

In all discretion, she left a mark

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Hery Alcaraz was born on March 16, 1939 in Tacambaro, Mexico. After spending a little more than a year in Chicago, USA in the '60s, she flew to Canada to settle in Montreal and spend most of her life there. She passed away in Montreal on August 5.

83 years of life... What is that compared to eternity? *How beautiful it is to lose one's life for Life!* (St. Josemaría) This is the story of Hery Alcaraz from 1939 to 2022: simple, discreet, and happy through the years. Her life consisted in being positive, discreet, and attentive, both in family life and at work. An assistant numerary of Opus Dei, she enjoyed making life pleasant through the little things that add flavour to daily life and inspired others to do the same, taking the same approach to their own work. She had great powers of observation and a keen sense of humour. That good humour made itself known through timely comments, unexpected jokes, services offered at precisely the right moment, and the way she took the lead. That was Hery.

The week before she left for the hospital, her attention was on someone at home who was not

feeling well and, of course, the plants she knew inside and out: their need for light, shade, potato peels in the soil, and a thousand and one other tricks she would discover online. Our garden was a little palace, and we missed it this summer. Her absence was noticeable in the house too, where we liked to see her beautiful, well-tended plants.

She saw everything and had great capacity of observation. She was aware of everything. She grasped messages, suggestions, and needs immediately. And she took action... Always quietly, but always present, right up to the last moment.

“My Father watches over me.”

Hery’s life shows that, while it requires a certain alertness, love does not make much noise. This was clear up to the very end. When we told her that she had advanced cancer, her face remained serene.

The look in her eyes said, “What God wants, I want! My Father is watching over me. He knows what is best for me. God does not abandon his children.” The next few weeks passed as naturally as before, despite the increasingly obvious signs of the disease's progression. It is heroic “to die in a good bed, unnoticed...but to die of love-sickness,” St. Josemaría said (*The Way*, 743). She understood this. For years she had been suffering from arthritis, headaches and other ailments. It was hardly noticeable: she made no complaints. She was strong and discreet, her attention always on others.

Without extravagance, Hery always appeared well-dressed and knew how to inspire those around her, sometimes suggesting to one or another a small detail that would enhance her appearance at home or away. She loved simplicity, beauty and cleanliness.

A serene presence

Even the neighbourhood cats were comfortable in her presence. They could feel her softness and would come close to her to lie at her feet or on the balcony right next to her. She knew how to coax them and provide them with a good environment, as she did so well with us, as a family.

An oasis of serenity, Hery has left her mark...

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