

Death Notice

SISTER MARIA BERCHMANE ND 4232

Dora LANGE



Maria Regina Province, Coesfeld / Germany

Date and Place of Birth:	February 26, 1931	Braunsberg/East Prussia, Germany
Date and Place of Profession:	May 22, 1952	Mülhausen
Date and Place of Death:	May 22, 2015	Haus Salus, Mülhausen
Date and Place of Funeral:	May 27, 2015	Mülhausen, Convent Cemetery

Sister M. Berchmane, her elder brother, and her younger sister grew up in a parental home that was shaped by the Catholicism of the Ermland. Their father Josef Lange was a miller and operated the public mill. Dora attended the basic Catholic primary and secondary school, but because of the war she had to leave school when she was in the 8th grade.

On February 18, 1945, the family had to flee from the approaching Russian front. Only the father was not allowed to join them because the Wehrmacht, who were also on the flight to the west, had instructed him to blow up the mill as soon as the German troops had left. On the coast, the family waited for their father for three days under continuing threat. Then they fled with the flood of refugees across the icy Vistula Spit and Lagoon to Gdansk and from there to Kolberg. On their way, they were constantly under fire by low-flying aircraft and so they experienced that people around them were shot dead or injured and left behind. Ice, hunger and fear of death were constant companions of the family. From Kolberg the refugees were taken by an ocean liner to the island of Rügen, where they were also threatened by Russian submarines and torpedoes. On their flight towards the west, the family finally reached the Oldenburger Land where they met with a warm reception from the Westendorf family in Dinklage and where they also found jobs.

Dora worked on the farm until she entered our congregation. Marked by the sorrowful time of their flight and a strong confidence in God's protection and help for her family, Dora strongly believed in the good and caring God whom she had trusted in a child-like way all her life. She felt a growing wish to live her life for God as a religious sister.

On November 18, 1949, she started her religious formation with the Sisters of Notre Dame in Mülhausen. From then on Sister Berchmane served God and His people in a friendly, helpful and professional way. In May 1953, her younger sister Margarete began her novitiate as Sr. M. Aureliana in Mülhausen, thus following her sister in religious life as well as in ministry.

Sister M. Berchmane was a religious with heart and soul and a dedicated cook and housekeeper. For 33 years she managed the kitchen at Heinrichshaus in Engers on the Rhine, an orthopedic clinic and a home with a school and workshops for handicapped young people. In a calm and considerate way, she succeeded in guiding all the employees and the apprentices who were entrusted to her.

On top of all her work, she always found ways to prepare special surprises, in making time for her employees and apprentices, for the handicapped and for the groups and associations of the city, who could always rely on the help of this wonderful sister and cook. Her co-sisters highly appreciated her because her life and her simple dedication to God reflected His goodness and care.

From 1988 to 1999, Sister M. Berchmane assumed the management of the kitchen in Maria Einsiedeln, a home for the elderly in Bonn. She then moved to Haus Salus in Mülhausen where she again assumed tasks in the kitchen. Since 2007, she has lived in retirement. She loved to pray and to help where she could. She enjoyed the many contacts with her family, her former employees and apprentices in Engers.

She accepted her cancer disease as her final journey to God. She had confidence in her doctors and nurses and was grateful for their assistance. On May 22, 1952, Sr. M. Berchmane dedicated herself to God by making her profession, on May 22, 2015 God called her home into the fullness of life with HIM.