

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

October 24, 1983

Dear Sisters,

When one is approaching 100 years of age, it is understandable that reaching such an exalted goal becomes a dream. Sister Gerarda Jonik cherished this thought, but knew the night before her death that it probably would not become a reality. Her lifelong goal, though, was union with her Lord, and early in the morning of October 24 she quietly returned to the Lord she had served faithfully for so many years as a woman religious. Adding to the joy of her passage from this life to the next must have been the reunion with her three Franciscan Sisters: Sisters Tharsilla, Bernarda and Beata, who died in 1951, 1968 and 1980 respectively.

Augusta Jonik grew up in South Chicago, a member of SS. Peter and Paul Parish. She followed the lead of her sister, Matilda (Sister Bernarda), arriving at St. Francis Convent January 16, 1901. In 1902 she started a life of active ministry as a first grade teacher of 95 children at St. Mary's, Columbus--a life that would extend for nearly a century, a life of service to elementary, secondary, and college youth. She prepared for this ministerial service by studying at DePaul University, receiving her degree in Chemistry in 1926, and at Notre Dame University, graduating in 1934 with her Masters in Biology.

Sister Gerarda was one of a very few Sisters who have celebrated the 75th anniversary of their entrance into the Novitiate. On January 11, 1976 she was honored at a special jubilee ceremony commemorating this anniversary. She had been the oldest member of the Congregation both in age and in religion until her death this morning.

Even in retirement Sister Gerarda had been active. Until her eyesight failed these past few years, she was always busy with her delicate embroidery and crewel work. She loved to read and could be found with books and magazines having large type, helping to stimulate her mind and fill up the hours as communication became difficult due to her lack of hearing. Her quick, warm smile spoke her greeting, though, making everyone feel welcome coming into her presence.

Among those who will feel the loss of Sister Gerarda most poignantly are her sister, Sister Seraphia, and her niece, Sister Michael Marie, who have shared such a large part of her life at Our Lady of Angels for many years. To them, as well as to her other sister, Mrs. Marie Goetzinger of Freeport, and her other niece, Mrs. Rosemary Nash of Oak Lawn, her grandnieces and grandnephews, we offer our sympathy.

The passing of Sister Gerarda from our midst is a special loss to the Congregation. For many years she has been our oldest and greatly respected Sister and friend. She has been first in representing our Franciscan traditions for the past 82 years. We give her back to the Lord, knowing that she carries each of us with her in her heart, but knowing also that a very special part of our history has reached a glorious finale.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



SISTER M. GERARDA JONIK, OSF (AUGUSTA) 578

Birthdate: August 25, 1885, in Ironwood, IL
 Parents: John and Maria (Nowak) Jonik
 Postulancy: January 16, 1901
 Novitiate: August 15, 1901
 First Profession: August 15, 1903
 Final Profession: August 12, 1909
 Diamond Jubilee: June, 1963
 75th Anniversary
 of Entrance into
 the Novitiate: January 11, 1976



Ministry:

1902-1903 St. Mary, Columbus, OH, grade 1
 1903-1904 St. Mary, Rock Island, IL, grades 3, 4
 1904-1905 St. Joseph, Galion, OH, grades 1, 2
 1905-1906 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, convalescing
 1906-1907 St. Clement, Chicago, IL, grades 3, 4, 5
 1907-1910 St. Michael, Sigel, IL, grades 1, 2, 3, 4
 1910-1912 St. Denis, Benton, MO, grades 1, 2
 1912-1913 St. Francis Assisi, Chicago, IL, grades 3, 4, 5
 1913-1914 St. Joseph, Freeport, IL, grades 1, 2
 1914-1915 St. Joseph, Galion, OH, grades 1, 2, 3, 4
 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, convalescing
 1915-1916 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, convalescing
 St. Pascal, Chicago, IL, grades 3, 4, 5
 1916-1928 St. Pascal, Chicago, IL, grades 5, 6, 7, Superior/Principal
 1928-1929 St. John the Baptist, Joliet, IL, grade 8, Superior/Principal
 1929-1933 St. Joseph, Freeport, IL, grades 7, 8, Superior/Principal
 1933-1940 College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL, Dept. of Biology
 (1937-1940: Superior)
 1940-1946 St. Francis de Sales High School, Chicago, IL
 1940-1942: Superior
 1942-1945: Superior, Teacher
 1945-1946: Superior, Principal, Teacher
 1946-1952 Sacred Heart (Englewood), Chicago, IL, Superior, Principal,
 Teacher
 1952-1958 College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL, Superior; Dept. of
 Biology
 1958-1959 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, Supervisor of service girls
 1959-1964 Guardian Angel Home, Joliet, IL, Superior
 1964-1983 Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL, Retired

Died: Monday, October 24, 1983, at 6:00 a.m. at Our Lady of
 Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL
 Age: 98 years old; in religious life 82 years
 Wake: Wednesday, October 26, 1983, 2 to 7 p.m., OLA
 Prayer Service: Wednesday, October 26, 1983, 3:30 p.m., OLA
 Liturgy: Wednesday, October 26, 1983, 7:00 p.m., OLA
 Burial Services: Thursday, October 27, 1983, 9:00 a.m. from OLA to
 Resurrection Cemetery, Lockport