



Obituary

Sr Fidelia Wilp OP

09.12.1938 – 04.08.2023



*My whole being exults in this eternal embrace with you and all creation
and in deep gratitude I come to do your will.*

Here I am Lord. Amen.

(From a Magnificat found in one of Sr Fidelia's books.)

Sr Fidelia was born on 09 December 1938 to Joseph and Maria Wilp in Emsdetten, Diocese of Munster. She was named Maria Franziska at baptism. She had three siblings, brothers Rudi and Werner, and her sister Helene. She had seven and a half years of primary schooling; then, at the age of 14, began working in a factory. She worked there for nine years. The War had ended, and times were hard for everyone, so the siblings had to work together to help support the family. During these years she became involved in the Catholic Youth Movement which had a profound impact on her faith. She began to realize that God was calling her to religious life.

At the age of twenty-three she entered the Oakford Congregation in Neustadt, received the habit in 1961, made her first profession on 05 May 1963, and then came to South Africa where she made her final profession in 1966.

After completing the National Senior Certificate, she trained as a Registered Nurse, Midwife and Clinical Care Administrator and Instructor. She gained a certificate in theology from the Theological Education by Extension College (TEEC), a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing through the University of South Africa (UNISA) and a Diploma in Human Development, Counselling and Spirituality from St Anselm's, England. She worked at Marifont, Osindisweni, Blessed Gerard Care Centre, St Francis Care Centre, Oakford Clinic and Ekukhanyeni AIDS Centre. She kept abreast of the developments in the treatment of HIV/AIDS and its related diseases. She shared this knowledge with her staff at the clinic and the AIDS Centre, giving time and attention to carers, particularly those who worked in home-based care. While working at the Oakford Clinic she sometimes came across school children who were infected with HIV. Parents had forbidden them to talk about it to anyone for fear

of the stigma that went with it. However, she managed to gain the trust and cooperation of some families, helping them to ensure healthy lives for their children.

As a Dominican she devoted much of her life to study, both professional and spiritual, to the ministry of healing, to preaching God's love and compassion by her service to others and by her faithfulness to prayer and the religious life.

Sr Fidelia sought perfection in everything she did, but this did not always go down well with others. She was a tough woman who expected much from herself and much from others. She pushed herself to achieve and wanted others to do the same. She had no respect for idleness.

As she grew older, she began to struggle with poor health. She underwent surgery for her back problem and was later diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. This was very difficult for her to accept. As a nurse she knew the implications, but God gave her time to make peace with her situation and to prepare for what was to come. On the evening of the 04 August, she finally let go of all her expectations and wishes and surrendered her life to the merciful love of God. May she be rewarded for all she has been to God's people and for all the love she shared with us.

May she continue to intercede for our Congregation as we move into the future in faith.

"... You should have eyes to the rear, to see whether you are being enticed back to things you have abandoned, and eyes in front, to see whether you are like the apostle, surpassing yourselves in what lies ahead of you, namely spiritual things, and eyes to the left, to see that you do not lose heart when things are difficult, and eyes to the right, to see that you do not become proud when things are going well."

(Humbert of Romans)

RIP