

# **Sister Anna Maria van Breukelen (Agatha)**

**Deceased on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in Boxtel, The Netherlands**

**At the age of 99**

**Born on 25<sup>th</sup> of December 1922 in Boxtel, the Netherlands**

**First Profession on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1948 in Esch, The Netherlands**

Sister Annie was to reach the blessed age of 100, unfortunately it did not come to that. After a fall in her room on the afternoon of 28<sup>th</sup> October, she suddenly died in a very short time. Fortunately, she was not alone and did not suffer.

Annie was born on Christmas Day 1922 and would therefore have turned 100 this coming Christmas. She was born in Soest, as the youngest of a loving and religious family with 8 children, 4 boys and 4 girls. She was given the same name as her deceased sister, who was only 4 years old. The family lived in Soest, because her father worked as a maintenance-man at the Royal Palace next door. He was also very active in the Catholic Workers' Association and care of the poor in the parish. Her mother was a seamstress and she believed in honesty and justice.

In the family, religion played a big part, and they were faithful churchgoers. Annie was a good student, and thanks to her older brothers and sisters, she was able to read even before starting school. In the meantime, she came into contact with the mission and read booklets about various mission congregations. Her teacher had a brother who was a White Father and made Annie thinking about the poor people in Africa who did not yet know God.

After primary school, she went to the Mulo (Secondary School) in the village and, like her parents, she attended Mass every day, after her high school, Annie started working in the draperyshop of her older sister. She was also very active in the Catholic Action-movement. Gradually she felt the desire to go to Africa. She had already heard of the White Sisters and after she visited the White Sisters in Esch, she decided to enter. The simplicity attracted her.

Shortly after the war, on 12 September 1946, Annie entered Sancta Monica in Esch, for the Postulate and the Novitiate. After her First Profession on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1948, she went with her fellow sisters to the Motherhouse in Algeria, to follow the Year of ongoing formation. They were the first group ever for this international year. Annie wanted to become a nurse and already did an internship at an hospital.

After this year she returned to Boxtel and was asked to become a teacher instead of a nurse because teachers were needed more. So, she went to the Teacher Training College at the Franciscan Congregation in Veghel. After that, she went a few months in Liverpool to brush up on her English.

On 28 February 1953, she was appointed to Tanganyika as a teacher for the mission school in Sumve. With a fellow sister she left for Marseille to take the boat to Dar es Salaam.

After one year already, she was transferred to Mombasa in Kenya, located at the Indian Ocean. Kenya was still a colony of England and she became head of a large government school for Asian girls. She was put in charge of 28 teachers and also became the Superior of the international community. In early 1955, the English Princess Elizabeth visited Mombasa on her trip in Kenya to get to know the country. She was welcomed by hundreds of school children, including our own. It all looked very elegant. When the Princess stood on the podium and started to address them, a high-ranking person hurried up to her. It became dead quiet. A short time later we were informed that the King, her father, had just died. She was now the Queen all of a sudden and had to go home immediately; and the party was over.

Annie was very happy in Mombasa and loved her work. She therefore was very sorry, when in 1960 she was called to the Generalate in Rome. She was called to be appointed as Mistress of Novices in Esch. She was just in time to participate in a retreat before she started a theology course in Toulouse. After her study she went to St. Charles to make the Third Year after which she went to Esch to start as Novice Mistress and Superior of the Community.

Unfortunately, despite our prayers, there were not many vocations at that time and in 1966 the Novitiate moved from Esch to a smaller building in Mook. But there were no more new candidates and after eight years Annie returned to Tanzania. In Ndala she taught at the White Sisters' school and again, became Superior of the Community.

After four years handing over the school, Annie returned to the Netherlands to the community of Mook, where she started teaching at the primary catholic school in Mook.

After a year as superior in Vorstenbosch, she was appointed to Heerlen with two other sisters (Carine Loohuis and Odile) to open a new community in Heerlen. Several congregations wanted to establish a Missionary Centre in Heerlen and they had asked to have the White Sisters there. It was very interesting work and for twelve years Annie worked with great pleasure on her new mission in the Netherlands.

In July 1988 to July 1994 Annie stayed in Boxtel as assistant and secretary of the Provincial Team. Then she went back to Heerlen for another year. It was in the early eighties that the Mission Centre closed its doors and they eventually left for Huize Mariengarde in Warmond where they could quietly enjoy the community, where many White Sisters already lived. She stayed there for almost twenty years, before finally, in 2014, she moved together with Sr Carine Loohuis and Sr Corrie van Wijk to the residential care centre Molenweide (now Wereldhuis) in Boxtel.

Annie would turn 100 at Christmas and celebrate her 75th Jubilee next year. Unfortunately, she didn't get to it. She passed away unexpectedly on October 28, 2022 and so we were unable to say goodbye to her.

Annie was a calm, balanced and modest woman, very precise and conscientious, good at language. Her poor eyesight meant that she was unable to read much and needed a lot of time to do her own things. She wanted to remain independent and not be a burden to anyone.

Dear Annie, we will miss you. May you rest in Peace. Amen.