

Death Notice

SISTER MARIA ZITA ND 4435
(formerly Sister Maria Carlinda)

Zida Margarida BACKES

Holy Cross Province, Passo Fundo, RS, Brazil

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| Date and Place of Birth: | March 24, 1927 | Tapera, RS |
| Date and Place of Profession: | July 18, 1950 | Passo Fundo, RS |
| Date and Place of Death: | August 25, 2022 | Casa Betânia, Não Me Toque, RS |
| Date and Place of Burial: | August 26, 2022 | Santa Cruz Cemetery, Passo Fundo, RS |



On the day of Sister Maria Zita's funeral, the Gospel told the parable of the wise and foolish virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Like the wise virgins, Sister Maria Zita filled her lamp with oil during her 95 years of life and 72 years of religious profession. Therefore she happily set out to meet her "bridegroom" to whom she had been devoted and faithful servant throughout her life.

Zida Margarida Backes was the second among the ten children born to Guilherme and Ida Backes. As one of the eldest, she was responsible for the care of her younger siblings, a responsibility she carried out with love and dedication. After the birth of her youngest sister, feeling called to Religious Life, Zida entered the Novitiate in Passo Fundo, on July 14, 1948, and received the name Sister M. Carlinda. Later, she changed her religious name to Sister Maria Zita.

After her first profession, Sister completed her basic education and then engaged in various household tasks such as food preparation, environment cleaning, sewing, and handicrafts. Witnessing as a happy religious woman always available to serve, Sister Maria Zita carried out her ministry in schools, hospitals, seminaries, missions, and homes for elderly, and at the Hotel Villa Maria Regina in Rome. As Eucharistic Minister, she appreciated the apostolate of prayer as well as her visits to the sick. Sister won everyone over with her cordiality and friendliness.

Sister Maria Zita valued community life. She was assiduous, cheerful and always ready to help wherever necessary, both in community activities or in lending a hand to any sister in need. Sister's welcoming, transparent, and joyful personality as well as the prayerful spirit, were an example to the many people with whom she came in contact.

As a lifelong learner, Sister Maria Zita took her ongoing formation seriously. She participated in meetings and cultivated her spiritual life. In 1985, during one of these ongoing formation meetings, she composed and recorded a prayer entitled *My song to my God* which portrayed her spiritual journey. In her prayer, Sister recognized, praised, and thanked God for His love and the wonders He had done, blessing her with innumerable gifts, talents and the ability to serve. She concluded her prayer by saying: "My soul glorifies the Lord, for His love is forever".

Sister Maria Zita had been bedridden since mid-June. Although she occasionally showed a slight improvement, most of the time she showed no reaction. On August 25, surrounded by the care and affection of her sisters and caregivers, Sister Maria Zita went to meet the God, whom she had loved so much in life. May Sister continue her eternal hymn of praise and gratitude to the good and provident God and intercede for all those who were witnesses to her life devoted to the service of the Kingdom of God.