

## **Sister Angela Maria Brekelmans (Scholastica Marie)**

**Deceased on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022 in Boxtel, the Netherlands**

**Born on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1923 in Hilvarenbeek, the Netherlands**

**First Profession on 1<sup>th</sup> May 1951 in Esch, the Netherlands**

After a short illness, in the year she would turn 99, our sister Angela passed quietly away, on the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022. She passed away just as she was, quietly and modestly, in her own room.

Sister Angela was born on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1923 in Brabant, in a large catholic family of teachers. Her father was headmaster of the school in Hilvarenbeek and later became cashier at the “Farmersbank“ (Boerenleenbank). He also gave evening courses in agriculture and horticulture to farmers, so as to become more independent. Her mother came from a well to do family in Tilburg, whose father was co-owner of a modern brick factory.

Angela was the sixth of eleven children, of whom three brothers joined missionary congregations, one of them the White Fathers. Several aunts and uncles were also religious. Angela had good memories of her childhood in the villa with its large garden, which her parents had built for their large family.

She loved to read, write and play the piano. Every child received a good education and there were many books in the house. After having finished primary school, Angela went to the Secondary Boarding School of the sisters of Charity in Oerle. From there she moved on to the Teaching training college in Tilburg. Her heart was with the little children, so she switched to the training for Nursery-Teacher. This training

was theory and practice in one. After the war she obtained her A and B certificate for kindergarten and head teacher.

The death of her brother Adrie in 1944 who, with other students of the university in Tilburg, was during the war forced to work in Dassel, Germany, had a great impact on her when he died there of diphtheria.

In 2017 these students were commemorated by the Tilburg University, and she was happy to show people the documentary made about this.

The mission was an innate calling for Sister Angela, even though she had been dating for a year. “The appeal of religious life was stronger”, as she herself said in her life book she made last year.

She wanted through education help girls and young women in Africa, to emancipate themselves. Her choice fell on the White Sisters, as they worked in international communities in Africa. Angela clearly wanted to see more than her own village, she wanted to go out into the wide world.

On the 3rd March 1949 she entered the postulate in Maarn and followed the novitiate in Esch. After her First Profession on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1951, she went to our Motherhouse in Algeria for more formation. After this she went to Liverpool to obtain her English Certificate.

In February 1953 she left for Tanzania and first learned Kiswahili. Angela was appointed as a teacher at the mission school in Kisa, South Tanzania. She was the first teacher and headmaster. The White Fathers recruited the girls for the school. She taught all kinds of subjects, English, Mathematics, General Development and World Geography at this Christian boardingschool for girls. Angela was an excellent teacher and it was important for her to have a good relationship with her students. For her, this

was her best time in the mission. In March 1961 she went for a holiday.

After Tanzania's independence, the school was nationalised and Angela's work was handed over to the African teachers, just as Cardinal Lavignerie intended.

In 1965 Angela became superior of the community of Kisa and in July 1971 she was appointed assistant Bursar to the Diocese of Mbeya. She did this for almost 20 years in a very secure and responsible manner. She missed the children at first, now that she was in the office, but she had an affinity for numbers, so she was quickly at ease in her new job. In Mbeya a lot of money came from Memisa and MISSIO (Dutch missionary NGO's), so Sister Angela had to make sure it was well spent and accounted for. In September 1985 she went to Frascati for a special Session.

From 1992 to 1997 she was appointed Provincial Bursar in the United Kingdom and lived in the London community. This job was a lot more complicated and extensive, but she was very happy. Angela returned for good to the Netherlands at the age of 77. Her active life was over and she really was now retiring.

Our Mother House in Esch would soon have to close, as the building no longer met the requirements of the time. New opportunities for the sisters were sought.

Just now in Eindhoven, the congregation of the Sisters of Charity had a carehome called Terhaghe. They were looking for sisters of another congregation, preferably missionaries, who would like to join them and take the vacant places of the empty rooms. We were very happy with this possibility and we opened there a community. (Just to say, this has been a beautiful success, for years the two communities were very happy together).

Angela lived for two years in Boxtel-Oost, where she had started volunteer work with the mentally weak. She was the first MSOLA sister to go to the convent Terhaghe together with a fellow sister. From there Angela went weekly, for over 10 years, by bus and train to continue her volunteer work in Boxtel.

As a White Sister she was also for many years the Superior of the constantly new fellow sisters who joined Terhaghe at set times. At one point there was a community of 18 MSOLA. Angela kept meticulously the records of the finances and the chronicles. With her fellow sisters and the sisters van Charity of Ghent, she lived wonderfully happy in a beautiful environment of Parc Glorieux.

After 20 years, together with the other remaining White Sisters, she moved to the Wereldhuis in Boxtel, where she eventually managed to adapt well.

Sister Angela was a sweet, modest, calm and deeply religious woman, with a somewhat introverted but balanced character. She did not like to be a burden to others and was not quick to express her feelings. But delicately she was able to make wise and recognizable remarks. Despite her increasing amnesia, being asked about Tanzania she would blossom and then become a full-fledged teacher again.

Dear Angela, we thank you for your love and care and will miss you.

May you rest in eternal peace with the Lord.

