

Celebration of 100 Years of Life, Canoas, Brazil

Sister Maria Hiltgardis : “Life enchants me”



Sisters, teachers, staff, former students and friends attended the celebration of 100 years of life of Sister M. Hiltgardis. The festive gathering was preceded by a solemn Eucharistic Celebration at Saint Aloysius Parish/Canoas/RS and, immediately afterwards, a luncheon followed at Maria Auxiliadora School. Gestures of affection: memories of the former students, photos and gifts expressed the love, appreciation and gratitude of the people who have had the grace to share life with our dear centennial Sister.

Sister Maria Hiltgardis was born on July 23, 1915, in Essen/Ruhr, Germany. She entered the congregation in Mülhausen, Germany, in 1936. In January, 1938, even as a novice, she realized her great dream of being a missionary in Brazil. To leave her homeland, to go to a strange land, to learn the language and to adapt to a new culture were her first challenges. In Brazil, her missionary ideal found expression in the care of young vocations and in education. As a dedicated and demanding principal and teacher, she awakened in the hearts of young people noble ideas, love for culture, for beauty and for truth. As a Provincial Superior after Vatican Council II and attentive to the signs of the times, she paved the way and encouraged the process of change and renewal of consecrated religious life. She lived within the limits of poverty, loneliness and paradoxes, and transformed them into life experiences or, as she says, “I found the great God of my life”. In 1995, the Gaúcho Society recognized her contribution to the field of Education and Culture, and she received the Gaúcho Honorário. As an older person, she preserves her joy of living and her interest in following the news. Today, at 100 years of age, prayer, art, books and Internet keep her active and connected to our mission and with the world.

Sister Maria Hiltgardis, a strong woman in love with God, transformed power into service, culture into a lesson on humility, and of life into wisdom. So, as she celebrates 100 years of life, she can proudly say, “I confess that I LIVED”.