

Sister Adalberta Mette Superior General of the Sisters of Christian Charity

Sister Adalberta's favorite color is the **rainbow** of colors

How long have you been a Sister of Christian Charity?

I entered in 1962, and was a postulant for six months. I was invested on October 24, 1962 – so I've been a Sister for 43 years.



Sister Harriet with Sister Adalberta during her visit to Sacred Heart Convent, Wilmette, IL.

Where have you lived?

I was born in Minden, Germany (the city where Mother Pauline was born). I lived there until I was 16, when I went to the Household School in Höxter. I was there for one year then spent some time at the Lippstadt Kindergarten Teacher School. These were boarding schools. I was apprehensive about being away from home but I was never homesick; everywhere I went I experienced warmth and friendliness. After passing the exams for Kindergarten teachers, I had thought to enter the community. However, my father told me to “work for one year” first. So I remained in Lippstadt for one year as a teacher. In the mornings I taught 3-6 year-olds in the Montessori style. In the afternoons, I was responsible for the 5th – 7th graders in the boarding school. Upon completion of this year, I then asked, and received, permission to enter the Community. I moved to Paderborn and lived in the motherhouse for two and a half years of formation (postulancy and novitiate).

After making first profession, I was sent to Frechen (a village near Cologne) where I worked in an all-day kindergarten for one year. I heard about this transfer on the evening of the ceremony of my first profession and I left the next day. (At the time, this was the common way Sisters were transferred.) An orphan home in Siegburg was my next place of ministry. The parents of these children were, for various reasons, unable to care for them so the

Sisters took care of them. After only six months at the orphan home, I was on my way to Cologne for further education. After I finished there I traveled to Brilon, where I remained for two years, to instruct kindergarten teachers. For the next four and a half years I studied at the University in Bochum; taking courses in Sociology, German and Pedagogy. We had no convent in Bochum, so I lived in a home for students. On the weekends I stayed with our Sisters in Dortmund. In 1975, I was sent to Rome for ten months to work on the Constitution Commission. I had to deal with other languages spoken in our Community (Spanish, Italian and English) and realized the need to learn these languages. The work was hard but enriching.

Upon my return to Germany, I taught high school at Lippstadt and trained future kindergarten teachers. This is where I expected to spend the rest of my life; in Germany, Sisters often stay in one place until they are 65 because of the civil laws. However, I was only there for two and a half years; in 1980 I was asked to go to Rome to be the Secretary General. I was very surprised and said to Sister Gregoris (the Superior General), "This is the least of what I would choose." Sister responded, "You can learn it." Rome as a city attracted me – but not the work. I was assistant to the Secretary General for three years, then was appointed to the office of Secretary General from 1999-2001, in addition to being Secretary General, I also was the Counselor General for the German Province. Again, I thought I would be doing this job for a long time. Then - in 2001 - I was elected to the office of Superior General.

What is your favorite thing about being a Sister?

My favorite thing about being a Sister of Christian Charity is the call to be a Sister of Christ-like love. Being connected to the whole congregation, to each individual Sister, continuously enriches my own life as an SCC.

What do you like to do when you aren't working?

I like to walk and bicycle for exercise. I enjoy reading (biographies especially), and listening to music. But most of all I like to just be with my Sisters.

How did you know you wanted to be a Sister?

I got to know the Sisters of Christian Charity in Minden, Germany, where I

spent my childhood. I was about twelve years old, and the Sister Superior impressed me because she was so kind and friendly. I was very drawn to her because I saw Mother Pauline in her; she had given me a biography of Mother Pauline, the Foundress of the Sisters of Christian Charity. I saw Sisters' life and Mother Pauline's life as a wonderful way to live, so I wanted to become a Sister of Christian Charity, too.

Do you have any interesting stories about your life as a Sister?

I was privileged to be present for the opening of Mother Pauline's grave during the Beatification process in 1963. It was a thrill for me to touch Mother Pauline's ring. In 1991, as Secretary General I had the joy to visit the United States for the first time. I was deeply touched when I could walk the steps of Mother Pauline in North America. Since then I have visited our Sisters here in the USA many times.