

SISTER JOHANNA de GROOT (Alphonsa Marie)

Deceased on the 10th August 2022 in Boxtel, The Netherlands

At the age of 92

Born on 24th of September 1929, in Vleuten, the Netherlands

First Profession on 28th of October 1951 in Esch, The Netherlands

Sister Annie was born as the second child in a horticultural family in Vleuten, province Utrecht. She had three brothers and two sisters. Jan, the eldest has taken over the company. Brother Theo became a priest. Shortly after her father died, her younger brother Fons was killed in an accident, a major tragedy for the family. Annie loved her father, a real daddy's child. She often helped him pick strawberries. In the family, the idea of mission was talked about at an early age and Annie let very soon know that she wanted to go to the mission. Just 18 yrs old she wanted to go, but the pastor thought she was still too young and so did her parents. They were able to hold her back for a year or two, but on 12th September 1949, just before her 20th birthday, the time had come and she entered the White Sisters. First the Postulate in Maarn, and six months later moving to the Novitiate in Esch. On 28th October 1951 she made her first Profession and chose the name Alphonsa Marie.

She was sent for a year of international formation to Sainte Marie at the Mother House Saint Charles in Algiers. Hereafter she remained in Algiers and after completing an English course, she was appointed to Tanzania. The 3rd March 1953 she went to Marseille to take the Raptim Missionary plane to Kigoma.

For about twelve years Annie had the responsibility for the kitchen and had been cooking in Ujiji, Kakongo, Mabamba and Kagunguli. With Sister Marianne Kemmeren and Francine van Berkel she went to the villages, to give catechism lessons and also sewing and knitting lessons to the women.

After about 12 years Annie went for the first time back to the Netherlands. At the airport she met the sisters and also her family.

After a holiday in Esch Annie was 4 years responsible for the kitchen in the community of Sterksel, NL.

Having followed the Tertianship in Frascati in 1969, she returned to Tanzania and resumed the housekeeping at Kagondo and Kigoma, and gave catechism lesson in Mabamba.

In 1974 she came back to Esch for medical reasons. Annie was very thankful to be able to care for her sick mother until she died on 7th September 1975 in her arms.

Then Annie went to London to study a year religious education at the college Corpus Christi. In november she returned to Tanzania. She was appointed to share women's work in the parishes in Mbeya and Nkundi. Later she started again working with the women in the parishes of Isingiro and Sumbawanga. Before finally returning to the Netherlands in 1991 she 4 years substituted as head of the kitchen in Kipalapala.

In november 1991 she came for good back in the mother house in Esch, she made herself very useful as a driver and cared also for the sisters in the carehome Molenweide in Boxtel, which is now called Wereldhuis. After her move to Sterksel, she there also became the driver on duty. In 1998 she returned to Esch.

In november 2003 she went to the Convent Care home St. Jozefoord in Nuland together with other White Sisters: Josina

van de Wiel, Marianne Kemmeren, Jo Senten and Riek Freijse. She lived there very happily for almost 19 years. In recent years she moved in the small-scale setting of the Longina residential group in the new building.

Sister Annie was a very religious, rather traditional, modest and obedient sister, who was very fond of the Pope and Mary. She was the last White Sister to wear a veil. She was a good silent force who did what had to be done. At her farewell in Sterksel she received a framed Apostolic Blessing from Pope John Paul II.

Unfortunately, due to her increasing dementia, it became also more difficult to communicate with Annie. In the end she was mostly still in bed and sleeping a lot. She was tired and her body and mind were exhausted. The contact from Boxtel was regularly maintained by Thea, co-worker of our Congregation, for whom we are very grateful. As time went on, the health of Annie was deteriorating. Very restful she finally left us to go to her Lord. May our sister Annie rest in peace.

Amen.