

Hallo! Greetings from St. Paul

In memoriam Father Thomas Peeters C.M.M.



*** Reuver 14 May 1939 - † Venlo 5 February 2016
Buried at St. Paul Arcen 11 February 2016**

Although Father Thomas Peeters had serious kidney problems, his actual condition was not related to his sudden death. During the two preceding days he was suffering heavy pain in the stomach. When his condition grew unbearable, he himself called an ambulance at 5.30 am on 4 February. After arrival at the hospital in Venlo he was immediately taken to the operation theatre for urgent surgery which unfortunately was not successful and gave no hope for a possible recovery. He died during the night, early in the morning of Friday 6 February.

The vigil in the evening before the funeral was held in the chapel of St. Paul on Ash Wednesday. The funeral service on Thursday 11 February was attended by a large number of mourners. The chapel was far too small for the about 150 attendants. Fr. Frans Lenssen presided over the Eucharistic celebration with the concelebrating priests, Fr. Wenceslaus Kwindingwi of the CMM Headquarters in Rome, Fr. Theo Verstappen, and the Fathers Hubert Wendl, Christoph Beesten, and Stuart Vukayi who had come from Mariaveen; the episcopal vicar Franssen for the religious in the diocese represented the Bishop of Roermond, Frans Wiertz. A large number of relatives,

Info 12/ 2016 February

friends and acquaintances were present.

Attending the funeral Mass were also the treasurer general Br. Fidelis Burgstaller from Rome and Br. Heinrich with a CPS Sister from Mariaveen and five Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood from Aarle- Rixtel.

After having completed his studies at the minor seminary of St. Paul, Fr. Thomas entered the novitiate of the Mariannahill Missionaries in Eijsden in 1957. After his first profession in 1958, he continued his formation for the priesthood in the international clerical seminary of the Mariannahill Missionaries in Würzburg and studied theology at the Bavarian State University. He was ordained priest on 19 March 1964. Soon afterwards he was sent to Zimbabwe where he worked successively in four mission stations for over 30 years as a missionary. He was especially active in the field of social concerns. In preparation for this work he had made special studies in London. He also served as provincial superior for Mariannahill in Zimbabwe. While attending the general chapter in Canada in 1996, he was elected a member of the general council and had to move to the headquarters in Rome.

When his term of office ended in 2002, his health was affected by a malfunction of his kidneys. He settled down in the mission house St. Paul in Arcen in the Netherlands. Since his arrival there, he has been going to the hospital in Venlo three days a week during the past 14 years for dialysing in order to keep his kidneys functioning. He showed an unimaginable willpower and energy while going on for so many years, hoping that one day he would be ready for a kidney plantation. Never would he complain about his ordeal which dominated his daily life and limited his actions. That was Thomas' character, a man of patience and modesty. He never forced himself on others or push himself forward. That made him sympathetic to others who met him in a natural way. He was a man who remained himself and in whose company one would feel at ease.

Fr. Thomas died only six weeks after had assumed the office of superior of the community of St. Paul, a task that he readily accepted in spite of his handicap. His decease leaves behind a gap which affects the community with sadness. There is no other way than to get used to going on without his presence.

Here Father Thomas rests at the St. Paul' cemetery on the side of his predecessor as superior of St. Paul Father Gerard Willemse

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