

Sister Annikki Rauhamäki, C.PP.S.

Born: December 23, 1929

Professed: August 10, 1951

Entered into Life: January 5, 2015

Verse on her memorial card: **“The Lord has done great things for us: We are filled with joy!” Luke 1:49**



January 16, 2015,

Dear Sisters,

On January 5, 2015, at 8:00 pm Finland time and noon St. Louis time, our dear Sr. Annikki Rauhamäki met our Lord face to face and entered into His glory. On the cover of Sr. Annikki's celebration of 60 years as a Precious Blood Sister we read: "The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with JOY." And Sr. Annikki was a woman of joy who seemed to brighten every room she entered.

Sr. Annikki was born Anna Teresa on December 23, 1929, to Anton and Valma Rauhamäki, and baptized at St. Henry Church in Helsinki, Finland. She was one of five children and is now in heaven with her parents, her sisters, Maria Susanna, Kerttu Elizabeth, Liisa, her brother Jorma, and her nephew Patrick. What a family reunion that must be!

In 1938 the Catholic Church of Finland invited the Sisters from O'Fallon to minister in Finland. The following year the Sisters went to Finland and stayed during World War II ministering to boys and girls in a children's home and later opening The English School which is still operating today. During this time, Sr. Annikki, was cared for by the sisters in the children's home and later decided to join the community.

The first step for Annikki was coming to the United States in 1947 to attend St. Elizabeth Academy in St. Louis. Annikki spoke English, Swedish, Finnish; she understood German and was studying Latin and French. At seventeen years of age, Annikki, had already graduated from high school in Finland and spent a year at SEA learning English and U.S. customs from the other students. "As a newcomer at St. Elizabeth Academy, Annikki is already known to most of the students. Her friendly and outgoing manner was evident then and throughout her life and in her interactions with others. (The Thuringian, Oct. 1947)"

After high school, Annikki, (meaning "little Ann" in Finnish), entered the novitiate in O'Fallon and became Sr. Mary Margit. She attended St. Louis University and graduated with a degree in German; she also attended Maryville University for a license in Library Science. As an educator, Sr. Annikki taught in several schools in the United States: St. George in St. Louis, Assumption in O'Fallon and Assumption in Mattese; Sacred Heart in Columbia, all in Missouri and St. Peter in Mendota, Minnesota. In Finland, Sr. Annikki taught in The English School at Tampere and Helsinki and served in the Helsinki Library.

To each ministry Sr. Annikki brought a great sense of humor, a compassionate spirit, and a charming naivety and innocence. One Sister said of her, "She laughed easily and enjoyed fun times and was always grateful for any small thing anyone did for her." Sr. Annikki was very devoted to her sisters in community and brought honesty and care for others with her in many situations. One of her sayings was: "For me home is where you hang your hat (veil)."

In the summer in Finland the Sisters went to Camp Villa Maria to be with the girls. Sr. Annikki went swimming with them every day and was one of the first Precious Blood Sisters who had permission to swim. Potato peeling was a chore that needed to be done with the girls. As they peeled, Sr. Annikki would start a story and each girl then took a turn continuing the story. It made the time go faster and the girls enjoyed the chore so much more.

According to Sr. Renee, "Sister Annikki never met a stranger. Finns are, by nature and culture, reserved, mind their own business and seldom acknowledge the existence of the person sitting next to them on a bus. But Annikki would start a conversation with anyone, including teenagers who would give her a mystified look. They gradually engaged in conversation with her and soon everyone was having a great time. She was outspoken about her favorite beliefs. She once told a priest that it would be more like Jesus if he would start his homily with 'Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,' especially since the majority of those attending Mass were feminine."

One of Sr. Annikki's classmates remembers an observation that she made about life in the U.S., "In the U.S. you are so busy and rush around; in Finland, we rest." Since 2002 Sr. Annikki was retired from active ministry and lived a life of prayer and presence in Helsinki. She enjoyed visiting with family and friends, keeping up with world news, knitting and playing with her cats.

Sr. Annikki was hoping to continue retirement at the Motherhouse in O'Fallon living with her sisters and classmates. She was really looking forward to this new life but on Christmas Eve while visiting with her nephew and family she became ill and was hospitalized. Along with family members, Sisters Mary Venard and Renee and our Partner in Mission Inger, were present to her during these last days of her life. Sr. Mary Venard recalls how she held her hand and prayed the rosary while Annikki was gasping for breath. "When getting ready to leave after an hour, I held her head in my hands and kissed her. Her face changed expression and that picture will stay with me. I think she understood."

Our deepest sympathy is extended across the miles to Annikki's nephew Tomppa and family, niece Margit, half-brother Aimo Sarin, and her extended family including our Precious Blood Sisters serving in Finland. We will always hold you in our hearts especially at this time when the loss of Sr. Annikki is keenly felt.

We will have a Memorial Mass on Tuesday, January 20th at 11:00 a.m. in St. Joseph Chapel, O'Fallon, MO. Sr. Annikki's Funeral will be on Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at 11.00 a.m. at St. Henry's Cathedral in Helsinki, Finland. Her burial will be the following day in Turku, Finland, at 3 p.m., in the plot belonging to the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood.

Let us join together to thank our Sister for the love she shared with us, for the joy she brought to us and the compassion she showed to us. We can hear Jesus saying to her: "Welcome my beloved daughter. "Tervetuloa rakas tytär." And to Annikki we say: We will meet again in heaven. "*Tapaamme jalleen taivaassa.*"

Sincerely,



Sr. Fran Raia