

OBITUARY

of our Sister Maria Holper

***27.05.1937 † 23.06.2021**



Sr. Maria – many of you know her as Martin Maria – was born on 27th May 1937 in Güttenbach in the Burgenland. She died on 23th June 2021 in Wernberg.

Sr. Maria, you were the sixth of seven siblings. You were our only sister with a Croatian mother tongue, as you came from the easternmost part of Austria, where a Croatian minority lives. You loved Croatian songs very much ... Your parents became both very old, your father was a shoemaker, your mother a housewife. You also had a small farm, as was usual in the countryside at that time. You too worked on the farm and brought a lot of practical skills with you from home.

On 31 August 1960 you entered our convent in Wernberg, you did your religious training there and on 3 May 1963 you promised God a life of poverty, celibacy and obedience in the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood. Already in 1964 you were transferred to Spain and stayed there for 23 years. Your reputation as a good cook was not only appreciated among the Mariannahill Missionaries, but also in the school and boarding school. Then came the call to Portugal.

Here in the newly acquired manor house in Lamego, all your talents came to fruition. The Portuguese Kolping Society, founded in the same year, and Portugal's entry into the EU in 1986 offered many opportunities. Through the recognition of your certificates from Austria you were able to give lessons in all home economics subjects. In your modesty you never talked about this to us!

In this disadvantaged area of Portugal, youths, young adults and long-term unemployed women were able to take a three-year training course to obtain a vocational certificate or a secondary school leaving certificate. Thus, a start into independence was made possible. Through your relatives, we learned again and again what works of art in baking there are in Burgenland and you passed on such recipes. Because of your kind nature and your

professional competence, you were much sought after, loved and adored. Our sisters and all visitors also benefited from your skills.

After 22 years, because of health reasons, you could no longer carry out these beloved activities and you returned to Wernberg in 2007. This was the beginning of your suffering, which you endured with great patience and bravery. Repeatedly, operations gave you some hope and improvement - and you never gave up, you were a fighter. As long as it was possible, you drove longer distances on the road with your rollator, then your radius became smaller and smaller. You never lost your kindness. Visits from your family in Burgenland were always a great joy for you.

At the beginning of March - you were doing quite well that day - you suffered a stroke. Although you received immediate help, the consequences were severe. You could only react with your eyes for a very short time and had to be fed artificially. Nevertheless, you recovered amazingly, except for the ability to speak. Those who knew you very well could read your lips. You beamed when the clown sang a Spanish song for you or Sr. Angelica a Portuguese one. Your family visited you as often as they could - your joy was noticeable. You showed your affection by shaking hands.

The last days were still a long path of suffering during which you were lovingly accompanied. We wish you well and that you are finally at home with God. You were a true Missionary Sister, with a commitment to the disadvantaged. Wherever you lived, you gave testimony of God's redeeming love in your fine, humble way. We thank you for your life in our community, for all the good that happened through you. We thank you for your patience and for your prayers.

Sr. Pallotti and fellow sisters