



OBITUARY NOTICE



SISTER FLORINA RAKUOANE
MARIE FATIMA

Entered eternal life on September 10, 2020
At the age of 96
and 72 years of religious life

+2468

“My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish His work.” Jn 4:34.

Sister Marie Fatima was not only profoundly committed to her apostolate; she was a beacon of love and compassion for those in need. She took pleasure in praying and sharing the Word of God with them. She dedicated part of her life providing care to the sick and elderly. She was devoted to the Virgin Mary and was known for always having a rosary wrapped around her hand.

Florina Rakuoane was born in 1924 in the highlands of Lesotho. She is the daughter of Nkunye Paulus and Matheboli Clara Rakuoane of Bokong ha Kenene in the Leribe District which has now become Thaba-Tseka District. She is the 8th child of her father and the only child to be born to his second wife.

In 1929, little five-year old Florina is sent to an Evangelical school because her parents were initially non-Catholic. But for practical purposes, Florina is soon inscribed at the catholic school located close to the family home. Consequently, she was later said to have been the reason why her parents joined the Catholic Church.

In fact, Florina becomes ill at a very young age and this prompts her parents to call in Mr. Laurence Sedia, a catechist and teacher from the nearest Catholic church, to baptize her. Baptism is urgently administered to her. Lack of transportation to Paray Hospital Mission precipitated this decision. Truly, the most reliable means of transportation at the time was a horse; it would have taken too much time for the pastor to come to the house. Luckily, with Providence on her side, Florina makes a full recovery and is able to complete her primary education in Bokong LEC Primary School.

Florina pursues and completes her secondary studies at Paray High School a year after the arrival of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Thaba-Tseka. The sisters had established a boarding for girls, to which her parents entrusted her.

All her life, Sr. Marie Fatima cherished a very special happy memory. She used to close her eyes and reminisce when she first met Sr. Claire of Sacred Heart with whom she had the pleasure of sharing a room when the Paray Mission Hospital opened its door in 1938. This living experience was life changing for Florina for this is where the flame of her vocation sparked.

After completing high school under Sister Marie of Annunciation's supervision in 1940, Florina obtains a six-month teaching contract at Qobacha in Lesobeng where she works in collaboration with Mr. Cletus Mokhoru, a fellow teacher.

From 1941 to 1943, Florina is admitted to the Mazonod Housecraft School and Training Institution with the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary with whom she resides. In 1945, Mother Louis-Gérard, Provincial Superior at the time, asks Florina to assist Sr. Bernadette Immaculée and Sr. Magdalena Rantsane in teaching sewing techniques to young girls and women. Florina senses that Mother Louis-Girard has planned to expose her to the kindness and to the purposeful activities of the Sisters of Charity. Surely, Providence has guided her to this place where her vocation to consecrated life becomes obvious and undeniable to her.

In 1946, she knocks at the door of Our Lady of Pontmain Convent and is admitted to the Noviciate a year later. She pronounces her temporary vows in 1948 and acquires the religious name of Marie Fatima. Immediately thereafter she is sent to Glen Grey Mission Hospital in Queenstown to train as a nurse, where she graduates in 1951.

Sister Marie Fatima is ready to receive an obedience and she is straightaway sent to Natal in the Republic of South Africa where the Sisters were opening a new mission. With her highly organized and disciplined character she is required to open a dispensary in Eshongweni village. Unfortunately, the mission,

like many others, is shut down due to apartheid principles... (*Apartheid refers to the official regime of racial segregation put in place by Daniel Malan, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa [now the Republic of South Africa] in 1948*). Even if she's disappointed by this outcome, Sister Marie Fatima clings to her greatest wish: provide for the needy and care for the most vulnerable.

In 1953, Sister Marie Fatima pronounces her perpetual vows. She pursues her nursing career in a spirit of total obedience at different missions where she is assigned: Paray Mission Hospital, St. Charles Mission Hospital in Seboche, and St Paul where she replaces a Sister who needs to take a long sick leave.

From 1977 to 1980, she is given the opportunity to improve her qualification at Queen Elizabeth II government Hospital and obtains her higher Nursing certificate.

In 1980, she is dispatched to St Marguerite Marie of Paray Mission Hospital for seven years. For the next two years (1990-1992 she returns to Our Lady of Pontmain Dispensary. Afterwards, the Provincial Superior appoints her to help open a new care facility in South Africa. When this mandate is complete, she once again joins the Paray Mission Hospital and finishes her career at Jeanne Emmanuel Convent's Health Center.

Her health starts to decline in July 2020. She is then taken to Berea Hospital in August where she receives oxygen to help relieve coughing and extreme fatigue. On the peaceful day of September 10, Sr. Marie Fatima takes her last breath and joins God to whom she gave her life.

There will remain of her a trail of beautiful memories: what she has sown, what she has offered and so generously shared unconditionally throughout her journey.

