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Sister M. Octavia Eberhard

Some time before dawn on Wednesday morning, April 22, Sister M. Octavia answered God's call and entered eternity. Sister's death was caused by a coronary condition, for which she had been under the Doctor's care since December, 1954, when she was brought to the Motherhouse after a heart attack at Pesotum. Because Sister at times rested longer in the morning, her absence from chapel caused no special alarm. When Sister Eucheria went to her room after Mass, she found Sister had passed away. Sister Constance, nurse, estimated that death had occurred about three hours earlier, or about four o'clock. Father Gervase was called and he administered Extreme Unction.

Sister Octavia was the former Johanna Eberhard, who entered the convent in 1899 from St. Mary's, Columbus. At the time of her death she was in the seventy-fifth year of her age; she had celebrated the golden jubilee of her profession in 1952.

Funeral services were held in the Motherhouse chapel Friday, April 24. The Most Rev. Bishop Martin D. McNamara Presided at the Solemn Requiem Mass celebrated by Rev. Gervase Brinkman, O.F.M. The interment was made at Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

Sister Octavia's work in the Community was varied. Her teaching career extended from 1901 to 1946. Her first appointment was at St. Francis Xavier School, Chicago, where she remained five years as first grade teacher. Other placements were Sacred Heart, Englewood, where for eleven years she taught classes from third to seventh grade; Immaculate Conception and St. Mary's, Columbus, where she totaled six years; and St. Peter's, Mansfield, where she spent eight years teaching the fourth grade. Appointments of shorter duration included Bayfield, Benton, Freeport, Elgin, St. Clement and St. Francis DeSales of Chicago, and Guardian Angels Home. In January of 1944 she was relieved of regular classroom duties and began a three-year period of special teaching and general work at Our Lady of Mercy, Granville. Following this she did domestic work at Ladd, Kankakee, Rock Island, and Pesotum. From 1947 to 1950 and from 1955 to the time of her death she was telephone operator at the Motherhouse.

In the classroom Sister Octavia was a gentle, cheerful, and patient teacher, one who drilled thoroughly and who could make allowances for limitations in her pupils. As a domestic Sister she found contentment in her new duties and made every effort to be a real "homemaker." She was welcome wherever she went, for she was a good helper, capable in many kinds of work, and had a gift for getting along with people.

During her first appointment at the Motherhouse as switchboard operator, she was a true aide to Sister Laura, Superior, doing the many and varied chores that constantly need doing. Perhaps her best work during this time was as practical nurse to Sister Camilla in her last illness. She understood the patient, and her tireless efforts were accepted with gratitude. She prayed often with Sister the many consoling prayers, both English and German, which she herself was accustomed to say.

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In her last years at the Motherhouse, she did innumerable kind and helpful things for the Sisters, particularly the older ones, though she was no longer young herself. These Sisters' deep regret at her sudden passing and their repeated stories of her quiet and unobtrusive services to them were warm tribute to the kindly character of Sister Octavia. Her sudden death, however, raised no fears. This Sister who was an embodiment of charity had heard, they were sure, the welcome "Inasmuch as you did it to these..., you did it to Me. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord!"