

**OBITUARY
of our**

Sister Doris Hartl

*** 23-06-1935 - † 09-09-2023**



Sister Doris was born on 23 July in Unterredt, Upper Austria, and barely half a day old, was already baptized in the parish church of Altenfelden and was given the name Margareta. Her parents, Franz and Katharina Hartl, had a small farm.

The children grew up during the war, which was not always easy. They went to school in Altenfelden on foot. Although little "Grete" was weak and regularly absent from school, she still got good grades. She was gifted and everything interested her. After primary school she went to the Catholic girls' school of the Sisters of the Cross in Lembach. There, too, her health was looked at with concern because she weighed too little for her age. Nevertheless, she received a medical certificate in 1950 stating that she was simply healthy and free of contagious diseases. So, she was able to join the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood in Wernberg on 31 January 1951, where she was first a pupil at the "Wernberg Missionary School", from which she received a certificate with "excellent success" on 25 June 1952. On 7 December 1953, she entered the religious life in Wernberg and was given the name Sr. Doris. On 8 December 1954, she made her First Profession in Wernberg.

In 1955, Sr. Doris acquired the "teaching qualification as a catechist". At first, however, she was mainly occupied with light housework, alternating between work in the host bakery and in embroidery. On 8 December 1957, she made her Final Profession in Wernberg. In November 1959, she travelled via Hl. Blut Convent in the Netherlands to Willowdale in Canada. There, too, she was initially assigned to light domestic work. On 5 October 1965 she received the Canadian citizenship.

In addition to a certificate from the Catechetical Institute at the University of Waterloo in Ontario in 1968, she earned several degrees in music over the years at the Royal Conservatory of Music at the University of Toronto. At the same time she taught music to children, mainly violin, but she also played the organ, piano and recorder. She used her home holidays to visit her family, but also to recharge her batteries; she was and remained petite in stature and not strong.

In June 1984, Sister Doris returned to Europe and became organist at the Motherhouse Heilig Blut in the Netherlands. There, too, she gave music lessons to children from the surrounding areas. From March 1989 to 1992 she was also assistant to the house superior.

Feeling a strong desire to help the weakest in society, Sister Doris worked two days a week in Helmond from February 1989. She obtained her driving licence for this in 1990. The foundation based in the Molenstraat in the former Convent of the Poor Clare Sisters, where she worked, was to change its name several times over the years: "People in Need", "People for People", "The Open Gate", "Clara Foundation". The goal however, always remained the same: To listen to people on the margins of society, to care for them and, where necessary, to support them with concrete help.

Sister Doris was also a welcome and impressive presence at the Helmonder asylum seekers' centre, the former Christus König mission house. Small and frail as she was, her straight posture and sharp gaze were admired by the many tall people, and the children to whom she gave recorder lessons loved her and looked forward to her visits. However, her health continued to fail; in 1991 she could not even play the organ for a while because of her heart. In 1994, she had to undergo a hernia operation, and around the turn of the millennium her eyesight deteriorated greatly. The condition proved irreversible and her vision was not stable; some days she saw everything, others nothing. This led to her having to give up most of her voluntary work in Helmond in 2001.

Through the Institute for the Blind, she received a then new talking computer with which she could have books read to her via a scanner, write e-mails and compose documents. This was given to her free of charge on the condition that she try it out. Being fluent in three languages, she soon came back with the question: "If I write an English mail first and then want to read a Dutch or German mail, do I have to switch the machine off completely first to change the language, isn't there any other way?"

On the computer, she wrote down the first notes of the various songs in large letters so that she could recognize the songs and play them by heart for a long time to come as an organist.

Sister Doris had poor health, but enormous willpower and a strong faith. Even when she became increasingly disoriented and wanted to go home, she attended all prayer times and Holy Mass as often as possible. Very special was the reception of the Sacrament of the Sick in the midst of the community, which she experienced very clearly and consciously. Afterwards she quickly weakened and died peacefully on 9 September 2023 in the presence of her fellow sisters.

Sister Doris, may you now rest in God's peace.