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Sister M. Richardis Bartodziej

Sister M. Richardis quietly closed her gentle life on Saturday July 18, at 11:45 a.m. in the Motherhouse Infirmary. Sister had been in the Infirmary for the past two years due to anemia and uremia. Although she alternated between bed and wheel chair, she was moderately comfortable until the last days. On Thursday an acute attack of uremic poisoning indicated a critical condition. She was anointed and received Holy Viaticum on Friday, and thereafter drifted into semicoma which deepened with the passing hours. - At the time of her death Sister Richardis was seventy-seven years of age and had lived fifty-four years in religion.

The funeral took place Tuesday, July 21st. The Most Rev. Martin D. McNamara presided at the Solemn Requiem Mass celebrated in the Motherhouse chapel by Rev. Gervase Brinkman. In addition to the assisting clergy, Rev. Casimir Zelinski, O.Carm., a former pupil of the deceased, was present in the sanctuary. - Interment was made at Resurrection Cemetery, Father Gervase officiating at the grave, assisted by Father Casimir. Six nephews of Sister Richardis were pallbearers: Doctor Edward Zimmerman, Dr. John Gates, Robert Roback, Alfred P. Bart, Herbert Bart, and Frank Klein.

Sister M. Richardis, Golden jubilarian in 1956, was the former Valeria Bartodziej. She entered the Community from St. Stanislas Parish, Chicago. Her teaching career spanned the years from 1906 to 1950. Of these 44 years, 23 were devoted to Holy Cross School, Joliet, where for five years she was also Superior and Principal. She spent fourteen years in Chicago: six at St. Wenceslas, six at St. Francis DeSales and two at St. Francis Xavier. Five years at St. Stephen, Streator, and two at St. Joseph, Elgin, complete her teaching record.

From 1950 to 1959 Sister served for two additional years as portress at St. Wenceslas, Chicago; the remaining seven years were spent at the Motherhouse.

Loved and respected by all, Sister Richardis was outstandingly gentle and kind, courteous and refined. A competent teacher and sound guide, she was well remembered in Joliet for her long years of service at Holy Cross school; and many of her pupils, among them Father Casimir Zelinsky and Doctor Bernard Zaworski, through the years remained loyal friends. Father George Dzurzyo, pastor at Streator, was also a former pupil of hers, and visited her faithfully during her years at the Motherhouse. All testified to her wholesome influence over the minds and hearts of her pupils.

Sister was deeply interested in seminarians and made it one of her missionary activities to remember them with special prayers. It was a great joy to her when several of her own nephews decided to study for the priesthood.

Sister's love and devotion to Our Lady were an important part of her spiritual life, and the rosary was a favorite prayer of hers. She often recited it during her hours alone in the Infirmary. At times, a casual visitor to her sick room would report that she was sleeping, but the nurse would observe the rosary beads slipping through her fingers and knew that Sister was absorbed in prayer. Though her heart had ever kept watch, these were days of preparation, and when the call came, Sister was ready "to enter into life." - May the light and peace of eternity be hers!