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Sister M. Eustacia Deragon

Our Sister M. Eustacia Deragon, who came to the Community from Holy Family, Bayfield, Wisconsin, and has been serving the past six years at the sister-mission of Red Cliff, went home to God from her hospital bed at Ashland on Sunday evening, April 20, at 6:10.

Sister had been ill only ten days. She had caught a cold which developed rapidly into virus pneumonia, and the doctor ordered her taken to St. Joseph's Hospital at Ashland, because of complicating dropsical and heart conditions. On Saturday, the 19th, a decided change occurred, and Sister Patrick phoned Joliet to inform Reverend Mother Borromeo. She being in retreat at Rochester, Minnesota, Mother Immaculate and Sister Gervaise started the next morning for Ashland, hoping still to see Sister alive. This was not to be, however, for Sister's death occurred five hours before their scheduled arrival at 11:10 that night.

Sister knew how dangerously ill she was and was well prepared to die. Father Fridolin Petrusiewicz, O.F.M., chaplain at the hospital, anointed her. The Franciscan Fathers at Red Cliff and Bayfield visited her, Father Hildebert especially making numerous trips in chauffeuring Sister Patrick and Sister Alfred.

Sister Patrick and Sister Aurelia remained with Sister Eustacia all night on Saturday; a trained nurse was also on duty. Sister was conscious most of the time, but on Sunday was in great pain and was so weak she told Father she would not be able to say her prayers that day. She died as she had lived--quietly, peacefully.

The Lisko Funeral Home, Ashland, was called to take care of the body. Mother Immaculate, with Sister Patrick and Father Hildebert, selected the coffin, and when all was finished, Sister looked lovely.

According to the original arrangement the body was to be taken to Joliet for burial, but owing to the urgent request of relatives, Father Regis phoned Mother Borromeo asking that Sister be brought to Bayfield for a Requiem Mass. In the end it was agreed that all would be taken care of in Bayfield.

The body was brought to Holy Family Convent Monday afternoon and was taken to the Church on Tuesday afternoon at three o'clock. Father Regis and the servers met the corpse at the entrance, and the children's choir sang the Miserere. Prayers with all the school children followed, and afterward the Sisters stayed on, two at a time, to pray. At 4:15 all the Sisters recited the Office of the Dead. Both Monday and Tuesday evening Father Hildebert recited the rosary, many of Sister's relatives attending.

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For the Solemn Requiem Mass on April 23rd, Father Hildebert Klitz, O.F.M., was celebrant; Father Regis Watts, O.F.M., and Father Fridolin Petrusiewicz, O.F.M., were deacon and subdeacon. The school children of Red Cliff and Bayfield sang the Requiem. Burial was made at Holy Family Cemetery, many of Sister's relatives attending.

After the funeral all the Sisters returned to the Red Cliff Convent, where Sister Eustacia's relatives brought them dinner in baskets and boxes - a kindness which was greatly appreciated.

Sister Eustacia's fifty-five years of domestic work constitutes one edifying record. Wherever she went she gave the same cheerful, quiet, efficient service--her meals were well prepared and tempting, her baking was invariably successful.

Sister began her mission life at St. Boniface, Chicago, in 1903 and returned in 1938, spending a total of 15 years there. She served at the Motherhouse and the Guardian Angel Home for eleven years, and St. John's and St. Joseph's added ten more years to her Joliet record. St. Francis De Sales, Chicago; Sacred Heart, Hubbard Woods; St. Mary, Rock Island; St. Mary, Columbus; and Immaculate Conception, Kankakee, were additional missions up to her last appointment at St. Francis, Red Cliff - her home area. Here, after the long absence of fifty years she renewed old friendships and endeared herself to her younger relatives. Small wonder that "the North" was reluctant to give her up for Joliet burial. And it was fitting that she was permitted to remain with her own. There they may visit her grave, offer their whispered prayers, and carry away with them the inspiration of her beautiful life and edifying example. - Gentle, kind, and industrious, loyal to her faith, regular in her prayers, a lover of the liturgy, and zealously mission-minded, she did all she could to encourage her people in the regular practice of the faith she held so dear.