



Obituary

Sr Angela Sutton OP

13.05.1938 - 10.11.2024



"Holy Spirit, please help me to respond to your urgings to reach out to others. And, as I strive to be of service, inspire me to give thanks to You as I see that You are already at work in their lives."

(Sr Angela)

Sr Angela was born in England on the 13th May 1938. She was named Marie Yvonne by her parents, Walter and Mary Sutton. She was one of five siblings. The first ten years of her life were spent in England. The family moved to South Africa and settled in Johannesburg where she continued her schooling at St Theresa's in Rosebank. She spent a year at a Commercial College in Johannesburg and was employed as a typist at Corner House, Gold Mine Consortium. She wanted to be a writer when she was in grade three, but God had other plans for her.

She entered the convent at Oakford at the age of 17, received the habit the following year and was given the name Angela. She made her first vows in 1958 and her final vows in 1961.

Her first experience of teaching at St Mary's Oakford was almost a disaster. The grade ones were out of control and she had no idea how to get them to settle down. Her thanks went to Sr Sarah who came to the rescue. She obtained her Teachers' Diploma with distinction in English and continued to upgrade her qualifications at UNISA. Sr Angela taught at schools in Oakford, Empangeni, Virginia, Bluff, Kimberley and Bendell. She held the position of Principal at the Our Lady of Natal Junior Primary School, Bluff and Vice Principal at St Catherine's Empangeni. Whatever community she was assigned to, Sr Angela made good use of her teaching skills to help uplift the local people. She ministered to prisoners in Kimberley, sharing with them the love and compassion of our God who loves and forgives unconditionally and encouraging them to believe in their own goodness. She told of her experience while teaching in a high school in Bendell. The students were not satisfied with her way of teaching and testing, so they complained to the principal, who called her to a meeting with some of the class representatives. The problem was this: the question papers only had questions and no answers. How were they to answer these questions with no answers given? What a shock this was to Sr Angela when she discovered the poor quality of education in many of our rural schools and the hard work and dedication required to prepare students for the challenges of life.

Sr Angela had many opportunities to help deepen her spiritual life, to discover herself as a woman of many talents and to face and embrace her strengths and weaknesses. Sabbaticals at the Casa di Studio in Rome, at Fons Vitae at Coolock House, and at St Stephen's Priory in Massachusetts, USA were experiences she remained grateful for, and which spurred her on to give generously of herself to God's people in so many ways.

She served the Congregation as Superior to the Osindisweni Community and as a member of the Regional Council. She gave her all to Pastoral and Catechetical work in a number of parishes, working as secretary of the Johannesburg Catechetical Office and making lasting friendships among the parishioners. She drove a scooter to work as catechist at Christ the King Parish in Wentworth, much to the delight of the children whom she loved. They would crowd around her scooter to welcome her and to see her off. Once she was pulled over by a traffic cop along Marine Drive, not because she was speeding, he only wanted to know if she was all right!

Her early desire to be a writer became a reality in her later years when she would write stories for children. She enjoyed writing for the little ones of the family and also for the children of some of our carers. Many hours were spent preparing and recording talks for Radio Veritas. Unfortunately, this had to stop when she was transferred to Villa Siena, but she continued to write short reflections for the community. Ill health affected her ability to use the computer and her short-term memory began to fail. Through all this she kept her great sense of humour and her interest in all that took place around her. She had a gentle nature and was never seen to be angry. Her love for our congregation and for Oakford was ever present in her heart. She thrived on the love and support of her siblings and their families who kept in constant contact with her. She always looked forward to those calls.

God called her to everlasting rest on Sunday November 10th. It seemed so sudden to us since she had sat at table and talked to Sr Clarina, her dear friend, that evening. What was God saying to her?

"Come, whom my father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; thirsty and you gave me drink; a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me."

Matt 25: 34-37

Sr Angela, you were given the gifts of teaching and evangelizing and you used them well in building up the Body of Christ. Pray for us, intercede for us and our Congregation that we may be attentive to God's call.

RIP