



OBITUARY
of our
Sr. Franziska Maria Pirker,
+ 13. 12. 2022
at Missionshaus Neuenbeken

Sister Franziska - Elisabeth Pirker - was born, like her twin sister Rosa, on 21 September 1940 in the small village of Pirk in St. Andrä im Lavanttal (Austria), Diocese of Gurk-Klagenfurt, and was already baptised on 22 September. After attending primary school and a private secondary school, she first worked on her parents' farm and attended courses for agricultural profession. In 1956/57 she took part in a household apprenticeship course. In October 1958 she began training as a nurse in Klagenfurt and graduated "with distinction" in 1961. Before joining our Congregation, she worked for three years as a nurse in the regional hospital in Wolfsberg. In a testimony of this hospital it says: "She proved herself ... in the best way, not only because of her knowledge, but also because of her contact with the sick. Special mention must be made of her professional attitude, which elevates her far above the average."

At the age of 24, Sr. Franziska entered our Congregation on 1 September 1964 in Wernberg. In addition to the religious influence of her parental home, her active participation in the Catholic Worker Youth was - as she writes in her curriculum vitae - "a great help to make her decision to enter religious life." On 8 December 1965 she was clothed in Wernberg, made her first profession on 3 May 1967, and her perpetual profession on 8 September 1970.

She took over the nursing in the convent and still found time for visiting the sick and helping in the immediate vicinity. From 1969 on, she was employed in the newly built Abbot Pfanner House in Langen to build up community nursing there and to practise it in the communities of Langen and Thal. In September 1973 she returned to Wernberg, became provincial assistant in November and took over the formation of the postulants and the accompaniment of the juniorate sisters. On 21 January 1984 she was appointed Provincial Superior. She held this office until 6 September 1995. At the beginning of the 1990s - after the fall of the Iron Curtain - Sr. Franziska had the courage to found a new CPS station in Romania - in the poor village of Dorf Tirol - with two Sisters to take care of the people. For 20 years the Sisters were able to work there in a very beneficial way.

After her term of office, Sr. Franziska wanted to turn to hospital chaplaincy. She took over the management of the Franz Pfanner House in Langen for a short time, completed training as a hospital chaplain in Salzburg from March to June 1996 and received the episcopal commission as pastoral assistant for the Elisabethinen-Hospital in Linz. She worked in this hospital until

31 May 1999. Her great empathy, her human and religious presence and the pastoral offers were much appreciated as “a valuable help not only to patients but also to the staff”.

On 1 July 1999 Sr. Franziska was appointed superior of the Motherhouse in the Netherlands and now looked after her own fellow Sisters. She performed this service for more than ten years; especially the move of the Dutch Sisters from their convent in Tienray to the Motherhouse also fell into her term of office and required a lot of commitment, understanding and prudence from her, so that the Sisters could feel at home in Hl. Blood.

Sr. Franziska came to Neuenbeken on 10 February 2010. A short time later, she was again found as a chaplain at the senior citizens' centre in Altenbeken. Almost every day she commuted there in her car, taking care of the people, be it in conversations, in caring for the sick or the dying, in common church services which she organised. Everyone appreciated her commitment and her advice: the home's management, the staff, the residents and their relatives. In an article dedicated to her in the house newspaper, she was called "the good soul of the house". In her remaining time at the Mission House, she helped in the vegetable cellar, did driving services and helped in our infirmary.

We thank Sr. Franziska for her truly missionary life, which - as the Constitutions formulate it as our common mission - gave witness to Christ's redeeming love in many ways. When we heard of the diagnosis of her illness a few weeks ago, we were very saddened. She herself - from her many years of experience in nursing and pastoral care - may well have guessed how her path would go. And, many of us said: It was good that she could still go to her family in Austria in autumn. Now God has taken his faithful servant home so quickly on 13 December. May she, who accompanied countless people on their last journey, rest in His peace and remain an intercessor for us.

After we heard that Sr. Franziska had passed away in the night, we sang a Paderborn Advent hymn in the service, which sings of our all goal in its last verse:

To be united with you, that is the best part;
In heaven and on earth there is salvation only in thee.
Let me be your own, let me be your own.
In life and in death I belong to you alone.

R.I.P.