



OBITUARY

Sr Josephine Robecke OP

06.09.1936 – 26.06.2019



"I am reminded that every day
I have the chance to pick up a needle and some thread
and add to the story.

To stitch together something beautiful and unique,
to patch a small scrap of fabric to the story,
to the Story of God,
that will be retold again and again
for all of eternity."

Jerusalem Jackson Greer



Sr Josephine was born on 6 September 1936 to Johannes and Elisabeth Robecke in Sassenberg, in the diocese of Münster, and baptised Mathilde Gertrude. She was the youngest of nine children, Sr Ferdinand being her eldest sister and Sr Marcella her cousin. She completed nine years of schooling at the local Primary School and trained in dressmaking for five and a half years in Warendorf.

She joined the Congregation in January 1960 and spent nine months as a postulant in Neustadt. She began her noviciate in October 1960 together with Srs Natalie, Michaela, Maria Muth and Sophie. She made her first profession in October 1961. Soon after profession, she travelled to South Africa on the Windsor Castle with Srs Natalie, Michaela and Annette under the care of Sr Marie de Lourdes.

At Oakford, she helped to teach sewing in the junior school and claimed that the little ones were her best English teachers. She sometimes told the story of how they taught her the difference between a needle and a pin, and how she would deliberately say the wrong answer to the delight of the children who saw their chance to teach an adult something.

Her dressmaking skills were a great asset in every house to which she was assigned. She kept busy making habits and veils and anything else that needed to be sewn. She empowered women with the skills she taught, and many of them were able to make a living from sewing, knitting, crochet and embroidery. Our Dominican brothers also

gained from her sewing skills when she responded to their need to have a number of habits sewn for them. She was loved by all who came to learn from her. She would listen to the stories of their lives of struggle and hardship and spent her life trying to make things better for them. She made many lasting friends among these women.

Sr Josephine immersed herself in the life of the parish wherever she lived. Her commitment, dedication and ability to sing so beautifully were greatly admired and appreciated. Many of us can remember her voice when she was chantress at Oakford and how she led the office and sang those difficult lamentations with ease.

In 1975, she gained her National Certificate in Child Care at an Institution in Durban and spent some years working with youth through her training in CLG (Christian Life Groups). She did the "Fons Vitae" course in Johannesburg and spent some time in Spokane, USA, on a sabbatical.

Sr Josephine was assigned to the following communities in three provinces in South Africa: Oakford, Osindisweni, Hlabisa, Ekukhanyeni, and Empangeni - all in KwaZulu Natal; Comptonville, the FEDOSA Novitiate in Vanderbijlpark, Koinonia, Villa Maria, and Emmanuel - in Gauteng; and Bendell - in the Northern Cape.

While living at Villa Maria and Emmanuel she volunteered to teach knitting in a nearby primary school. Her class was so popular that the room was more than full in no time. She spent many hours doing the finishing stitches on the children's work and enjoyed the delight on the children's faces when their articles were completed.

She fell ill while living in the Emmanuel Community in Gauteng and was advised to move closer to the coast to improve her health. However, her health deteriorated and she moved to Villa Siena in Pietermaritzburg for medical treatment.

She felt so much better on the morning after she received a stent and was discharged from hospital. She had not felt so well in a long time and looked forward to a few more years of good health. That was not to be as the Lord had other plans for her and called her to her heavenly reward on the evening of Wednesday 26 June.

Grateful, we recommend Sr. Josephine to God's loving mercy. May she be our advocate with God.

RIP