

## Death Notice

**SISTER MARIA FÁTIMA**

ND 4177

Iracida MALDANER



Holy Cross Province, Passo Fundo, RS, Brazil

Date and Place of Birth:	January 8, 1928	Selbach, RS
Date and Place of Profession:	February 12, 1947	Passo Fundo, RS
Date and Place of Death:	March 11, 2023	Passo Fundo, RS
Date and Place of Burial:	March 11, 2023	Santa Cruz Cemetery, Passo Fundo, RS

In the year of our Centenary, our good and provident God visited us again calling another of our sisters - Sister Maria Fátima. We are certain that the Lord welcomed her with open arms into eternal life.

Iracida was the eighth among eleven children, all of whom are deceased, born to Nicolau Maldaner and Catharina Seibel Maldaner. She came from a deeply religious family and had a brother who was a diocesan priest and three sisters in our Congregation: Sister Maria Irena, Sister Maria Hilda, and Sister Maria Irma. Feeling called to religious life herself and following the example of her sisters who had preceded her, Iracida entered the Novitiate in Passo Fundo receiving the name of Sister Maria Fátima.

Having earned degrees in Pedagogy, Theology, and Portuguese Literature, Sister Maria Fátima began her ministry in education, sometimes as a teacher, sometimes as principal of one of our Notre Dame Schools. Beginning in 1970, Sister served as principal of Colégio Notre Dame Rainha dos Apóstolos, in São Paulo with a deep sense of responsibility and dedication. From 1982 to 1985, she was the secretary for the Basic Education Movement sponsored by the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB). From 1989 to 1998, Sister guided several retreats for men and women religious and lay people as a member of the team which guided retreats at the Jesuit Spirituality Center in São Paulo. Sister Maria Fátima later wrote, *“From 1989 on, I shifted from the formal and popular education ministry to the education of the faith, giving retreats for different groups of people, accompanying seminarians and those in formation for Religious Life, assisting them in their journey to experience the good God.”* Her constant prayer was Psalm 138:8: *“Finish what you started in me, God”*, for no one can give what he does not have.

Sister loved literature, reading, and writing. She was also a great disseminator of the life, work, and spirituality of Saint Julie Billiart. She was determined to do what it took to make Julie’s charism and pedagogy better known, more visible; lived, and experienced. As a result, she published several books, among them are *Julie Billiart’s Pedagogy in the Light of Vatican II*; *Saint Julie Billiart, a Messenger of God’s Goodness*; and *The Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame under the Mantle of Mary*.

Beginning in 2014, as her health began to decline, Sister Maria Fátima devoted herself to summarizing the annals of the Province and participating in prayer groups. In the last two years, she joined the Senegalese Refugees Cultural Project, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Passo Fundo, a ministry very dear to her.

In January 2022, during the retreat in preparation for her 75 Anniversary of religious life - Jubilee of Joy – and on the day itself, she spoke of not feeling well. Therefore, she moved to Casa Betania to receive more intensive care. On March 9, 2023, she suffered a hemorrhagic stroke which led to her death on early Saturday morning, a day dedicated to our good and tender mother, Mary.

*“In the traces of the good God, we are writing our history”* – says the slogan marking the first Centenary of the SNDs in Brazil. Sister Maria Fátima, a strong and courageous woman religious, wrote her own history leaving significant marks in the lives of the people she served. May God be praised for Sister Maria Fátima’s generosity and reward her with a happy eternity.