

Testimony for Sister Josefa at her funeral on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at Kanaan, Darmstadt, Germany

Sister Cherubina:

Sister Josefa loved Jesus as her "Good Shepherd". She testifies that she always noticed, especially on dark roads: "You, Jesus, are with me. You are there, You help. You are Victor, You are stronger than all the power of sin and the power of the enemy. Everything is in Your hand."

Sister Josefa, after her secondary education and a year at a school for household management, began her training as a medical-technical assistant. During this time, in 1955, she came to Kanaan for a Passion/Easter retreat. She writes:

"The Lord called me to give HIM my life and my love exclusively. This seemed humanly impossible, since I wanted to start a family with many children. So I wanted to 'forget' this calling and went to the USA for about three years, working in my vocation and traveling a lot."

Her work included caring for Holocaust survivors. Understandably, a heart connection wasn't easy, because of the question, "what did these Germans want from them?" Some didn't speak English yet, and German was understandably difficult for them to hear. Fritz found a way to speak to them in a mixture of English and Swabian with such love that hearts melted. The evaluation report from the Jewish hospital says that she was much appreciated.



But Jesus continued to tug at her heart and not let go. She writes:

"After three years I returned to Germany. Again and again I felt the call of Jesus in my heart: 'I want you completely.' It gave me no peace. So I wrote to the Sisterhood asking if the Lord would confirm the call." And He did. July 14, 1959, exactly nine years after she came to a living faith, became her entrance day into the Sisterhood of Mary.

On the day of her first consecration, September 15, 1959, the day remembering the Sorrows of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, she wrote: "I received my new name, which the Lord had already told me at my calling four years earlier: Sister Josefa. What a confirmation and strengthening of faith."

Her bridal dedication in 1966 was also a landmark for Sister Josefa. She wrote: "It was a very special day, since the Lord was so near; and above all HE called me to walk with HIM the way of suffering, to become a true

'Josefa' to HIM: HE alone." She was named after Joseph of Arimathea. With her energy, speed and determination, she was useful in many pioneering situations and new beginnings: she was one of the founders of the branches in the USA and Australia and influenced their early years.

Sister Daniela:

The new branches were great challenges for Sister Josefa. She was multi-talented, also very practical, and always ready to help, whether she understood the matter or had to learn it herself first. She was cheerful, optimistic, and ready for whatever tasks the Heavenly Father sent her - we loved Sister Josefa very much and have much to thank her for.





To characterize her a little, a few brief incidents: On the return trip of one of her many ministry trips throughout the United States and Central America, Sister Josefa, Sister Urania and Sister Deborah drove by the Grand Canyon, one of the seven Wonders of the World. Overwhelmed by the grandeur and beauty of this landscape, the Sisters praised God in His Creator glory with songs of praise and thanksgiving: "Here He must be honored, monuments must be erected to Him!" And so the impossible happened, with the Heavenly Father's assistance and great perseverance, that three praise plaques glorifying God could be placed in the Grand Canyon. For almost 50 years, millions of visitors have been able to read the Word of God on the scripture plaques.

No matter what work was needed - Sister Josefa helped. Once we had to unload a truck full of gravel for the parking lot. The dump truck made the work go faster - but not fast enough for Sister Josefa. Suddenly we saw her, armed with a rake, standing high up on the tipped bed of the truck and pushing the gravel down with all her might.

Once we received an invitation to Washington D.C., to hold a Bible study for wives of the state representatives and senators. Someone asked, "Who would be willing to do this?" There was total silence. - Then Sister Josefa exclaimed, "Well, if no one wants to go, I'll go!" No sooner said than done. She packed her bags and also many banners of faith. Then she taught these ladies the battle of faith until all joyfully sang along and proclaimed Jesus' victory, waving banners over all the government affairs.

When we were building The Garden of Jesus' Sufferings, the heart of Canaan in the Desert, a lot of cement was needed for the foundations of each of the monuments of the eight stations. The trenches were dug, and Sister Agape mixed the heavy cement in a wheelbarrow. When Sister Josefa saw this, she promised to get help. She would be right back, and drove the car out of the gate. Not ten minutes later - we could hardly believe our eyes - she drove in, and a huge cement truck with the revolving cement mixer was following her! So the job was quickly done! The driver was even more grateful that he could get rid of the left over cement so easily! Father, we thank You!

S. Cherubina continued:

The Sisters in Phoenix wrote a few days ago that almost all of the Sisters who are there today received the help to grasp more deeply and establish their own vocation as Sisters of Mary precisely through Sister Josefa. In 1995 Sister Josefa was called back to the Motherhouse. This was certainly not an easy transition for her.



← Corrie ten Boom



When Sister Josefa then came to work in the Guest Reception Office, I had no idea that she was struggling inwardly to be able to say “yes” to this new assignment. But, it happened in secret, she was able to surrender her will through praising the victory of Jesus. She always had a radiant smile that made our guests feel at ease as soon as they arrived, and an open ear for their concerns. The secret behind her smile: praising God’s will in times of inner night. Her focus became increasingly to “look to Jesus alone” and to worship Him. She left the outcome to Jesus and was then able to release everything completely into His hands.

In the years together at the Reception Office I experienced her in her determination, energy, initiative, readiness for “small, inconspicuous” things, as well as large responsible duties. I experienced her as someone who could forgive quickly and completely. She could tell me clearly what was wrong, but also forgive immediately when I was sorry. When I came back to her the next day, everything was long forgotten and forgiven. Her heart was completely open to me, simply unclouded in Sisterly fellowship. She did not hold any grudges. Something that was also refreshing: Sometimes things were a bit “American” at our Reception Office! unconventional, not so formal - the word “no problem” solved many things quickly.

Later on, she was asked to help care for our older, infirm Sisters in “Jesu Friede” House (Jesus’ Peace), which corresponded to her innermost calling, like Joseph of Arimathea cared for Jesus when he was taken from the cross. Her clear focus on Jesus and her determination to reach the heavenly goal became clear to me in several ways during this last year. She had rearranged her belongings and had given away many things. On her birthday 3½ months ago, she asked me if I could help her move to a new room in Jesu Friede. She felt her strength was waning and she would need more help in the future. However, her prayer ministry continued at Jesu Friede. She was more and more absorbed in worship. She could be seen praying through the hallways, around the house, or walking over Kanaan. Her last service of intercession was a week ago today at our weekly prayer evening. Then she fell, and the very next day at 3 PM, at the hour of Jesus’ death, with the bells ringing for 3 o’clock prayer in the Motherhouse Chapel, she was allowed to reach the heavenly goal.



Some comments from friends: * She was full of life * The boldness of Sister Josefa left quite an impression on me, but also her childlikeness in trusting the Father in Heaven for good things * What a true saint, full of joy and life and yet, didn’t let you get away with sin of any kind! * She had a way of kindness and love that shined through everything she said. There was always a profound humbleness toward our gracious Heavenly Father * She was such a powerful influence on my life. She was so straightforward. * She had a wonderful sense of humor * We REJOICE with her, but this world will not be the same without her!

