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Sister M. Antonine Herner

Sister M. Antonine, formerly Clara Herner of Columbus, Ohio, died in the Infirmary Thursday morning, September 10, at 7:15. She had in her usual fervent manner been preparing for Holy Communion when she suddenly lapsed into unawareness and within the hour slipped quietly away to eternity. She had been a patient in the Infirmary for two and a half years. The past winter she had rallied after a stroke, but serious hemorrhaging in July and August presaged the end, although she was alert and conscious. Sister was in her ninetieth year and had celebrated her Diamond jubilee in 1952.

Funeral services were held in the Motherhouse chapel Saturday, September 12. The Most Rev. Martin D. McNamara, D.D. presided at the Solemn Requiem Mass celebrated by Rev. Angelo Zwiesler, O.F.M., chaplain. Burial was made at Resurrection Cemetery, Lockport Township.

One of our very venerable sisters, Sister Antonine had given active service in the Community through 64 years. Of her 48 years of teaching she spent 34 in Chicago--Five at St. Francis DeSales, six at St. Boniface, five at Sacred Heart Englewood, and eighteen at St. Clement. Ohio claimed her for seven years, five being spent in her home parish, St. Mary's, Columbus.

Relieved of teaching in 1941, Sister continued to work for the Community. For four years she was portress at St. Clement, Chicago, and did helpful things about the house. After that, St. John's, Joliet and the Preparatory each claimed her for six years as seamstress. By this time her health was failing and in March of 1957, in spite of her desire not to give up, abdominal complications and arterio sclerosis made hospitalization necessary. On her release she was taken to the Motherhouse infirmary as her last "mission."

Sister Antonine will long be remembered for her many good qualities. Herself petite, neat, and dainty, all of Sister's work was characterized by care and precision. Both as teacher and seamstress she was exact and painstaking. No half measures ever satisfied her. In school she drilled tirelessly. By preference a fourth grade teacher, she neglected nothing of the standard program. Her children were required to read and to understand what they read, to write short paragraphs and acceptable little letters; they had to know their tables and be able to multiply and divide. They had to learn about God with the help of their catechisms and know how to speak to Him in prayer. -- These were minnum essentials that she had to teach and her pupils had to learn, though it might take repetition.

As a seamstress, she worked livingly, with the touch of a professional. Even if it were only mending a garment, it would be a perfect piece of work. While at the Preparatory she assisted with the girls' uniforms and stitched innumerable flawless buttonholes. She loved to help the aspirants with a bit of mending or sewing, and they were always richer for the contact.

Sister Antonine was of a warmly affectionate nature, devoted to her family, tender to her friends, attached fondly to each mission at which she was stationed. Because of this, changes were extremely hard for her. A new appointment meant severing ties, and this she dreaded. But once the obedience was given and the transfer made, she wholeheartedly adopted the new mission, and it in turn became a cherished home, its Sisters her loved confreres. She never seemed to realize the capacity of her own heart - she should have trusted it to find ample room. as it always did, for a new home, new comfort, new friends.

This experience of happy adjustment came to her once more in the Infirmary. She was deeply touched by the care given her, by any kindness shown her. She greatly appreciated having visitors and was happy with the kindly interest of the Sisters. In these last years, too, she received the grace of complete confidence in God. She had before been perhaps too conscious that He was the All Holy. She had always been pious and prayerful, but too exacting with herself to be entirely peaceful. The peace that was lacking she now learned. God became the All Loving, and her long periods of prayer were happy hours of friendship with Him. At her last anointing on the Sunday before her death, serene and ready, she said she 'wanted to go to heaven,' and was waiting to do so. The "Eternal rest" petitioned following her death seemed to the Sisters at her bedside as much a fulfillment as a prayer. This loving soul would find Love.