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Sister M. Stanislaus Droesler

Ven. Sister M. Stanislaus Droesler, a member of the community for eighty-five years and the senior member of our congregation for the twenty-nine years, this day closed her long and fruitful life, passing away peacefully at 2:10 this afternoon, Tuesday, October 14, 1952, in the Motherhouse Infirmary at the age of 97.

Sister Stanislaus, admitted on September 3, 1867 at the age of twelve, was the sixth postulant to enter our newly founded congregation. She celebrated in turn silver, golden, diamond jubilee, and she observed the seventy-fifth anniversary of her reception nine years before her death. Hers to date is the longest religious life in the history of our congregation.

Her active career, too, was the longest. Having as a girl entered St. John's school, where Mother Alfred was teaching, she had "met the test" before her entry, and, having donned the postulant garb, was sent out at once to help Sister Francis Shanahan and her companion to open St. Boniface School, Chicago. After fifteen years in various elementary schools, five years of which she was also superior, she was in 1882 appointed principal of St. Francis Academy, a position which she held with distinction for nineteen years. She also served in general community administration. She was secretary general three years, treasurer general six years, councillor six years, councillor and secretary general nine years, and school supervisor three years. In 1915 she was instrumental in forming the St. Francis Academy Alumnae Association and she acted as its moderator until 1921.

During the centenary year of the death of St. Francis (1927), Sister Stanislaus, then in the sixtieth year of her reception into the novitiate, was granted the privilege of a pilgrimage to Assisi. Sister Camilla Woermann was appointed her companion, and together they represented our Congregation at the tomb of our holy Father St. Francis. While abroad they visited not only Assisi, but Rome, Padua, and other cities of Italy, Germany, France and England. Their trip lasted from June 16 to October 25.

From 1926 to 1932 Sister was engaged in historical and literary work for the congregation. The last twelve years before retiring to the Infirmary in 1944, Sister had no assigned duty. She followed the community exercises, however, and kept herself occupied by reading, writing, and doing short---period portress duty.

When in 1944 she retired to the Infirmary because of her advanced age, she was still able for the most part to take care of herself, was still alert and interested in the life of the community, still gentle, pleasant, refined, and prayerful.

On December 9, 1951, she was seized with a heart attack. The following September she developed broncho pneumonia, and was anointed on the 18th. She continued critically ill and was again anointed on October 13th. The next afternoon she quietly fell asleep in the Lord. She had that morning still responded to Sister William's questions, assuring her that she was not suffering greatly and promising that she would "pray for us." She had said earlier that she was ready whenever God wished to call her.

Sister's life was the best eulogy one could offer. As pioneer educator, supervisor, administrator, retiree, here was a gracious and refined personality - a personality that was proof against the press of business, the responsibility of office, the corrosion of years and the strain of declining health. To her last hour, she was a "true lady, and a simple, sweet child." The Very Rev. Eligius Weir summarized it well when he wrote, "Besides being the perfect religious, Sister Stanislaus was always the most perfect little Lady. God bless her and may she rest in peace."

The funeral took place on Friday, October 17, at 8:15 a.m. His Excellency, the Most Rev. Martin D. McNamara, Bishop of Joliet presiding at the Solemn Requiem Mass, which was celebrated by Rev. Gervase Brinkman, O.F.M. Rev. Frank Dopak of St. Joseph's was deacon, and Rev. Alphonse Coan, O.F.M., subdeacon. Rt. Rev. Msgr. Gregory M. Cloos of St. Anthony's was among the priests in the Sanctuary.

Burial was made at Mt. Olivet Cemetery Joliet, Father Gervase officiating at the grave.