



OBITUARY NOTICE



SISTER MARY ANNA CHECHILE

entered Eternal Life on July 15, 2020
at the age of 59
and 34 years of religious life.

+3497

(Mary and Martha were the sisters of Lazarus). "As Jesus and his disciples went on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him in her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat down at the feet of the Jesus listening intently to his words. Meanwhile, Martha was working frantically to prepare and serve the meal." (Lk10: 38-42)

In some way, this quote from St. Luke reflects the life of Sr. Mary Anna. After all, her twin's name is Lazarus Mokhosi and her two older sisters are Mary and Martha. Mary Anna and Mary both devoted themselves to God and respectively joined the congregations of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa and the Handmaids of Jesus the Priest. We can easily make the connection with the aforementioned quote as they both sat at the feet of the Lord, listening to His Words and committed themselves actively at his service.

Sr. Mary Anna, also affectionately known as 'Letebele', was very faithful in attending morning prayers including lauds, meditation and holy mass, before going to work. She always spent some time with the Lord in the chapel before going to bed at night. The Sisters of St. Marguerite Mary's Convent where she lived most of her time as a religious can attest that she always stood steadfast in this practice.

Mary Anna and her twin brother were born on July 14, 1961. This set of twins were the third and fourth born of a family of six children. They were baptized on their day of birth. Her staunch Catholic parents were the late Martin Chechile and her mother, Bernice. The latter is still living in Mantsonyane Ha Mafa, (Auray Mission) a village in the highlands of Lesotho. The Sesotho culture is divided into several ethnic groups. Mary Anna's family is part of the 'Matebele' clan. Its members have a reputation for being hardworking and very strong-willed; Marianna is no exception; she was endowed with an iron will and unparalleled ambition and determination.

She completed her elementary studies in a nearby school and moved to Marakabei to attend high school which is run by the Sisters of Good Shepherd. They are the reason why Marianna developed a passion for religious life. She thus asked to join their Congregation, the only one that she knew at the time. After she completed her JC or grade nine exams, arrangements were made for her to be sent for some time to Emmanuel Hostel in Maseru, a Residence held by the Sisters of Good Shepherd while waiting to be taken to formation house at St Rodriquez in the remote areas of the Maseru diocese, Ha Shoaepane.

There, she was introduced to other congregations including the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa.

After meeting them and getting to know them better, she developed a deep love for this Congregation. Consequently, Mary Anna decided to follow her heart. She took the matter in her own hands, and fled to Pitseng to Our Lady of Pontmain Convent. She feared that if she had explained her change of heart to the Sisters of Good Shepherd, she would not have been understood or approved.

It is in 1983 that Mary Anna finally joined the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa. She pronounced her first vows on January 7 1986 and received her first obedience for Our Lady of Pontmain Convent. She made her final profession on January 7, 1991.

Mary Anna felt drawn to one apostolate in particular while she was attending high school and fervently wished to become a teacher. When a teaching position opened up at Pontmain Primary School, she was asked to leave her high school studies to assume this responsibility and as expected, she agreed voluntarily. Despite all the necessary adjustments required by this new role, Mary Anna never complained. She accepted this obedience from her superiors as inspired by the Holy Spirit. She developed an unconditional love towards children and she became an inspiration to all her fellow Sisters.

In order to qualify for day care and preschool teaching she enrolled in different institutions to enhance her skills. She took up basic courses at Silveton South Africa in 1994 for preschool teaching and in 1986, at Technicon in the Republic of South Africa where she obtained a certificate in service training for basic education as well as a diploma in child care management in 2001.

The authorities soon recognized her potential as a teacher and educator not only to children but also to young Sisters. They decided to enroll Mary Anna in a formation training program in Kalundu, Zambia. After successfully completing this new formation, she returned determined and aspiring to offer religious formation to young postulants. She was later sent to St. Marguerite Marie Convent as a formator to pre novices. Sister Mary Anna lived and resided in this Couvent most of her life while teaching at St. Bernadette Nursery School.

This woman's amazing qualities and high devotion did not go unnoticed. Her skills and professionalism were required at the ECCD (Early Childhood Care Development) department where she facilitated teacher development in Maseru District. She was even appointed as Inspector in some of these schools. Sr. Mary Anna loved her work, did it extremely well and gave herself entirely to the task. She quickly became a role model to young Sisters. She was more than a teacher for them and for the children she taught over the years; she cared for all and had their general well-being at heart. She went beyond herself to make sure everyone felt accepted and valued.

Sr. Mary Anna was a sympathetic and warm person and was always seen wearing a beautiful smile. She was not only kind to the most vulnerable, she cared deeply for all those in need. Although she was known to be very timely, organized and constantly busy, this never prevented her from being prayerful and she always found special time to exercise her deep devotion to the Virgin Mary. She also loved music and she sang with a melodious voice. She enjoyed broadcasting events within the Congregation over Radio Maria FM..She was described within the community as dependable, courageous, patient, loving and supportive of her fellow Sisters. She always encouraged unity among them and had a very deep bond with all of them.

It was on July 15, while she was teaching at St. Bernadette's School that her life was suddenly taken. No one expected it; her abrupt departure completely overwhelmed everyone who knew her. Gone too soon at only 59 years old, she still had so much to offer, but "God's thoughts are not our thoughts". (Is 55, 8-9)

We remain sincerely thankful to the Chechile family who granted us with the gift of their daughter whom we loved and appreciated very much. Her story is written in a multitude of touching and inspiring gestures and attitudes whose memories will continue to hearten us forever.

Rest in peace Letebele!

