, and

later Kiswahili. Jeanne has lived in many places in Tanzania, she mainly worked with girls' and women's groups in the villages, close to their environment. She also taught at the domestic science school.

After 5 years she came on homeleave and in 1968 she did the "Third Year", a course of five months, in Frascati. From there she returned to Tanzania.

After a holiday in 1971, Jeanne started an MBO course in Social Work and did an internship at Huize De Bocht in Goirle, a house for unmarried mothers. This was a particularly instructive period for her. A world literally opened up for her.

After 5 years she returned to Kashozi where she taught at a girl's school. She only learned about her mother's death after a few weeks while she herself was in hospital with a kidney infection. She was very sad that she had not been able to say goodbye to her mother.

Fortunately, a good time began for Jeanne in 1976 when she went to remote Isingiro, an Ujamaa village, where people from different areas lived together. With another sister she really lived among the people and they were able to form a 'small Christian community'.

Back in the 80's in the Netherlands for mission animation for young people, she felt alienated from her own culture. She found the church very hierarchical here and in Africa she had experienced much more community spirit. Fortunately, she found a lot of support in her community in Den Bosch. She organized international missionary routes and was in close contact with a Taizé youth group. In 1982 she was Provincial Assistant and also became involved in the MVA-team.

From 1988 to 1994, Jeanne again worked in Africa where she trained and worked with young people, especially in Kangemi, a slum in Nairobi. Here she experienced a vital church and real reciprocity. In 1996 she followed the re-orientation course in Scotland, "where you look back on your life and re-orient yourself", she said. After this she went back again to Kangemi.

When a sister, who lived with Jeanne in Kangemi, heard of her death, she wanted to add a little word of thanksgiving:

"I praise God for her life. She was a woman of peace. She was my accompanist when I was just a young professed and I thank God for the support she gave me in my vocation. I thank her for her sense of justice, her faith and her calmness.

Dear Jeanne, thank you very much for what you have been for

us, a sister, a mother, a companion to so many people in the mission in Africa. I will ever be thankful to God for what I lived with you. May you enjoy the fullness of life in God”.

Before Jeanne finally returned to the Netherlands in 2003, she also did some pastoral work with women and AIDS-patients in Tukuyu in Tanzania.

Back in the Netherlands she lived in the community of Esch. In February 2005 she celebrated her 50th anniversary of her Profession. After Esch was closed, Jeanne moved to Boxtel and was the superior of the new community of “Molenwiek”. She was still busy in the MOV (Mission, Development, Peace)-group in the parish and the “Lenten Action”.

During 2007-2013 she was nominated as the Regional Superior of the Netherlands. Looking at the age of the sisters in our Region, the time had come, that soon a layperson would have to take over tasks in our Region. In this capacity as a Regional and with great perseverance, Jeanne ensured that a coordinator was appointed in May 2012. In this same Year we also celebrated the 125 years of our presence in the Netherlands and made a pilgrimage to our first community in Maastricht.

In 2012 Jeanne had moved into an apartment in “Molenhof”. In 2017, due to increasing memory problems she moved to the “Wereldhuis”, where she spent her last years.

Two days after her fall, she died peaceful in the presence of her sisters. She saw her life as a pilgrimage in which God was her source of life. From this she drew plenty to become who she was. A real missionary concerned with all the people she encountered, both in Africa and in the Netherlands.

Dear Jeanne, you are now included in the eternal peace of the Lord. May you rest in peace.