



Obituary

Sr Karolina Hohmann OP

23.03.1938 – 11.04.2023



*“Senor, tu me has mirado a los ojos, sonriendo has dicho mi nombre;
En la arena he dejado mi barca, junto a ti buscaré otro mar.”*

*“O Lord, with your eyes set upon me, gently smiling,
you have spoken my name;
all I longed for I have found by the water, at your side,
I will seek other shores.”*

(Pescador de Hombres, Cesareo Gabarain)

The above Spanish hymn of Christ's call to discipleship could well be the theme-song of Sr. Karolina's life-mission and one of her favorite hymns. She still sang it wholeheartedly in Spanish at the Communion service in her room on her 85th birthday.

Maria Karolina was born on 23 March 1938 in Ulmbach near Fulda in Hessen, Germany, as the eldest child of Maria (Müller) and Leopold Hohmann. Fulda, a site of pilgrimage, is famous as the diocese where St. Boniface was martyred in 754. The apostle of Germany is buried in the Cathedral.

When Maria's father, a soldier in WWII, died in Russia in January 1944, her mother faced a very harsh reality of being left alone with three young children, ages 6, 4 and 3, and the farm. Out of necessity she married Adolf Schöppner, a bachelor of the village. In 1946, Maria's step-brother, Joseph, was born, now her only surviving sibling.

In July 1944, only a few months after learning her father would not be returning from Russia, Maria attended elementary school in Ulmbach until her graduation in March 1953. She continued her education at the district's vocational school of Schlüchtern, April 1953 - 1956, and entered our Congregation in Neustadt/ Main on 15 January 1959. Maria learned of our Congregation through her younger sister, Christel, who studied in Frankfurt. Christel may well have been a boarder at one of our two hostels for young women. Christel also entered our Congregation, though in Oakford, having come to South Africa by boat as a tourist. When Maria, now Sr. Karolina, made her First Profession in Neustadt on 23 October 1960, Christel had just been received into our Congregation. Though Christel, known as Sr. Mary

Daniela, made her First Profession at Oakford three years later, she left our Congregation in 1970.

After her Novitiate in Neustadt, Sr. Karolina, interested in the nursing apostolate, was sent as a Junior Professed Sister to our community in Flörsheim to assist in the hospital. From there she was sent for her nurse's training to the Certified Public School of Nursing at St. Katharinenkrankenhaus in Frankfurt/ Main from 1962-1965 and returned certified to our Marienkrankenhaus in Flörsheim, where she served as a Surgical Nurse in the operating room from 1965 to 1974. Her close working with the doctors in surgery became a good foundation and preparation for her future nursing ministry in Argentina.

When our Congregation responded to the call of the Church in Latin America in 1974, Sr. Karolina was one of our four founding Sisters. They came by boat to 25th De Mayo in the Province of Misiones in Argentina to work among the poor. The contrast between the organized institution of our hospital in Germany with its private convent area reserved for the Sisters and the humble beginnings of the Sisters setting up a clinic at 25th De Mayo was quite a challenge to adjust to. During the first year, until the convent was built in 1975, the Sisters had to transform their bedroom each weekday morning into clinic space to attend to the sick patients. However, the experience of the people in dire need, their living with hardships, as well as the people's love for the Sisters, had a positive, transformative, impact on Sr. Karolina. It awakened her deeply-rooted charism for serving wholeheartedly in a healing ministry with and for the poor. The life and writings of Oscar Romero became a lasting influence for her. He was, with St. Catherine of Siena, a favorite and a mentor on her growth journey.

Sr. Karolina had a deep love for her nursing ministry. Her lifelong love of music and beautiful singing voice also served her well in her pastoral outreach, and in planning of weekend liturgies or prayer services for special occasions. She also had an enthusiastic boys' choir which was her pride and joy.

Her thirty years in Argentina were spent in 25 de Mayo from 1974 - 1992 and in Panambi 1992 - 2002. She was also committed, primarily on weekends, to some of the 30 chapels that were established for those who lived off the dirt roads and were too far to participate on a regular basis in the parish life in the towns of Obera, 25th de Mayo, or Panambi. After our Congregation handed our property over to the Diocese of Posadas and withdrew the Sisters from Misiones in 2003, Sr. Karolina was the last one to leave Argentina in March 2004.

Coming to the US, Sr. Karolina learned English quickly, and moved to our community in Indio, California. She ministered as Pastoral Care Coordinator in St. Francis Parish in La Quinta from 2007 - 2009, reaching out especially to the Spanish speaking parishioners. She also had developed an excellent program of adult Faith Formation.

Circumstances brought her back to the Bay Area, to San Leandro, where she helped care for one of our older Sisters, in addition to her outreach with the Spanish speaking parishioners at St. Leander's Parish.

She moved to our convent in Sunnyvale in 2009, and was joined by Sister Gemma in 2011. Together they experienced fruitful years of living community and participating in the life of St. Martin's Parish. Sister Karolina focused her pastoral outreach to the Latino community, as well as through jail ministry and restorative justice. She enriched Sunday worship by singing in one of the music groups. She loved working in the convent garden. During these years, one of her proud moments was becoming a US citizen on 27 October 2011.

In 2015, Sister Karolina was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. She moved to St. Martin's Residence in 2018, and had a growing sense of being in the place she needed to be, feeling cared for, and loving the beauty of the grounds which she enjoyed on her daily walks. In her years at St. Martin's Residence, she grew in the freedom and joy of her simple lifestyle, needing less and focusing on gratitude.

On April 11th she recognized the voice of her Beloved calling her Home as the very voice which had called her into a life of discipleship and mission. She quietly surrendered her life to Him.

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