



Obituary

Sr. Ildefonsa Grätz OP

**5 October 1933 –
14 January 2026**



*I want to thank you
with all my heart,
to sing and play before the angels
and play before the angels.
Psalm 138*

Sr. Ildefonsa was born on 5 October 1933 as the fifth of six daughters in Rütchenhausen, a small village near Schweinfurt, and was christened Maria.

After completing primary school in 1948, she worked on her parents' farm before moving to Heidingsfeld to live with her relatives and train as a dressmaker in Würzburg from 1950 to 1953. During this time, she was involved in Catholic youth work in Heidingsfeld. She made a lasting impression on the young people at that time as a friendly person.

At the 1954 Catholic Day in Fulda, she came into contact with the Dominican Sisters of Neustadt and was very impressed by one of the sisters. This awakened in her the desire to go on mission to South Africa. So she entered Neustadt in 1955, where she took her vows on 3 May 1957. Although her family was very religious and devout – some of her aunts were sisters and there were also several priests in her family – her decision to enter the convent came as a great surprise, as she was considered the prettiest of the "Grätz' girls" and always sewed beautiful dresses for herself.

However, to her disappointment, instead of going to South Africa, she was sent to Volkersberg and assigned to domestic work. She was the one of the Grätz sisters who least wanted to be a housewife. She worked for several years at Volkersberg and then in Dießen.

In 1971, she spent eight months in Paderborn on a housekeeping course, which further qualified her for work in housekeeping and commercial kitchens. After that, until 1990, she worked as a housekeeper and dietician in the kitchen of our Marienkrankenhaus hospital in Flörsheim, and then again in the kitchen and sewing room at the convent in Dießen until her retirement. Due to health problems caused by rheumatism, gout and dementia, she moved to the St. Martin senior citizens' centre in Lohr in 2017. From September 2023, she lived in the community at the Kist retirement home, surrounded by her fellow sisters who cared for her.

Over the years, she maintained a very close relationship with her biological sisters and their families, which was cultivated mainly through many letters and mutual visits. Even in Kist, she received regular visits from her sister Anni and her nieces and nephews until her death.

Being musically gifted, she learned from her father as a child to play the organ, which she did with great enthusiasm and enjoyment: with this charisma, she enriched life in the communities as an outstanding organist and singer. She chose the songs for the services and organised the prayer times with care and sensitivity. Until the end, she enjoyed singing together, even when she could no longer sing herself.

Although she was perceived as competent in her professional activities, she was at the same time cautious, sometimes fearful, and sought encouragement from her fellow sisters. She was always ready to fulfil the tasks and assignments entrusted to her and was considered very loyal and reliable.

The piety instilled in her by her family helped her to accept the adversities of life. Although she was plagued by pain from various illnesses, she accepted them trustingly as God's will and as a sacrifice for him – out of love for him. Her fellow sisters described her as open-hearted, approachable and humane. She also had a great sense of humour and loved to laugh.

Her caring attitude towards the people around her and her own modesty remained essential to her until the end. Her very joyful and happy charisma, her radiant smile and her great gratitude are qualities that will be remembered. She had been ready for some time and longed to die and return home to her God. After a difficult period, her wish was granted on the afternoon of 14 January 2026.

We look back with gratitude and appreciation on her life as a religious, as a fellow sister, and on her dedication to the people she loved to serve.

Thank you, dear Sr. Ildefonsa, for your rich life among us.
May you now experience life in abundance with God.