

SISTER M. ARTHESMA, O.S.F.
June 27, 1963

It was Obedience Day at Our Lady of Angels, and Sister Arthesma, a patient since May 27th, listened from her room. Her name was not called. Later, as though to verify the fact, she asked, "Did I get an Obedience?"

Sister Peter hesitated a moment. "I think you already got your Obedience, Sister," she said. Sister Arthesma made no comment. Both of them knew.

But knowing the truth and accepting it were two different things. After all, it was hard at fifty-two to think of life closing. She had so wanted to just "finish the year" at Des Plaines where she had returned after her major surgery in the spring. She had put up a gallant struggle from after Easter until the end of May, but even her dogged determination could not see her through, and on May 27th she left Des Plaines, left the classroom, for good. Thirty years of teaching were finished.

Resignation did not come easy, but it did come; and on June 15th Sister Arthesma began her last retreat, composed and resigned. She was losing ground physically, but she was still able to attend Mass in a wheel chair for the first three days. She was alert for her last anointing which Father Roderick Misey, C.P., administered, and at the retreat's close she was still able to enter into the general happiness that attended Sister Cordelia's Golden Jubilee. "Well, she made it!" Sister Arthesma remarked, and if she thought of the golden years she herself would never see, she gave no indication.

It was obvious by then that the end would come soon. From late afternoon on Wednesday the 26th, there was no response. Her eyes, glazed and fixed, remained open. She could not reply to the prayers, nor respond when Mother Borromeo pressed the crucifix to her lips. Sister Arthesma was dying -- it was only a matter of hours, and as far as anyone could tell, Sister had already slipped beyond the realm of conscious life.

When the end finally came Thursday evening, she was surrounded not only by her Community, but also by her own family -- her father, two sisters and three brothers kept vigil with Father Antl and the Sisters. It was 8:10 when Sister Peter gently closed the eyes that would never again open on the world about her.

Eternity had begun for Sister Arthesma.

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!

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