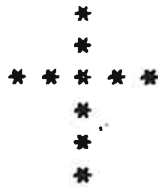


184. Sister Seraphine Decker
August 10, 1933



Sister Seraphine Decker

Shortly after two o'clock in the morning of August 10, 1933, Sister Seraphine Decker died at St. Joseph Hospital, Joliet after a painful and lingering illness. Sister Seraphine had been confined to the infirmary for more than three years. However, there were periods during this time when she felt well enough to be up and to follow the Community exercises and to assist with some of the lighter work in the infirmary. In June, 1932 although she was suffering very much at the time, Sister Seraphine made strenuous efforts to follow the exercises of the retreat which was conducted the last week of June. As the retreat advanced, her sufferings became more and more acute. She succeeded in finishing the retreat, however, but a day or so later she was obliged to take to bed, where she remained until the day of her death. As time went on there was no improvement in her condition, in fact, her suffering became more intense. The doctor did everything possible for her, but her condition was serious and the pain excessive. Besides carcinoma of the spine and a chronic heart disorder, she suffered severely from arthritis. After New Year of 1933 she asked to be permitted to go to the Kneipp Sanitarium in Rome City, Indiana. She was taken there on the 11th of January in the auto of Father Eligius, OFM. Sister Clotilde and Sister Consolata accompanied her there. She was given treatments, but evidently they proved too severe, for she became so much worse that word was sent from the Sanitarium to have her taken home as they could do nothing for her.

Just when this word had been received at the Motherhouse there had been a heavy snowfall. As soon as the roads became passable, however, the ambulance of Mr. Fred Dames went to bring Sister to Joliet. Sister Clotilde and Sister Gonzaga went to assist her on the journey home. Upon their arrival in Joliet, Sister Seraphine was brought directly to St. Joseph's Hospital and remained there until her death. Her suffering during all these months was intense. In the last two weeks of her life the excruciating pain seemed to subside. She remained conscious to the end. She prayed much and suffered patiently. It was edifying to see her try to form the words and answer to the prayers. She made this effort even to the last hours of her life when she could no longer move her lips. At the time of her death she was in the fifty-fifth year of her age and the thirty-fifth year of her religious life.

Although the funeral arrangements had been made for the morning of August 12 and the notices to this effect sent out to the Missions, upon the advice of Mr. James B. McCann, the undertaker, the funeral was held Aug. 11. Mr. McCann advised this because of Sister's condition and the very great heat just at this time. The cancer had opened some days before Sister died and this together with the heat made it advisable to bury Sister a day sooner.

Sister Seraphine was buried in St. John's Cemetery, Joliet. Rev. Bede Carberry, O.F.M. assisted by Rev. Paul Eberle, O.F.M. and Rev. Jesus Carrion, OFM officiated at the obsequies.