



OBITUARY NOTICE



SISTER CLARA GODUKA

Entered eternal life on August 1, 2020
At the age of 67
and 45 years of religious life.

+3453

“If you seek Him, he will be found by you” (1 Chronicles 28:9)

From her early childhood, Sr. Clara was moved by a strong yearning to seek and to love God.

This passion inspired her to dedicate her life to God by joining the Sisters of Charity and to persevere against all odds. Her thirst for God found sustenance in the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, but she was stirred and inspired as well by the Ignatian spirituality through the Christian Life Group (CLG). She saw God ‘s presence in everything and his will in every circumstance. She rarely missed an opportunity to join prayer groups.

Clara was born on June 14, 1953. Her parents, Ntate Vitalis and 'M'e Enerstina 'Makhothatso Guduka, both staunch Catholics, were so happy to welcome their little bundle of joy that they named her *Sebongile*, ‘Gratitude to God’. She was truly a gift from heaven as she was their only child. She was baptized two weeks later on June 29, 1953 at St. Paul Mission Butha-Buthe parish. Her father was an elementary school principal and catechist.

Clara made her First Communion in 1963 and was confirmed in 1964 by Bishop Emmanuel 'Mabathoana OMI, the first Mosotho bishop in the country. Our young Sebongile attended an elementary school in St. Denis for a few years. She faced her first important challenge in 1967 when she went to live with non-Catholic relatives in Leribe, St. Monica. Since these kinsfolks did not share the same faith, she found no support among them and this troubled her. When her parents realized how this situation saddened her, they brought her back home. She then joined children's sodalities such as the ‘Christ the King Crusaders’. Fortunately, she also met Sr. Henry Emmanuel of the Grey Nuns of the Cross whom she greatly appreciated for her guidance and her life testimony. She considered her as a true disciple and became assured that joining the Congregation was the very best way for her to walk with God and live all of her life as worship.

Like Abraham who accepted to offer his only son to God, her parents consented to a similar sacrifice by offering their only child to the Lord. Clara entered the novitiate of Notre-Dame de Pontmain Convent in Pitseng in 1970 and was accepted as a pre-novice on February 6, 1971. Clara took her first vows on January 7, 1975 and her perpetual vows on January 7, 1980. Shortly after taking her temporary vows, Sr. Clara began working devotedly as a nurse's aide at Our Lady of Sacred Heart Medical Clinic and the following year she was sent to

the Paray Mission Hospital to perform the same duties. However, since the Sisters of Charity are very much involved in the world of education and were in charge of several schools, Sr. Clara was encouraged to accept an experience in teaching. She was first assigned at Guardian Angel Elementary School and continued on for ten years from 1977 to 1987. The authorities recognized her love of children and her true natural skills as a teacher and decided to send her on a three-year teacher training course. During her studies, Sr. Clara remained at Marguerite d'Youville Convent in Maseru. After obtaining her diploma, she returned to teach at Guardian Angel Elementary School.

In May 2001, following her request and intense desire to participate in a foreign mission and serve those in greater need, she was sent to our convent situated in the refugee camps, in Papua New Guinea. She took on pastoral work helping in the parishes. She also served as local Animator of St. Agatha Convent. In November 2004, she returned to Lesotho and was granted a short period of rest.

In January 2005, she was appointed at St Clare Convent in Maseru to work at the orphanage where she took charge of the small children in her custody with compassion, giving the love, care and attention that they needed to grow and find comfort and happiness.

Sometime later, in January 2007, another obedience called her to Dennilton in the Republic of South Africa where she did pastoral work and served the community as the local Animator of Our Lady of Lourdes Convent in the Diocese of Pretoria. After four months she became local Animator of St Cécile Convent in Mamaneng continuing with pastoral activities. Finally, while in the Republic, she took a six month course in clinical pastoral psychology in Cape Town.

She then requested to pursue her studies in theology at St. Augustine's Major Seminary in Roma, Lesotho, to further develop her professional skills and obtained a degree in this discipline. She was consequently much better equipped to become a formator for new postulants at the novitiate of Notre Dame of Pontmain Convent. In 2008, she established a formation team with Sr. Alina Khabane, Sr. Margaret Rammutlanyana and other Sisters. Two years afterwards, Sr. Clara was given a new obedience at the Louis Gerard Convent in Mathokoane as there was a great need for help. It was agreed that while working on the farm, she could offer some days of formation at the novitiate. However, an opportunity arose that called her to another mission. The Sisters of Charity had two offices that were operated in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Since a Sister was

needed on site to do administrative work and Sr. Clara had the skills to perform the tasks, she was asked to offer her services in accounting at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish in St. Paul Butha-Buthe.

Evidently, Sr. Clara has gained experience in many different fields of work for she obediently accepted to be moved very often from one mission to another according to the needs. We can suppose that she thus constantly adjusted spiritually to God's will as expressed by the authorities. She made herself available at all times. Sister Clara Goduka served the Congregation and the people with compassion and love in every place where she was called to live and work. She was always in a good mood, and her zest for joy and for life was contagious. She had a great sense of humor and laughed a lot so that when she became ill, her Sisters took some time before they realized the seriousness of her illness. She had had a stroke that gravely affected her condition.

She received her last obedience in 2016 for Paballong Convent upon her return from the hospital. She was on a recovery path and was even scheduled to receive an obedience elsewhere but the global pandemic decided otherwise and like many of her sisters, Covid-19 took her at the age of 67. Her departure was difficult for all of us. Yet, we rejoice for her, knowing that she has arrived in the realm of eternal Peace and Joy and is forever in the presence of God that she so loved and faithfully sought and served.

Sister Clara Goduka always had a great love for prayer, and for the Eucharist. Her humility was greatly praised. She was known for her love for the youth and the Christian Life Community. She taught theology with eloquence and enthusiasm. She had many interests and kept herself well informed about current political affairs. She loved to engage in professional activities, agriculture and was also an exquisite cook and seamstress. God had blessed her with many beautiful gifts that she has always joyfully put to good use wherever she went.

Thank you Sister Clara for brightening our days and for making us laugh so much along our journey. In spite of your young age and your work abruptly interrupted, you left your mark, for which we will be always be grateful.

Rest in peace. Your dearest dream which was to find God and to love and serve Him thoroughly has been indeed achieved! Happy eternity!

