

OBITUARY

of our Sister Antonio Außerleitner

*23. 02. 1929 † 04. 05. 2021



Sr. Antonio was born on February 23, 1929 in Taiskirchen, Upper Austria, and baptized with the name Kreszenzia. On 04. of May, God called you to Himself forever in the convent of Wernberg.

Sr. Antonio, you were the youngest of four siblings, two boys and two girls. Your parents had a farm and for you as children it was natural to work everywhere. You were still very small when your mother died. Your father soon followed her. Your aunt now took the place of your parents. You always spoke highly and gratefully about her. Already at the age of 19 you wanted to enter the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood at Wernberg, but your sister, our Sr. Barbara, entered first. So, you had to wait two more years until your brother got married and a wife came into the house. October 1, 1950, you were able to follow your dream - the enthusiasm for mission was awakened in you by the magazine of the Peter Claver Sodality. Your practical talents were much appreciated for a few years in Austria, but already on July 13, 1956, together with your sister Barbara, you boarded the boat for your journey to Zimbabwe, former Rhodesia. Without a word of English and certainly not Shona, you had to work immediately with co-workers. Working in the fields and handling livestock was familiar to you from home. With all your talents, your energy, your knowledge and your unshakable faith in God, the good Father, you gave yourself to the people for 60 years. You spent 28 years in Mashonaland and 32 years in Matabele. Everywhere you were entrusted with responsibilities caring for sisters, novices, fathers and school children - under circumstances that would have been challenging under normal circumstances, even more so during the years of civil war. For years you were responsible for feeding 1000 children. You travelled countless kilometres on bad roads to take candidates to school or to go shopping. "I didn't do anything extra. I was in the house, in the garden, in the kitchen and with the cattle. Anybody could have done that." That's what you said when you were awarded the Medal of Merit of the Province of Upper Austria in 2019. And that wasn't rhetorical deep-thinking, but was your essence. Not everyone would have been able to do that! As a manager of large farms, you did all the hard

work and you proclaimed faith through your deeds and your being, not with words. Of the many incidents you shared with us, I would like to mention only one: A worker who had no relatives and no home died and no one wanted to bury him. You simply staked out a grave and gave the deceased a home. Then the men were ready to bury him.

"The people of Zimbabwe were very helpful and kind" you said in retrospect and "I don't want to miss that time, I appreciated every day, it was the best time of my life." Due to your much work in the sun, you got skin cancer and came back to Wernberg in 2016 for treatment. You endured everything bravely and without complaining. This year in January you suffered a fracture of the thigh due to a fall, and in February you were already walking again with a walker. Then, however, the cancer began to work again and you could no longer see out of one eye; your strength and your will to live diminished and you went to bed. In the last weeks you suffered a lot and gave your pains to other suffering people. You found new meaning in the suffering. "Helping was always my mission," you said in an interview. That was your concern until your last breath. Two days before your death you said with conviction: "Now the worst is over. I can just leave the rest to the Lord God." This testified to your struggle and also unshakable trust. You were a grateful patient and were lovingly cared for.

Sr. Antonio, you were a great woman, model of a Missionary Sister of the Precious Blood. We thank you for your life and know that you are now at home in God - and will have also met your parents and siblings again. Thank you.

Sr. Pallotti and fellow Sisters