



## Obituary

**Sr Ehrengard Benken OP**

**12.11.1928 -14.03.2022**



*Through the gateway to life  
into the light - to God  
my love!*



Sr Ehrengard was born on 12 November 1928 in Ehren, near Lönigen, in the diocese of Münster, Germany. At her baptism, her parents, Emma and Heinrich Benken, named her Erna Anna. She grew up on her parents' farm with five siblings, with whom she maintained contact throughout her life.

After primary school, from 1935 to 1943, she attended a vocational school for home economics until 1946, and in 1949, after a further year at an agricultural and business school, she qualified as a certified home economist.

Sr Ehrengard's desire to enter the convent and go to the mission matured over many years. She entered our Congregation in Neustadt am Main on 1 February 1952. At her reception on 7 October 1952, she received the name Ehrengard, an expression of her bond with the place of her birth. On the Feast of the Holy Rosary, 7 October 1953, Sr Ehrengard, together with two other Sisters, made First Profession in Neustadt, and on 21 November 1956 her Perpetual Profession.

In January 1954, Sr. Ehrengard went with a group of young Sisters to the Catholic Rural College in Freckenhorst, Westphalia, where she worked as a home economist and instructor for 15 years. During this time, she attended the business college, from which she graduated as a state-certified home economist, trainer and housekeeping manager.

After our Congregation withdrew from the apostolate in Freckenhorst in 1969, Sr Ehrengard went to Volkersberg, where she was in charge of housekeeping and training at the Rural College of the Diocese of Würzburg, with a five-year interruption, until 2002. During the time of interruption, she temporarily took over the kitchen management in our communities at the rehabilitation centre in Neustadt and the hospital in Flörsheim in order to bridge staff shortages.

Even during her so-called retirement in Neustadt from 2002 until shortly before her death, she brought all her experience, competence and energy to the community, guests and parish.

Home economics and education were Sr Ehrengard's passion, apostolate and mission. She was passionate about imparting the skills and love of the home economics ministry to young women. In total, she had supported and accompanied more than 150 trainees, so that, with good examination results, they also had good chances for their professional life.

Together with her team, she easily managed the organisation of celebrations, conferences, training courses, family retreats, etc. with up to 400 meals per day. Nothing was ever too much for her, so that guests felt comfortable and were strengthened in body and soul.

For her commitment and life's work, she was awarded the certificate of honour of the Free State of Bavaria by the then Secretary of State, Barbara Stamm, in 1992. In 1998, on the occasion of her 70th birthday, she received the St. Bruno Medal of the Diocese of Würzburg from the then Rector of Volkensberg.

With her talent for creating and organising, she enjoyed taking on challenges throughout her life, trying out new things and leading them to success in her determined and calm manner.

She was obliging and reliable in large and small things, so that, in addition to these tasks, she was also given the office of Superior at Volkensberg and that of Provincial Councillor for the German Area of the Congregation. If someone, whether a fellow Sister or a guest, thanked her for her work, Sr. Ehrengard would reply simply and modestly: "That is not worth mentioning."

Sr Ehrengard was a prayerful woman. During lunchtime especially, she spent a lot of time in the chapel to be there before God. Ultimately, she prepared herself to meet her God in death. She created her memorial card herself and thus gave a last testimony of her faith in and her relationship with God.

Sr Ehrengard was still completely independent until her fall at the end of 2021, working at the sewing machine and reliably providing the daily door service. Despite initial good healing successes, she never recovered. Sr Ehrengard was never a woman of great words. In her sleep and very quietly she died on the night of 14 March 2022, consciously and well prepared.

We are grateful for Sr Ehrengard's life in our Congregation and her tireless work for the glory of God and a blessing for so many people. May she now live in the light of God and be a powerful advocate for us all.

*RIP*