



Obituary of Sr. Andrea Polt
Immaculata Monastery
Norfolk, NE 68701

Vivian Polt was born on November 12, 1933, the fifth of eleven children born to Andrew and Cecilia German-Polt. She grew up on a farm near Pierce, Nebraska. While reminiscing about her childhood, she said that when she was old enough, she helped with the housework and in the garden while her other siblings worked on the farm. She recalled that both parents were hard-working, deeply religious, and prayerful. They made sacrifices to have their children go to the Catholic Parish school. During her 7th and 8th grades, she often stayed in town with her aging grandmother who spoke only German, which was a hardship for Vivian who knew very little German.

In 1940, when she was 7 years old, she learned about the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Raeville, Nebraska, and heard in her heart that that was where she was to enter religious life. Six years later this vocation was confirmed, and she entered as an aspirant in Raeville and she attended St. John Berchmans Highschool. In 1951 Vivian became a novice and received the name Sr. Andrea (after her father, Andrew). In 1952 at the age of 18, Sr. Andrea made her first profession as a Missionary Benedictine Sister where her older sister, Sr. Cecilia, was also a member. During her juniorate she attended Creighton University in Omaha and later taught in the parish schools in Madison and Wayne. Her final profession was in June of 1955.

Unexpectedly in 1959 Sr. Andrea was asked to go to Ndanda Priory in Tanzania, East Africa, to help in the Teacher Training College. While in Ndanda, she was the only American among the community of German and Swiss sisters. Since only German was spoken in the convent, she quickly had to learn German. In school she used her Swahili and English.

After five years she was allowed to return to the USA for two years to obtain a master's degree in guidance and counseling after which she returned to Ndanda in 1966. Soon she was back in the classroom, this time at Ndanda Abbey Secondary School where she was also charged with the care of the 130 girls boarding students. In 1973 she was transferred to Morogoro Secondary School where she oversaw the English Department.

Special challenges seemed to follow Sr. Andrea. This time, in 1974, she was sent to be the administrator in the Nyangao Hospital. Since she knew little about hospital administration, she thought this assignment would be short-term, but it lasted 20 years. She remembers that she learned a lot and did very well during those years.

Then, in 1994, even though 20 years out of educational work, she was sent to Mtwara to help establish a diocesan high school for sisters from the different African congregations. In 1996, she was appointed superior of the newly established community there in Mtwara. Eventually, Sr. Andrea's discontinued her teaching because the sisters were expanding their services in other areas and taking on building projects which the sisters had to supervise. Sr. Andrea said, "In spite of really enjoying my many years of work, and living with the Tanzanians and fellow sisters, most of my working life was very stressful, with too few sisters and much work."

In July of 2015, even though the sisters were in the midst of plans for a primary school and a hostel for boys, it was decided that at the age of 82 and after 56 years in Tanzania Sr. Andrea would leave Mtwara and the Ndanda Priory and return to the Norfolk Priory.

Here Sr. Andrea helped in the archives and library. Eventually, her heart condition forced Sr. Andrea to discontinue these works and prayer became her primary ministry. Last September Sr. Andrea had the special joy of celebrating her 70 years of religious life with family, friends, and her community of sisters.

By March of 2023 one noticed significant changes in Sr. Andrea's overall health. This decline continued steadily. Sr. Andrea surrendered all to her faithful God on May 19, 2023. Services: May 21, 7:00 pm Wake, May 22, 2:30 pm Mass of Christian Burial.

Sr. Andrea is survived by her Missionary Benedictine Sisters, and sisters: Leona Piper, Sr. Cecilia, Barb (Mike) Kirk, by her brothers: Edwin (Michaela), Walter (Cynthia), Roger (Lois), and sister-in-law Carolyn.

Sr. Andrea was preceded in death by her parents, Andrew and Cecilia, and by four siblings: Fr. Albert, Sr. Doris Ann, Bernard, and Erwin.