



Obituary
Sr. M. Gabriel Kleinelütern
who died
21.04.2021
at Missionshaus Neuenbeken

Sr. Gabriel – Hildegard Kleinelütern – was born 28.12.1920 in Warendorf, Diocese of Münster. In September 1936 she came to Neuenbeken to attend the Missionssschool. In 1939 she passed her Oxford Junior examination. In 1940 she obtained her qualification as catechist by “Missio Canonica” and attended a course in medical First Aid.

In September 1940 she started her basic formation for religious life at Wernberg, was received into the novitiate 01.02.1941, made her first profession 15.06.1942, and final vows 10.12.1945.

On the day after her final profession Sr. Gabriel came to Neuenbeken and helped at the entrance for some time. From 1946 - 1950 she did a vocational training at a trade and business school at Mönchengladbach – Rheydt. This included several practica of different nature, one at Haus Widey, Paderborn (a centre for unmarried mothers and their babies), and one at Maria Hilf Krankenhaus, Mönchengladbach, as well experience in sewing at Neuenbeken. In 1950 she obtained her qualification for further studies in domestic science in Solingen - Ohligs. She completed this training successfully in 1952. Subjects included in the final examination in Education, Business administration and Law well a thesis. As a theme for her thesis she chose “Fear, its causes and effects”. For this she obtained the mark “Very good”.

In April 1954 Sr. Gabriel – now a fully trained domestic science teacher took over the responsibility for the “Haushaltungsschule, later on Pflegevorschule /Berufsfachschule at Neuenbeken. Here, numerous young women obtained their training and good foundations for their future life and vocation. This became a formative experience for many of them, and they expressed their gratitude by letters and visits. Sr. Gabriel herself kept up keen interest for her former pupils and an amazing memory of details.

In 1982 the school closed. Sr. Gabriel took on care of the elderly sisters and was part of the house leadership team. She enjoyed community life, and her gradual loss of hearing was a painful experience. In 2010 she had to move to the Infirmary. She was extraordinarily alert and interested almost up to the end, for which she longed during the last months of her life.

In the evening of 21. April she passed away quietly. She had prepared her funeral service herself, already years ago. Her favourite song "Ich bete an die Macht der Liebe" (I adore the power of love) was to have a place in it.

The pearl in a sea shell was one Sr. Gabriel's favourite symbols for life - its origin, slow maturation, its beauty and preciousness. This was what she wanted to pass on to others.

In nature, pearls come into existence in a way not fully understood. A former belief that a grain of sand that entered the shell initiated the formation of a pearl is not proved scientifically. But the thought that pearls come into being through pain which changes the grain of sand into something precious was a symbol to Sr. Gabriel: Faith, love and joy can grow out of deep suffering. Pearls have always fascinated people. Even Jesus uses the symbol in one of his parables, and the Book of Revelation speaks of it. A well known hymn, expresses it beautifully: "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" here freely rendered in English:

The gates of the city (heaven) are made of twelve pearls.
We stand in the choir of angels around your throne.
No eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard such joy.
We exult and sing Halleluja for ever and ever.

May Sr. Gabriel now sing this Halleluja and live in God's glory.

R.i.p.