



Obituary

Sr Francesca Ledderboge OP

13.11.1938 – 13.03.2021



Everlasting life of life,
You are the one;
You are the Word;
Let there be life.

Hildegarde of Bingen



Sr Francesca Ledderboge was born on 13 November 1938 to Gustav and Else Ledderboge. She was baptized in the Lutheran Church in Braunschweig, Germany, and given the name Ute Friederike. Her siblings were Gustav and Karin.

After thirteen years of primary and high school, she obtained her German "Abitur" and began studying for a Teaching Diploma. It was while studying to be a teacher that she met the Dominican Fathers and because of their witness, was drawn to the Catholic Church. Her sister Karin in particular did not support her decision to become a Catholic and this caused Francesca much pain.

She taught for one year in Germany before entering the Congregation at Neustadt in 1963. She made First Profession on 5 May 1966 in Neustadt and Final Profession in 1970 at Oakford, South Africa. After her First Profession, she was assigned to our Convent in Santa Clara, California, USA, where she taught at "St. Justin's School" for three and a half years. She was loved and appreciated there, and it pained her that she was transferred to South Africa in March 1970 without being able to say goodbye to anyone before she left. Fr Terry Sullivan kept contact with her until her death.

Her next assignment was at Oakford. She spent twelve years teaching at "St Xavier's School". Her favourite subjects were music, fine art, and religion. She was held in high regard by the inspectors of art and music, as she herself was a good artist and musician. Some of her students took up art in high school and one of them became a Fine Arts teacher. Others used their musical skills as entertainers and as church musicians. She brought out the best in her students and had great patience with the slow learners. During her years at St. Xavier's she taught catechism to the children in Redcliff who belonged to the Verulam Parish. She was often touched by

the poverty of the families and tried all she could to help them. She gave particular attention to a single mother of seven who struggled to house, feed, clothe and educate her children. Today these children have good professions. They had kept contact with Sr Francesca, showing their gratitude for the care she gave to them all those years ago.

After her years at St Xavier's she moved to the "Sacred Heart Combined School", where she spent five years as school manager and teacher. There she was instrumental in raising the standard of teaching and learning and worked tirelessly in improving the teaching of Mathematics and English.

Her next assignment was to the Bluff, Durban, where she studied and worked as a Social Worker. She dedicated much of her time to the people in Wentworth, where poverty and various addictions affected the lives of families, particularly children.

In keeping with her call as a Dominican, Sr Francesca loved studying. She obtained Certificates in Bookkeeping, in Marital and Family Counselling, and in Play Therapy, a Diploma in Theology, and a Master's Degree in Social Work. She had numerous papers published and wrote some poetry.

Sr Francesca was not the easiest person to live with. She was a perfectionist and did everything to the best of her ability - expecting no less from others. She did not hide her shortcomings but as she grew older and her health deteriorated, she became gentle, and grateful for all that was being done for her by the Sisters and staff at Villa Assumpta. Sr Francesca enjoyed red wine and good cheese and so was always happy when we could celebrate something in community.

When visiting her on her sick bed one was conscious of her suffering but was also convinced of her closeness to the Lord who accepted her with unconditional love. How wonderful it must have been for her to hear the Lord say to her:

"Welcome my beloved, your suffering is over,
enter into this place of everlasting happiness."

RIP