

In memoriam Mien Leistra



Yesterday morning, the 5th of May as the sun rose, Mien set out on a very special and wondrous journey. In this way Mien spoke about her pending death. Peacefully and calmly she surrendered her life to her Creator. Leaving so many behind in great surprise and loss, here in our Religious House community and far beyond. Only about a week ago Mien was diagnosed with severe and acute leukemia. And once she knew she gracefully returned the gift of her life to God. She died in her community in De Bilt, a mixed community of religious and lay people. It was a grace that she could stay in the place where she had many happy years. She will be missed so much there.

Mien was 79. She was born in Heerlen in 1943 and the youngest of large family together, with her twin brother who died already many years ago. From early on she was familiar with missionary life: one of her brothers worked as a missionary in Malawi and another brother was a priest and in missioned in Portugal (Fatima).

She must have felt attracted to a dedicated life from early on. Before she was a MMS, she visited Africa already several times.

Mien became a nurse and worked for many years in district nursing in the South of Limburg.

When her mother was diagnosed Alzheimer she took care of her several years with energy and the power to love people as they are. She discovered the relationship with God was her strength to fulfill this at times difficult mission. When her mother died the path opened up to enter our MMS Community, in 1987 at the age of 43. After her noviciate she went to Africa: now to stay there!

In 1990 she went to Rubanda and worked in the health center. After 15 years she went to Southwest Kenia, trained health workers and help to start another health center.

Besides this ministry she has introduced so many of our young sisters into African Religious MMS life! For ten years she was in charge of the postulancy in East Afrika. For health reasons she returned to The Netherlands in 2013. She found here a Church and communities who were in the process of termination. This was so difficult for her. To make a long story short, with great wisdom and energy she supported our community here in he Netherlands. The last six years in Leadership. What a joy it was it to work with her and our lay staff to create a community and atmosphere where sisters can be happy and as alive as possible till the very end.

It was a privilege to work together with Mien. I can not imagine yet how it is without her in our meetings. The respect for each person, her wisdom, her humor and the depth of her faith. And most of all her laughter and optimism. Mien you are a true daughter of Anna Dengel: " real love is to give of oneself not counting the costs". We will remember!

You have not gone, you are still with us. Now in a place of light and love. We are happy with the space and the rest that is now yours. Your last words when I was with you the last day you were still conscious were: "I am ready now. Now the journey can start ".

Rest now in the fullness of your God-given life. Rest in God and the fulness of life you have searched for. Thank you for the love you so generously gave to so many. I am so proud that you are one of us, forever.

Elly Verrijt

The funeral of Mien is on Thursday May 11. At 13.30 h. Amsterdam time.

You are kindly invited to be with us and the many friends who will be there. Please help us to celebrate such a rich and beautiful life!

There will be a life stream and the link to enter the life stream is:

www.kijklive.nl

Naam: Mien Leistra

Wachtwoord (Pass word) 1430