

## Obituary of Father Meinolf Kraft OSB

On 17 February 2019, God Almighty called his servant Father Meinolf Kraft OSB to his eternal rest in heaven. Father Meinolf was born on 23 May 1934 in Wülfte, a village within the Diocese of Paderborn in Germany. At his baptism, he was given the new name of Hermann. His parents were Heinrich and Maria Kraft, who were blessed with four children whom they brought up in the Catholic faith.



The youngest Hermann attended primary and secondary school in Brilon. In 1952, he was sent by his parents to learn the blacksmith trade as an apprentice. He earned a good certificate. In 1956, Hermann heard the call of God to become a monk, so he joined the Benedictine Abbey of Münsterschwarzach, which belongs to the Benedictine Congregation of Sankt Ottilien. In 1959, he was admitted into the novitiate and received the monastic name of Meinolf. On 23 September 1960, he professed his temporal vows.

From the beginning, Hermann felt the vocation to become a priest, so he was sent to St. Ottilien to study philosophy and then to the University of Würzburg for theological studies. On 29 June 1965, he was ordained a priest after finishing his theological studies.

As the Abbey of Münsterschwarzach is a missionary abbey, Father Meinolf was happy to be sent to Peramiho Abbey in Tanzania for missionary work on 6 June 1966. He was full of joy to be able to fulfill our Lord's command: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Father Meinolf's pastoral activities in Peramiho reached as far as Lupanga, Lupingu and Luilo on the shores of Lake Nyasa. From 1980-1989, he was the parish priest of Uwemba close to the town of Njombe. He exerted himself in helping people come to know our Lord and serve Him. In 1991, Father Meinolf was appointed as parish priest of Namabengo, where he remained until 1999. From that time onward, he returned to Münsterschwarzach Abbey to stay until 2001. In 2001, he returned to Tanzania again, but this time to Ndanda Abbey. He was appointed as parish priest of Ndanda Parish. At Ndanda, he made big strides in educating the Christians on being self-reliant and avoiding dependency. The people of Ndanda remember him as one who underscored the importance of making the parish run by its own means. He was rather reluctant to hand out private help. Therefore, his faithful gave him a nickname in Kimwera: *likavenga*, which means thrifty.

From 2002, Father Meinolf was appointed to work in our guest house in Kurasini in the big city of Dar es Salaam. There he faithfully served the people coming and going from different places until 2013, when he asked to retire because of his old age. He left Kurasini and settled down in Mbande, a little place outside the city. There he was the spiritual father of a group of African Benedictine Sisters of Imiliwaha. He enjoyed his spiritual work until January 2019, when he suffered several attacks of vertigo.

As his health situation worsened more and more, the sisters brought him to the Aghakan Hospital in Dar es Salaam. The treatment in the hospital helped him so that he felt sound enough to return to Mbande, where the sisters cared for him with motherly love. But only after a short time, his health situation increasingly worsened, such that he himself asked to be taken to Ndanda. There on 16 February, his health situation grew worse, and our doctor there, Brother Isaya, diagnosed Father Meinolf with pneumonia. The doctor tried all available means of treatment to save the life of Father Meinolf, but on 17 February 2018, God called Father Meinolf, his faithful servant to the church of Tanzania, home to His everlasting Kingdom.

The Funeral Mass and burial was celebrated one day later on 18 February 2019 in the cemetery of the Abbey, with a great audience of faithful, priests and two bishops.

Ndanda, 18 February 2019  
Abbot Placidus and the community of Ndanda