



OBITUARY NOTICE



SISTER GENEVIEVA MOTSELEBANE
MARIE ALMA

Entered eternal life on July 25, 2020
At the age of 90
and 69 years of religious life.

+2626

"Lord make me an instrument of your peace!" (Prayer of St Francis)

"Whoever wants to be the greatest let him or her be the servant of all!" (Mt 20, 26)

"My spirit magnifies the Lord my Savior, for he has done great deeds for me...!" (Lk 1: 47-48)

These three quotes depict Sister Marie Alma's life and spirit very fittingly. It was on April 9, 1930 in Ha Malefane, Leribe, that Mr. Gabriel Molefi and Mrs. Isabella 'Matsepišo Motseebane welcomed and named their little girl Mamosebetsi, which means "the one who works a lot". As we say in Sesotho, "Lebitso lebe ke seromo" (Let a person's name define who he or she is). And just like her name foretold, our dear Sr. Marie Alma was later known as an earnest and relentless worker.

Her family had the reputation of being very welcoming and open-minded; love was felt throughout the household. Obviously Mamosebetsi inherited these qualities and as a Sister, a nurse's aid, an animator or a teacher, she will forever be remembered for her tender heart, her compassion and her love of people.

Mamosebetsi was the fourth of seven children. She was baptized on May 7, 1930 by Father Romestain O.M.I. at St. Paul Mission. During the celebration, she was given the name Genevieve. In 1939, she made her First Communion at St. Margaret Marie Mission and was confirmed by Bishop Bonhomme O.M.I.

She first attended 'Mate Villa-Crux Primary School until sixth grade and pursued her studies at Mazenod in the Maseru District. At age 15, she admitted to her father that learning was very strenuous for her and pleaded for permission to leave school before graduating. Back home, while attending church, she met the Grey Nuns of the Cross. Young Genevieve asked to join the Congregation. The request surprised her father who considered her too young to make such an important life changing decision. However, her mind was set on this goal. Later on in life, she would recall: "Every night, before going to bed, I opened my Bible to the page where the Holy Spirit was represented in the form of a dove, imploring the Holy Spirit to open ways for me. I would open this book with the intention of 'adjusting' to the Word of the Lord, and I would read a little bit more each morning before going to work. After some time, my father gave me permission to follow my heart and join the Sisters."

During this period of vocational discernment, she had sought refuge with the Virgin Mary. Her prayers were answered. At the end of 1947, Genevieve went to the Our Lady of Pontmain Convent with her two brothers, Azariel and Bernard. Soon after arrival, she was sent as a student to finish high school in Pontmain's Pitseng High School. Of course, she was confronted with the same old academic challenges she had previously shied away from. Because of her will to graduate, she joined a group of aspirants with the Grey Nuns of the Cross. She was eventually admitted to the pre-novitiate on January 8, 1949. She pronounced her temporary vows on January 11, 1951. It was at that time that she took on the religious name of Marie Alma. She took her final vows on January 7, 1957.

Shortly after pronouncing her temporary vows, in 1951, she was sent to the Paray Mission Hospital to work as a nurse's aide and in 1954, was assigned to the clinic at Our Lady of Pontmain Mission. Her time within the health care community earned her many praises, especially for her great devotion, but mostly for her warmth and kindness. Moreover, her professional qualities and her dedication were duly noticed by the Nursing Care Management and she was sent to undergo college studies in order to improve her nursing skills.

Sr. Marie Alma worked in other dispensaries at Our Lady of Lourdes Convent (1960-1964) and at Our Lady of Mercy Convent (1964-1966). She also returned to work at the Paray Mission Hospital from 1966 to 1975 and later from 1984 to 1989. Everywhere she went she established good relations with the local authorities and the people. In 1978, she received an obedience for St. Denis Mission in a remote area of Leribe. She quickly gained the trust of the patients in this area for she served everyone, rich or poor, without distinction. As Mother Élisabeth Bruyère, her compassion knew no boundaries. Her departures were truly difficult for the people in all her workplaces. She had a true spirit of loyalty and dedication; she was generous and loved to be of service.

Very close to her retirement age, in 1992, she left the nursing apostolate by obedience and embarked on a new missionary activity in a new country, the Republic of South Africa. She was posted in Mamaneng Pretoria St Cecile Convent and took on pastoral work. Judging by the short duration of her stay in this mission, it seems that adaptation to a new country, a new people, a new language, a new house, and a new apostolate all at once, at her more advanced age, was too demanding.

On her return to Lesotho, Sr. Marie Alma felt renewed and she

received an obedience to start a new catholic pre-school in Hlotse, Leribe. She became instrumental in the founding and the development of this project which the parish priest considered as a real need. Within a short time, the number of children attending the new Horst Schier Pre-School grew from below 10 to over 300. The popularity of the school had reached beyond the boundaries of the town and people from the neighbouring villages would send their little ones to 'Me' Alma. In 1993, she was named Vice-Superior in charge of the daycare and in 1994, she became superior and took over the governance.

Sister Marie Alma enjoyed this last episode of her active life and was herself much appreciated. She was invited to Germany to visit a day care center by the friends of the German Spiritan priest, the missionary who had requested the opening of the kindergarten: Father Horst Schier. She was enchanted by the two-week trip to Germany and cherished the memory for the rest of her life. In addition, many of the children, as adults, continued to visit Sr. Marie Alma.

In 2000, she was launched on a missionary adventure abroad. She was asked to go to Papua New Guinea to temporarily keep company to Sister Françoise Thérèse at the convent in the refugee camps while other sisters were preparing to join her as missionaries later on. Sister Marie Alma spent three months there. Before leaving for this country, having no knowledge of English or their native language, she assured, "I will give them a smile..." Upon her return, she said that despite the arthritic pain worsened by the humid climate and the 10-hour time difference, she had enjoyed the experience beyond all expectations.

Sr. Marie Alma had an immense spirit of gratitude. She thanked God for all her life experiences and said that she owed a lot to the Congregation for allowing her to live all those intense and warm moments. She was a happy woman.

She joined the Lord on July 25, 2020 at the age of 90. Her family was very dear to her, and she had close ties with her brothers and sisters, as well as with her nephews and nieces who visited her regularly. She is now with the Lord and Our Blessed Mother whom she served and loved with all her strength.

Dear Sister Marie Alma, we will always think of you with a smile. Rest in eternal joy and peace.

