

IN LOVING MEMORY OF SR GEMMA BELEBESI CPS

*"Come, you whom my Father has blessed, when I was hungry you fed me, when I was naked you clothed me..." Matthew 25:
34 - 35*



Ntekeng Fidelia Belebese was born in Mt Fletcher, Fatima on the 02 September 1939. She is the daughter of Mr Sixtus Belebese and Mrs Dina Belebese.

She joined the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood in Glen Aventura, Mthatha, on the 6 January 1958. On reception as a novice, she received the name Sr Gemma. She made first profession on the 02 July 1962 and final vows on the 06 January 1968.

After her first profession, she was assigned to teach at Ikhwezi Lokusa Special School until 1964 when she was transferred to Mariazell to teach in Moiketsi Primary School and in 1970, in St Theresa Domestic Science today known as Bethany Children's Home.

Sr Gemma's leadership skills were put into good use in the Province. She was in the Provincial Administration from 1980 -1986, house leader in Landsend in 1984. Mt Frere in 2008 and Mariazell in 2009. Sr Gemma, with the late Sr Anthony Valashiya pioneered the Catechetical Team in the Diocese of Mthatha, which developed from the initiative of Fr Paul Baumeler CMM.

Sr Gemma was trained in Bible courses, **Biblical Course** in 1963 in Cwele, **Understanding the Bible** in Tiberias in Israel in 1979 and **Christian Development** in Khanyisa, Mariannhill in 1987. She worked in different parishes in and outside the Diocese of Mthatha. In Qumbu 1973, Brig in Switzerland 1984, Marialinden 2003, Bedford and Landsend 2005.

After her return from Brig, Switzerland, Sr Gemma put into practise what Abbot Francis said, **"You cannot talk about a loving God to a starving person."** In 1988 she founded **Phakamis'isizwe Project** in Elliotdale, which taught the youth women and even some men, sewing, bread baking, poultry farming and basic computer skills. On the 4 September 1993, the Transkei Social Workers Association awarded her for the work she did. Unfortunately, the project slowly died out after Sr Gemma was transferred to Glen Aventura. In 2002 she started a sewing project for the unemployed youth in Landsend.

When she finally returned to Glen Aventura because of health reasons, she collected clothes which she sold cheaply to needy people. She also kept her hands busy, making cushions and woollen blankets. Her health deteriorated as the control of diabetes became a challenge. She had a shoulder surgery after which she got sick and was hospitalised in St Mary's Mthatha on the 13 December 2021 and was diagnosed with a clot (pulmonary embolism) on 6 January 2022, due to hospitalisation, she did not celebrate her Diamond Jubilee with her group mates. She was discharged from hospital and with the help of the physiotherapist and the infirmary staff she could slowly walk. She fell sick again and was hospitalised on the 19 March 2022 in St Mary's Hospital, Mthatha where the Lord called her home on 28 March 2022.

Thank you, Sr Gemma, for what you have been as our fellow sister and for what you did for the congregation and the church in Mthatha and Brig. May the Precious Blood cleanse you from all sin and the Lamb of God lead you to the seat he prepared for you.

REST IN PEACE SISTER.