

Death Notice

SISTER MARIA HELENA ND 6934

Maria Helena FERNANDES DO AMARAL



Our Lady Aparecida Province, Canoas, RS – Brazil

Date and Place of Birth:	December 6, 1941	Portão, RS
Date and Place of Profession:	January 27, 1979	Canoas, RS
Date and Place of Death:	July 26, 2024	Recanto Aparecida, Canoas, RS
Date and Place of Burial:	July 27, 2024	Convent Cemetery, Canoas, RS

“I called you, and I will be with you until the end.”

On July 26, 2024, at 5:40 a.m., the Lord visited the Our Lady Aparecida Province for the fifth time this year, calling Sister Maria Helena to eternal life.

Maria Helena was the third of ten children born to José Fernandes do Amaral and Valy Santa Fernandes do Amaral. Although her birth certificate officially states she was born on December 6, 1941, oral history and her baptism certificate, dated May 16, 1940, suggest she was actually born on April 11, 1940. Growing up in a rural environment and a deeply Christian family, Maria Helena developed a profound love for God, nature, and all of His creations.

Maria Helena joined religious life as an adult. On January 27, 1979, she professed her vows together with the sisters of her group, embracing the vocational motto, “I called you, and I will be with you until the end.” She lived this motto faithfully throughout her 45 years of consecrated religious life.

Sister Maria Helena was a joy to be around. She cherished her relationships, her prayer life, and was always present for Holy Mass and for community gatherings. She had great apostolic zeal and, as long as her health permitted, she visited the sick in their homes, offering them the comfort of the Word of God and the Eucharist.

She dedicated her life to domestic activities, playing a fundamental role in the well-being and quality of life of the sisters. As a cook, she provided nutritious meals for the community. She kept the house clean and organized, and her diligent care left the environment and clothing fresh and fragrant. In addition to her domestic duties, she excelled in handcrafts and sewing, creating beautiful embroidered and crocheted towels that brightened the house and brought joy to the communities she served.

Since 2016, Sister resided in the Recanto Aparecida community. She maintained a loving bond with her family, who visited her frequently, especially as her health declined. In recent years, she was confined to a wheelchair due to multiple myeloma and Parkinson's disease, among other health issues. Despite the tremors in her hands from her illness, she found great joy in coloring pictures.

In the last year, her physical condition gradually declined until she finally met the One whom she loved and served so faithfully as a Sister of Notre Dame.