

## In Memoriam Sr Bep (Elisabeth Agatha) van Grieken, Sr Willibrord

☆ Oegstgeest, April 2, 1930

Profession, May 1, 1952, Esch

† Boxtel, October 8, 2022

*Member of the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa*

Bep was the eldest of a family of nine children. Her father was a florist and a flowerbreeder and her mother a housewife. She went to domestic science school and got her seamstress diploma. Later, when she was already with the White Sisters, she obtained her diploma for home economics and pedagogy at the school of the Srs JMJ (Jesus, Mary, Joseph) in Den Bosch. She wanted to enter before she was 18 in order to go to Africa. However, the White Sisters thought she was still too young and said she should come back later. So, she returned two years later and was accepted.

May 1, 1952 she did her 1st Profession in the church of Esch. After studying English in Liverpool, Bep was appointed to Chilubula in Zambia in '58. Here she gave domestic lessons to girls from secondary school and primary school. After 5 years she was transferred to Ilondola, where she became principal of primary school and worked as a domestic teacher. A year later, Bep starts teaching household courses in Kayambi, but is sent back to the Netherlands because of her health.

Then she goes to help in Frascati and Toulouse to sew new modern habits. In '67 she is fortunately allowed to return to Zambia, now to Lubwe in the north. After a difficult start, she founded several successful women's clubs here that eventually became self-sufficient by sewing uniforms and raising chickens. She also started organizing savings- and credit associations together with the people, which not only increased the standard of living but especially the self-esteem of the population.

After some time in the Netherlands for rest and study, Bep was appointed for pastoral work in Sinia, a slum near Ndola. Here, together with the residents, she built a new church that was also used as a school. She also ensured that disabled children were helped and set up a youth movement.

In 1986 she was recalled to the Netherlands to become Provincial Economist. Her last post in Zambia was Kalilo, where she worked from 1993 to 2002. Here too she built a church together with the people, founded a school and was involved in the organization and finances of the parish. She had good contact with the women and was able to learn a lot about the local culture. In turn she taught the women to emancipate themselves. The hospital was completed under the direction of Bep and in 2002 she celebrated her 50th Jubilee here. After this she left permanently for the Netherlands and became Regional Economist until 2009.

She lived in the Regional House in the Prins Bernardstraat in Boxtel. In 2012, she moved to a flat in the Molenhof and in May 2022 she went to the Wereldhuis. Some time later, she received word that she had a terminal illness. She resigned admirably quickly to this. She had her prayer that she started every day with: **You Lord are all I have, and you give me all I need, my future is in your hand.** She was grateful that the Holy Spirit had inspired her so much during her work in Zambia and that she had been able to trust God completely, even in difficult times. Her motto was: "When I am weak, then I am strong". And strong she certainly was, besides being sober, courageous and sensible.

Dear Bep, we will miss you very much.