



## Obituary

**Sr M Benita Hummels OP**

**14 .08.1938 - 20.06.2024**



*“And when the chief shepherd appears,  
you will win the crown of glory  
that never fades away.”*

(1 Peter 5:4)

Ursula Christine Katharina Hummels, known in the convent as Sr Benita, was born on 14 August 1938 in Winterswijk, Holland, where her father had a business. She was the eldest of five children of German parents, Frank and Gertrud Hummels. Her family avoided being imprisoned in a concentration camp, crossing the border into Germany illegally at the end of World War II. They were left with nothing, just two rooms on a farm.

She attended school in Ramsdorf in the diocese of Münster, completing eight years of primary education and three years at a commercial school. She worked as an office clerk for eight years before joining the Dominican Sisters of Oakford in Neustadt. Her original interest had been in the Sisters of St Charles de Foucauld, but that Congregation did not seem to offer what she was looking for.

Sr Benita completed her postulancy and novitiate in Neustadt, making her first profession in October 1963. Before travelling to South Africa in 1964, she spent some time in Flörsheim and Freckenhorst with our Sisters working there. Her final profession was at Oakford in 1968.

She studied music under Sr Regina at Oakford, obtaining a licentiate in music through Trinity College, London, as well as a teachers' singing certificate through the Royal School of Music. She taught music at Oakford, at St Catherine's in Empangeni and at St Mary's in Virginia. She made good use of sabbatical time at the

"Casa di Studio" in Rome, and later at the "Recollectio-Haus" in Münsterschwarzach in Germany.

Sr Benita's passion was the Good Shepherd Parish in New Farm which was later known as Phoenix. Before the church was built services were held under a tree or in the library. She saw the parish grow from nothing, and the development of the Catholic faith among the Indian community in the area. Initially she did a lot of walking, but when the area to be traversed grew too large she acquired the use of a vehicle from the Archdiocese of Durban, once she had learned to drive. Some of the Sisters from Oakford where she lived at the time, among them Sr Clarissa, helped with catechism as the number of parishioners grew.

Despite having no formal training in pastoral and catechetical work, Sr Benita committed herself to the work of evangelization. Over the years she worked with around 300 families in Basic Christian Communities. She valued the collaboration with Lutherans, Prebyterians and Muslims in the area. At the time of her death, aged 85 and still inspired, she was preparing for a parish mission as well as supervising the catechism teachers.

Next year the parish celebrates its fortieth anniversary. Sr Benita will be in the heavenly choir giving thanks for her own commitment over so many years and for the life of faith of the many people who have belonged and belong to Good Shepherd Parish.

May she rejoice in her heavenly reward, welcomed by the One whom she proclaimed so generously and lovingly, and be an intercessor for us. Rest in peace dear Sr Benita!

*RIP*