



Obituary

Sr Ernestine Zeißner OP

15 March 1931 – 20 March 2026

*The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
Even though I walk through the
darkest valley, I fear no evil.*

Psalm 23



Sr Ernestine was born on 15 March 1931, the third of four children, in Wasserlosen, a small village near Schweinfurt, and was christened Anthelma.

After finishing primary school in 1945, she helped out on her parents' farm and attended agricultural college, graduating in 1947. She then worked for several years at the Obbach estate and as a domestic helper at the Juliusspital in Würzburg. It was there that she decided to pursue a career in nursing and completed her training from 1955 to 1957.

After completing her training, she joined the Dominican Sisters in Neustadt as a qualified nurse in 1957, was given the name Sr Ernestine, and took her vows on 2 May 1959.

For eight years, she worked as a nurse in outpatient care in Neustadt and Erlach.

In 1967, she was transferred as a nurse to the order's own Marienkrankenhaus in Flörsheim, where she carried out her blessed work for 41 years until 2008 – for a long time on night duty.

She then worked until 2014 with the sick sisters at the convent in Dießen am Ammersee, whom she cared for with great devotion until her death.

She carried out her profession with great enthusiasm and diligence, no matter where she was posted. She was a reliable, competent nurse with a genuine concern for people: a person of 'action', without many words, who cared deeply for the well-being of those entrusted to her. She was so popular as a nurse that a little girl was even named after her.

From 2014 to 2020, she spent her retirement back in Flörsheim.

She remained in constant contact with her siblings and their families, a bond nurtured through mutual visits. To her nephews and nieces, who visited her regularly and took her out in her wheelchair in the final years until shortly before her death, she is remembered as a warm and open-hearted aunt who took an interest in their lives and those of their families.

In her spare time, she was creative, knitting for her fellow sisters or for the mission bazaar in Flörsheim, embroidering beautiful cards or making Christmas decorations. As her eyesight began to fail even before her stroke and no ophthalmologist could help her, this marked the end of her beloved creative handicrafts.

On the other hand, in her free time she loved spending time outdoors in nature and going for walks, especially during holidays with her fellow sisters in the mountains, where she proved to be in good physical shape.

She was a sociable person, played a lot and enjoyed telling stories, especially funny anecdotes.

Her fellow sisters remember her as cheerful, warm-hearted and always ready to help, as well as an interested and attentive listener. One fellow sister still recalls how, when she entered the convent in Neustadt, she was warmly greeted and welcomed by Sr Ernestine.

In May 2020, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, Sr Ernestine suffered a severe stroke which left her with significant impairments: she was paralysed on her right side, confined to a wheelchair as a result, and could only speak with great difficulty. From then on, she lived at the St. Martin Lohr nursing home alongside other sisters in need of care. There, despite her serious illness, she faithfully accompanied dying sisters with her prayers. She could sit by their bedsides for hours, rosary in hand.

From October 2023, she lived in the community at the Kist retirement home – cared for by her fellow sisters. During her final years, it was difficult for those who had known her from earlier times and were close to her to watch her suffer from the loss of her mobility and, above all, from her eventual complete loss of speech. Despite her deep faith, it became increasingly difficult for her to endure and accept her health limitations. And so she longed to die and return home to her God.

Two days after her 95th birthday, which she celebrated in good spirits with her fellow sisters, she suffered another severe stroke, as a result of which she died on the morning of Friday, 20 March – lovingly cared for by her fellow sisters and the nursing staff right up until the end.

With gratitude and appreciation, we look back on her life as a nun, as a fellow sister and relative, and on her dedication to the people she served as a nurse.

Thank you, dear Sr Ernestine, for your rich life spent amongst us.

May you now, freed from your physical suffering, find peace and fulfilment with God.