



## Obituary

**Sr Marie-Luise Faupel OP**

**26.09.1944–07.12.2024**



*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.*

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;  
and his name shall be called*

*Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

(Is 9:1-7)

I was  
born on 26 September 1944 in the little village of my grandparents on my mother's side, because my father was in the War. I grew up in Warburg, Westphalia, Germany, with three siblings in the shadow of the Convent and Novitiate of the Dominican Friars.

After primary school I went to the "Neusprachliches Mädchengymnasium" (High School for Girls), which was run by the "Arme Schulschwestern Unserer Lieben Frau" (Poor School Sisters of Notre Dame), where I obtained my German Abitur (Matric). I entered our Congregation in Neustadt am Main, on 20 August 1965, became a novice on 30 April 1966, made my First Profession in Neustadt on 5 May 1968 and my Final Profession on 17 July 1971 in Oakford.

On 20 August 1968 I arrived in Oakford and began my teaching career as an untrained teacher - with only a book knowledge of English - in January 1969 in the Primary School at Saint Mary's, Oakford. From 1968 to 1987, and again 2000 - 2004, I held various teaching assignments (including a stint as Principal of St. Theresa's in Manzini, Swaziland) before and after my training as a High School Teacher (Witwatersrand University, BA and HED, 1974 - 1977). I am told, I have a natural teaching talent. I enjoyed making learning an adventure and a happy time for the students.

My other natural talent is that of "business administration". I started my career in administration with my employment as secretary to Sr Jennifer Alt OP, Psychotherapist. During that time (1988 - 1992), I obtained a Diploma in Practical Bookkeeping and studied, by correspondence, for a B. Com degree at the University of South Africa. I began my first steps into computers and, with initially very rudimentary word processing knowledge, typed Sr Jennifer's doctoral thesis. At that time, too, I assisted two Congregations of African Sisters in setting up and maintaining their digital accounting systems.

Between 1993 and 2016, I held three appointments to the Generalate at Bedfordview, first as assistant to the Congregational Bursar and Secretary and later as Congregational Bursar and Secretary.

However, teaching and administration were not the reason I entered the Religious Life. In essence, my heart yearned for what Teresa of Avila called "Solo Dios basta!" - God alone suffices. After years of struggling and yearning, I transferred to the Carmelite Monastery in Mafeking, South Africa (1997 to 2000). I returned to the Congregation a wiser person.

From 2006 to 2010, I was employed as Secretary General with the Leadership Conference of Consecrated Life (LCCL SA). This "job" suited me well and gave me much "job satisfaction". It was interesting and allowed me to "flourish" and to develop other talents. As part of the ministry to Congregations, I offered basic computer courses in Johannesburg and Aliwal North (Transkei) and assisted bursars with computerised bookkeeping procedures.

In March 2017, I requested and obtained a transfer back to my German roots, to the German Area. Though long beyond pension age, I am as busy as ever: driving, translating, shopping, maintenance, ..., in short, being "maid-of-all-work" and, since 2018, I am a member of the leadership team of the Neustadt/ Lohr/Flörsheim Local Community.

My hobby is taking photos, especially of nature and animals and, since the advent of a Smartphone; I am ever ready for a good shot!

My favourite Scripture passage is that of *Is 9: 1-7* (Nativity of the Lord, Midnight Mass),  
*"The people that walked in darkness  
has seen a great light; ..."*

On 9 January 2023 the community of Neustadt moved to the Senior Citizens' Residence Kist, where I now live.

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This first part of the obituary was written by Sr Marie-Lu herself. She must have felt her health diminishing and therefore wanted to express the most important and essential elements of her life in her own words of farewell. In this text, she outlines her life story and she describes and evaluates the various services she rendered to our Congregation.

In gratitude we look back on her life as a member of our order, as our Sister who generously engaged in the service of our Congregation and the people she enjoyed serving.

On entering our missionary Congregation she had ardently wished to be sent to South Africa, and since she clearly expressed this wish she was missioned to South Africa shortly after completing her basic religious studies in the noviciate. Her wish to become a teacher was likewise fulfilled. In the various schools around the Oakford motherhouse, she could try her teaching talents and was tested by the authorities of the Congregation. This is expressed in her own words "I am told, I have a natural teaching talent."

Sr Marie-Lu was well aware of her talents and focused on developing them. Her goal was to teach and to learn, to study and to practise. She was teaching in various places and accepted a variety of challenges. She enjoyed engaging in new tasks as we can read from her own memoirs. Yes, she was ready to be called to engage in tasks not only in our own Congregation but also for other religious, social and cultural groups in Southern Africa.

She familiarised herself with modern technology and the social media, finding satisfaction and acknowledgement in exercising and developing these skills.

On her return to Germany, she joined the community in Neustadt where she found a wide field for applying her administrative skills. She quickly got back into speaking German and was even afraid to forget her fluency in English. However, that fear was unfounded. She became our translator in writing as well as orally and helped the sisters in her community in the use of computers and smart phones right until the day she had to go to the hospital.

As a typical teacher, she was readily telling others how to do things and hesitant to share responsibility which was not always helpful in everyday community living and working together.

As one of the younger "senior sisters", Sr Marie-Lu had difficulties in accepting the necessary move of the Neustadt community into the Senior Residence in Kist. It meant acceptance of services from others and their care in matters which she would rather have continued doing herself. But she managed to accept this challenge as she had done in so many other situations in life. Humorously she commented with a German saying „Mitgegangen, mitgefangen" (if you go with them you'll be caught with them).

In this obituary we hear a lot about activities and service. We don't want to ignore the other facet in Marie-Lu's personality which may have been less obvious, i.e. her deep rooted connection with God which also prevailed in the darker hours of her life as a religious woman. She called it 'drawing from the well'. Right through her life, Sr Maria-Lu remained a God-seeker who deeply and unwaveringly trusted Him. Mastering the tension between the two poles of a life in action and contemplation was her endeavour and her final goal.

We thank God and you for your rich life in our midst, dear Marie-Lu; may God now lovingly hold you. Solo Dios basta!