



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
SR. MARIA GERTRUD WINDISCHHOFER, CPS
JUNE 28TH 1933 TO SEPTEMBER 29TH 2023.

“The Lord will work out his plans for my life- for your faithful love o lord, endures forever. Don’t abandon me for you made me.” (Psalm 138: 8)

Paula Windisschhofer the daughter of the late Anton Windischhofer and Maria Geb Steinkeller was born on the 28th of June 1933 in PabrieuKirchen Austria.

She joined the congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood at Wernberg Austria on the 2nd of November 1955. On reception to the novitiate on the 7th of Dec 1956, she was given the name, Sr. Maria Gertrud. She made her first profession on the 8th of December 1957.

After her first profession, she worked in Wernberg, and on the 8th of December 1959, she was missioned to East Africa where she has served faithfully until her entry to her eternal home.

From 1959 to 1970, Sr. Maria Gertrud did household work in various mission stations in Tanzania. These stations were Mgeta, Matombo, Kigurunyembe, Kilosa, and Mhonda but none of them exists as Precious Blood stations today.

In the year 1970 to 1993, she served in the kitchen in Riruta, Kilungu, Mbitini and later returned to Riruta. While in Riruta her duties were changed and was asked to work in the sewing room, dining room, and later in the chapel where she remained active until her health and old age set in and she could not do it anymore. She entered the prayer ministry which she did faithfully until she returned back to the Lord.

It was very difficult to separate her from active ministry. She served the sisters without reservation. Oh Sr. Maria Gertrud, how many stitches did you receive at Nyina wa Mumbi health center after your falls when you tried to do things by yourself and you could not manage. Lucky enough your bones were strong and healthy you never got any fractures. You had to bow to nature. You used a wheelchair for a time until you got confined into bed. The last five years of your life were without speech. All this time, your face was aglow with a smile, your eyes always focused, as if to say, I have done my work faithfully, what I am waiting for is the eternal life promised to me.

One day our sister nurse asked you, Unampenda Yesu, and you responded “Kabisaaa” (Do you love Jesus? Very much?) Your Yes was so convincing and you went back to your silence again. I believe the Lord wanted you to have a physical rest, while still here on earth. We know Sr, Maria Gertrud as a very industrious person, she never gave in to little pains or fatigue. You may have tasted heaven while still here on earth. The Lord gave you a rest in silence where we were meant to provide all the assistance needed. This was an opportunity for us to serve you, just as you served us in the immediate services of the Lord. You tested our generosity. I hope we passed the test.

In many ways, some of us who had the privilege to live with her can attest to it that she was a true daughter of our father founder Abbot Francis, and our foundress mother Paula. She lived faithfully the four virtues of the inner spirit of a Missionary Sister of the Precious Blood.

1. Perfect Surrender to God:

She did not entertain any personal wish. She was deeply convinced that God knows best where she can do most for His glory. She respected the decisions made by her superiors and took her assignments with love. She was so precise and particular in her duties. I was amazed to come across a handwritten exercise book with various recipes. It has even a table of contents for easier reference. If she would have been living in the digital era, it should have been published. Everything in all the departments where she worked was labeled and kept very neat and orderly. A sign that she was at home with what she did.

2. Incessant Worship of God:

Prayer and work were an irrevocable principle in her life. Sr. Maria Gertrud was both prayerful and hard-working. When she felt she would fall asleep during prayer time, she had some personal mortification exercises. She would either move to the gallery in the chapel during the rosary or she would prick herself with a pin to keep awake. She was among the last ones to go to bed as she checked on everything and the next morning, she would rise early to open the chapel door and prepare for morning meditation, prayer, and mass. She had time for personal prayers despite the many activities. She had a personal devotion to our Lady. She did everything without complaining. She knew neither work nor official duties themselves make a life meritorious, but the attitude with which they are taken up and carried out.

3. Persistent in self-denial by faithfulness in little things:

Sr. Maria Gertrud was selfless. She was faithful in little things. She would never go for the best when there was a choice to make. She practiced her vow of poverty to a greater length. She was never wasteful. She was conscious of how she used material things. She would collect rinsing water when sisters did their washing and would preserve it to scrub the pavements in the garden and around the house. She would mend things on time. I think her attitude towards people and things, was a preparation for the last days of her life in this world. She remained calm and peaceful even in her state of life till the end. She had given herself up to the will of God.

4. Generosity in making sacrifices:

Sr. Maria Gertrud never worked in any public office. For Sixty-six years of her religious life, she worked in the immediate services of our Lord. She kept to the common good of the community. There were no selfish attributions. She served us all. She prepared delicious meals, she made our habits and mended our clothes, she cleaned our common rooms and pavements, she served us in the dining room, and she prepared the chapel for the daily Eucharistic celebrations. When she was still strong, she went to assist with the feeding of the street children with our late Sr. Damiana Satman. She would pray with the staff in our convents. She must have learned some Kikuyu prayers as they are well written in her diary. She was at home with visitors and always served them with cheerfulness.

Sr. Maria Gertrud was well-connected with her family members at home. Her family has been writing letters to her and occasionally they would phone her. Through her, they gave some support to the children at Amani Primary School. She also kept contact with her home diocese.

You were very orderly, neat, hardworking, prayerful, cheerful, faithful, resilient, self-sacrificing and wanted the good of all. Even in your suffering a beautiful genuine smile never left your face. You are a true daughter of Abbot Francis and mother Paula. You taught us how to do domestic services with precision and love. May God now reward you with eternity. Just as you went about

your work here on earth, gently, unassuming, and not disturbing anyone, God gave you this grace to the end. You left us quietly on the morning of 29th of September 2023. Your wish was that the sisters should be present at the moment when your soul and body separated, this may not have happened, but it did not take long after this, and the whole community was gathered at your bedside to escort you to your new home where there will be no more pain and suffering. The archangels were present to take and escort you to heaven for you left us on the feast day of the archangels. May you now celebrate with all the saints in heaven.

We thank Sr. Maria Gertrud for all the services she rendered to us and to all of God's people. May God reward you with eternity. We miss you. Fare thee well Sr. Maria Gertrud.

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith, all that awaits me is the crown of glory.” (2nd Timothy 4: 7-8)

