

## Death Notice

**SISTER MERITA** ND 4134  
(formerly Sister Mary Murita)

Loretta Mary STRAHLER  
(natural sister of Sister Mary Doreen +Oct. 07, 2020)



Immaculate Conception Province, USA

Date and Place of Birth:	September 24, 1926	Suffield, Ohio
Date and Place of Profession:	August 16, 1947	Cleveland, Ohio
Date and Place of Death:	July 10, 2021	Health Care Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Funeral:	July 21, 2021	Provincial Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Burial:	July 22, 2021	Resurrection Cemetery, Chardon, Ohio

Loretta Mary Strahler was born the fourth of seven children of Raymond and Stella Oakes Strahler. With three older brothers and later, three younger sisters, Loretta described her childhood as “very happy,” as she played, learned and shared the work on the family’s large farm in Randolph, Ohio. By eighth grade, she had prayed about her desire to be closer to God and to serve others in religious life. She enrolled at Notre Dame Academy, Cleveland, as an Aspirant, and entered the novitiate as a postulant on February 2, 1945. Her sister Dorothy (Sister Mary Doreen) also became a Sister of Notre Dame, and the youngest, Edna (Sister Sylvia, MMS) is a Medical Mission Sister who has spent many years in Pakistan.

Sister Merita earned a bachelor’s degree in education from St. John College, Cleveland, and ministered for almost forty years as a primary and intermediate grade teacher at 16 different schools in the Cleveland and Youngstown Dioceses, as well as in Arlington, Virginia and Winter Haven, Florida. When help was needed, Sister assisted with food service in several large convents.

In 1988, Sister accepted an invitation to become a certified teacher of the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program in Cleveland. Working with adults as a literacy tutor proved to be a perfect match for her skills and advocacy. Extending her ministry beyond the classroom through Catholic Charities, Sister Merita addressed the practical needs of refugee and immigrant families, accompanying them to medical appointments, performing job searches and familiarizing them with grocery shopping and public transportation.

Sister returned to Florida in 1998, where she assisted at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Dunedin, and continued her work as a tutor and moderator of weekly conversation classes at local libraries in Clearwater. In 2012 she was recognized as “Volunteer of the Year” by the Literacy Council of Upper Pinellas County. “My students come to America to find a better life and to escape poverty, persecution, fear, and injustice,” she said. “This ministry is most gratifying because they gain self-respect, security and a chance to accomplish their goals.” Working one-on-one with six students per week, her persevering efforts helped them to complete needed education and citizenship requirements. She always concluded her tutoring sessions by saying “I love you” to each student in his or her native language.

When Sister Merita retired and joined the Chardon community in 2018, she devoted herself to the ministry of prayer, presence and praise. She especially appreciated the presence and assistance of all who continued to share her life journey. Sister was a prayerful woman whose gentle, grateful spirit and simple manner of life revealed her love for God and her reverence for others. May she delight in the eternal presence of our good and loving God.