

*For those who have been faithful, O Lord,
life is not ended, but merely changed.*

July 17, 1978

Dear Sisters,

As a very young Sister in 1933, Sister Marie Beth Dockter, then called Sister Charline, wrote her request of Mother Thomasine to renew her Profession of Vows. She quoted someone as saying, "The greatest thing about every Catholic is that he is one." Then she added, "The same thing, I think can be said of a religious. Every day I pray God to grant me the grace of final perseverance, so that, having had the honor of being called a Franciscan during life, I may still bear the title after death." Yesterday morning, July 16, 1978, at about 9:30, Sister Marie Beth died in the 48th year of her life as a Franciscan religious. Her prayer was answered just two weeks before her 69th birthday.

Last summer, as she had done for many previous summers, she volunteered to teach in the Reading Center. She wanted to complete her commitment for the summer, and so she had the pending surgery scheduled for the week following the closing date of the Center. It was on her 68th birthday last August 2 that Sister underwent the surgery that was to reveal terminal cancer. The coincidence of celebration of birth and revelation of imminent death touched her deeply. She embraced the latter courageously and willingly even as she had always been known to rejoice in the former, for Sister Marie Beth was a happy person. Her jovial spirit erupted constantly in a favorite joke meant to amuse her listeners. Life and death she embraced with joy. The thread of obedience was woven through both.

Born in Barton, Wisconsin, on the Franciscan feast of Our Lady of Angels, 1909, she was the daughter of John and Barbara Rodenkirch Dockter. Although her home parish was St. Adrian's, Chicago, she attended both the elementary and commercial schools of Sacred Heart, Englewood. She became a postulant on October 20, 1929. The following Feast of St. Clare saw her entrance into the novitiate. Her First Vows were pronounced on August 12, 1932; her Final Vows, three years later in 1935.

For 45 years she served in the active ministry of elementary teaching. She also assumed leadership as principal and offered her talent as organist wherever she was needed. Her first mission was Immaculate Conception in Columbus; her last was St. Mary's in Des Plaines. Between these two, she was asked to teach in 15 other grade schools staffed by our Congregation.

Sister Marie Beth is survived by one brother, Frank, of West Bend, Wisconsin; two aunts, Sister Prima Rodenkirch, SSND, and Rose Samuels; one niece, Charline Oehmen; and one nephew, Bud Jung. To each of them we offer our deepest sympathy and our promise of prayer as also to her classmates and friends, especially her friend of 62 years, Sister Dominic Marie Blanz, who spent countless hours at her bedside in the infirmary of Our Lady of Angels this past year. May God comfort each of you.

The Wake will be held at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home on Wednesday, July 19, from 2 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. When a Mass of Resurrection will be celebrated. A Scripture service will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Burial will be at 9:30 a.m. Thursday July 20, in St. Mary's Cemetery, Evergreen Park. Rev. Martin Farrell, Pastor of St. Mary's, Des Plaines, will be the celebrant.

Devotedly yours,
THE GOVERNING BOARD

