

**SISTER GEERTRUDIS GRATIANA (Truus) BOS (sr.
Hubertine)**

Deceased on 24th July 2023 in Boxtel, The Netherlands

At the age of 88

Born on 14th February 1935 in Wognum, The Netherlands

First Profession on 15th August in Esch, The Netherlands

After an unexpected hospitalization and major surgery last week, Truus returned to her appt in Wereldhuis to enter her final phase. She wanted to say goodbye to everyone and that she did. Then she went to sleep and never woke up again. The community is in deep mourning.

She was called Truus and was born in Wognum in Holland in a family with 8 children. Unfortunately, her parents died at a young age and the children became orphans. They were separated from each other and were divided among the family. Truus ended up with a childless uncle and aunt, where she didn't really feel at home. She didn't dare ask anything; afraid she would disappoint them. She thought she had to be an exemplary child. After primary school, she went to domestic school. She really wanted to become a teacher or a nurse, but instead went to work for two families with many children.

At one point she read a book about the missionary Father **Damien** working with lepers in Indonesia. That inspired her to become a missionary in Africa. She hardly dared tell her adoptive parents. Despite her poor health and to her great joy, she entered on 3th June 1957 at the White Sisters in Maarn to become a postulant. After her formative years in Esch she made her first Profession at the 15th August 1959. Her sister Clare became also a Religious in the Congregation of Augustiness and she often wrote to her.

After her year of on-going formation in Algeria Truus (then called Sr. Hubertine) was appointed in 1960 for **Burkina Faso in West Africa**. She left from Marseille for a boat trip of thirteen days. Finally, her desire was fulfilled! Burkina had just become independent, so there was still plenty of celebration everywhere. Truus could not believe her eyes.

After learning the local language (Moree), Truus went to the international community of **Koupela** where the White Sisters had a weaving centre for young girls. This expanded with more and more

teaching, in all kinds of subjects and self-sufficient activities, such as raising chickens. It was hard work during those 12 years, because there was not much money and little water, so the sisters had to improvise a lot.

In May 1973 she left for her leave in the Netherlands. In September she went to **Frascati** for on-going Formation for the so called Third year.

After some time in **The Netherlands**, Truus was appointed in 1974 for **Bam in the north of Burkina**. She taught domestic education and religious training for Mossi girls in their own independent Congregation **Soeurs de Notre Dame du Lac Bam**, which existed from 1967. This was the last of the 22 native congregations founded by the White Sisters in Africa. Truus was proud that they could now be at their own and had their own autonomy.

After 7 years in Bam, Truus was asked to do pastoral work in a new neighbourhood in the capital **Ouagadougou**, surrounded by the Muslim population. The bishop wanted to form a Christian community with catechesis for children and literacy for the illiterate.

She was also involved in health education and sewing lessons. It was difficult work in difficult conditions, there was a lack of everything and the community was very small. There were many interfaith marriages between Muslims and Christians. She was therefore happy that in 1984 she could go to **Nasso, near Bobo Dioulasso**, in western Burkina. Here as a pastoral worker, Truus together with another sister, was assigned to a huge parish, where many Mossi migrants lived and worked in the rice fields. Nevertheless, she had to learn a new language, Jula. In her car, a **Deux Chevaux** van, she travelled from village to village, making house calls and teaching both catechesis and literacy classes. It was a very nice time, as Truus herself said. With a fall in 1989 she broke both her wrists and had to undergo a lengthy rehabilitation, first in Burkina and later in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, it was just at the time when her sister Clara was due to visit her in Africa. It was very sorry for both of them that this visit had to be cancelled.

She could no longer work in the interior because of this handicap, it would be too heavy. So Truus was appointed for **Sikasso in Mali**, where she had to learn another new language, now Bambara.

Catholics were also a small minority in Mali. Truus again engaged in catechesis, preparation for communion, literacy and hygiene lessons for the women. After working for about 5 years in **Sikasso**, in 1999 she returned to the Netherlands for good.

She went to live in the mother house of the White Sisters, Sancta Monica convent in Esch. The transition was not easy, but she soon made herself useful again as a volunteer at the intercultural primary school in Boxtel, where she taught Dutch to non-native children. She also became active in a local interreligious women's group with Muslim women.

She lived for some time in the Provincial house in the Prins Bernardstraat. In 2005 **the big house in Esch was sold** and the community moved to the new **Molenwiek-house**. Truus was there for four years and moved to Parc Glorieux in **Eindhoven** in 2009, where she lived very pleasantly for many years together with her fellow sisters and the sisters of Charity of Gent (Gand). In 2020 she was given the opportunity to come to the **Wereldhuis** together with 5 other sisters, where she made an active and inspiring contribution to community life. Truus felt very grateful that the Lord had “**seen, called and sent**” her. This was also the title of her recently completed book of life. She felt like a missionary till the very end.

Last Monday 17th July she was suddenly admitted to the hospital because of abdominal complaints. After much deliberation, an operation followed in the evening. On Tuesday Truus seemed to recover, but the day after it went completely wrong again. She insisted on not wanting a second risky operation, she was tired. She did want to go back home to say goodbye to her family, sisters and staff. On Thursday she returned to the **Wereldhuis** and on Saturday evening, after she had arranged everything á la Truus, she was put to sleep.

Subsequently, she passed away peacefully at half past seven on Monday morning 24th July in the presence of sister Joanna and co-worker Marja.

Dear Truus, we thank you for who you were and what you have done for us and for the Congregation. ***We will miss you very much. Rest in Peace with the Lord, Amen.***