

+ 368. Sister M. Engelbert Borer
+ January 21, 1960
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Sister M. Engelbert Borer

Sister Engelbert's passing ended almost three years of the rigorous testing that sickness brings. A heart attack in February of 1957 took her from school. This was followed in turn by a partial stroke with temporary loss of speech, severe stroke with permanent loss of speech, and the last year, complete paralysis of the throat, then final cerebral thrombosis and pneumonia. Through all this, the sturdy soul of Sister Engelbert persevered with courage and sweetness undiminished.

The former Helen Borer of Lindsey, Nebraska, Sister had entered the convent December 27, 1912, and had made her first vows in 1915 and perpetual vows in 1919. She had taught for 42-½ years in schools staffed by the Community. Twenty of these years she spent in Chicago--St. Francis Xavier, St. Boniface, St. Clement, Ss. Peter and Paul, St. Francis DeSales. She taught for eight years in the grades at St. Mary's, Columbus, for three years serving also as principal. She further devoted seven years to the public school at Green Creek, Illinois, as teacher and principal; and two years as superior and principal at St. Denis in Benton, Missouri. St. Joseph, Freeport, and St. John, Joliet, complete the list of her placements.

A hard-working and community-minded religious, Sister Engelbert was a careful and conscientious teacher, leading her classes on in learning and in wise self-discipline. All children merited her fond attention, but, a farm girl herself, she loved the country and was at her happy best when teaching children in farming communities. With them she understood the ways of "wind and weather"; she taught them to pray for farmers and their needs--for rain in drought, for sunshine in over-heavy rains, for warmth in a too cool summer. Even in the Infirmary, Sister still wanted to contribute her "farmer's share" to the work of the world, and often spoke of wanting to go on mission--"to a small country place like Leonore."

As a religious, Sister was serenely mindful of her Rule, truly Franciscan in her spirit of poverty, and faithful in her prayer life. She loved the Rosary, had a special devotion to St. Joseph, and preserved a thoroughly Catholic view in the trusting use of Holy Water--had it not been blessed by the Church, and was it not a means for obtaining many graces? On recovering speech after her partial stroke, her first words were, "Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee." And when the long final trial of paralysis of the throat deprived her of the Eucharist, her spiritual communion as Father brought the Blessed Sacrament to the Infirmary was a visible yearning and adoring reverence. With others, her friendly voice now silenced, she continued intercourse by her smile, and light in her eyes, her alert interest in those about her. In this loving prelude she prepared herself for the everlasting union and communion of heaven, and advanced toward it with joy.

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Again the Solemn Requiem Mass in the Motherhouse chapel, deferred to Monday, January 25th, Bishop McNamara presided, with Rev. John Doyle of St. Paul's and Rev. Leonard Guz of Holy Cross Church as chaplains, Rev. John Skrodenis of St. Mary Nativity assistant priest at the throne, and Rev. William Condon as master of ceremonies. The Franciscan Fathers, Rev. Angelo Zwiesler, Rev. Reinhold Link, and Rev. Benedict McCarthy were officers of the Mass. - Sister was laid to rest at Resurrection Cemetery, Father Angelo reciting the prayers at the grave.

Sister Engelbert is survived in the Community by a niece, Sister Bertha Ann, and a cousin, Sister Wilhelma.