



Obituary

SR HERMINE KLÖKER OP

17.02.1937 - 24.08.2022



God is at work in us – if we but let Him...

(Sr Hermine: The Story of our Wheat)



Elisabeth Antonia Klöker was born on 17 February 1937 to Agnes and Anton Klöker in Lohne, Germany. She was the eldest of five siblings. Her mother died in childbirth when Elisabeth was five years old. Her father re-married and some more children were born. After completing her secondary education, she attended for 3 years a Commercial School, once a week. At the same time, she worked as a shop assistant for her parents for four years and then spent one year as a volunteer at a Youth Centre in Altenberg.

Elisabeth entered in Neustadt on 4 August 1958 and received the name "Hermine" when she became a novice on 29 April 1959. She made her First Profession in Neustadt in May 1960 and her Final Profession in Oakford in July 1963.

Hermine was a "nurse aid" in Flörsheim, Marifont and Marymount during her time of formation. After her Final Profession she lived in Oakford and Walsingham (Durban), where she wrote her matric and studied Home Economics at the Natal Technical College.

After teaching at Oakford for a year she went to Swaziland in 1968 and taught there until January 1993. She returned to Oakford in 1993, taught for some time, and then took responsibility for overseeing the children who had bursaries and sponsorship from overseas donors. She did this until she came to Villa Siena in December 2009.

Sr Hermine had a sabbatical in the Holy Land in 1984/85 which made a deep impression on her. At the end of her time she wrote a beautiful reflection on what the year had meant to her. She loved every minute of her time there. The experience of the desert was profound for her and the reading from Hosea spoke loudly to her: "I will lead her into the wilderness, there I will speak to her heart." For her this was a time "des Hörens" - of hearing/listening deeply not only to the voice of God within her but also to the voices in the city of Jerusalem, to the calling of the bells and the sirens, to the prayers in the synagogues, mosques and churches.

Sr Hermine was an exceptionally creative woman and an 'all-rounder'! She could put her hand to anything and make something beautiful. She produced reflections on the O Antiphons which we still use during Advent. She made mandalas out of various seeds of differing colours and shapes. She was a great friend of Sr Johanna CPS and they must have drawn inspirations from one another.

Sr Hermine loved her 25 years in Swaziland and while never actually learning Siswati, she was always out among the people. They knew her well and they loved her as she loved them. It was they who gave her the name Thandi (Love).

She was a hard worker and nothing was too much for her. She and Sr Hildegunde were great friends and did many things together - in community, in the school, among the people. The former king had a couple of his daughters at our school, St Theresa's, and he extended invitations to the Sisters to visit him. On one occasion some of the Sisters did visit him, among them Sr Hermine.

When the Alzheimer's disease began to take hold of her, she used to walk around the property many times a day. Everyone knew her, and everyone stopped to talk to her. Even when she could no longer speak, she communicated with a smile, with holding out some leaves or flowers that she had collected on her walks. Mr Henry Spencer, a consultant and then a manager at Villa Assumpta/Villa Siena, Pietermaritzburg, for a while, wrote a beautiful reflection on Sr Hermine and Alzheimers which he keeps on his desk. In one of her meditations Sr Hermine wrote:

***Lord, let us be Easter people, let us always dare
to break open into your Light.
Let us say our "Yes" to our human life, give us the fullness of life.
Let us remain on the way with one another in love.
Lord, we trust in your promise: I am with you always.***

(Sr Hermine: The Resurrection)

We are grateful for the life of Sr. Hermine, knowing that she will be our advocate with God.

RIP