

SISTER M. PETRA, O.S.F.
June 15, 1967

Sister Petra will not make Retreat this year. She had planned to, of course, but another, more important commitment changed those plans. Sister Petra died at 8:30 as night was closing in at Our Lddy of Angels and Retreat was beginning.

She had lingered, however, to welcome her old friends from Cleveland, and all the others who had dropped in during the day because "Sister Petra is bad!" and they wanted to see her before they themselves went into retreat. Her classmates at OLA, Sisters Beata and Casimir and Victorine, had been in and out of her room for days. They had entered the Novitiate together so long ago, and they were hoping to celebrate their Diamond Jubilee together in 1969. They had watched Sister Geraldine leave them in March. Now Sister Petra was slipping away, and her classmates faithfully came in to pray, to watch, and to say their voiceless goodbyes.

Sister Petra herself had been optimistic about her chances. "I'll be coming home for my Jubilee in '69," she had assured her sister who had visited her in May after a slight stroke had signaled that a downward trend was imminent. It was not until early June, however, that she really began noticeably to fail. But until six o'clock Thursday evening, Sister Petra clung tenaciously to the thread of life. Then at six she began to lapse into the unconsciousness from which she did not awake.

Earlier the Retreat Master Father Caspar, OFM Cap., had visited her, praying and blessing her. Sister did not know when he made his final call at 7:30. By that time she had slipped past the boundaries of human recognition.

At 9:00 that evening Sister Alexine, a music pupil from Sister Petra's days at Holy Family, came on as Night Nurse. But her teacher had not been able to wait. A half hour earlier, Sister Petra had quietly surrendered. Easily, without struggle, she was gone.

She was buried on Saturday, and she would have been so proud of the choir that sang her Requiem Mass -- so proud of their youthful voices petitioning, "May the angels take you into paradise!" She had loved Gregorian Chant, but when the new liturgy went into effect, altering the musical pattern of a lifetime, Sister Petra went along with it. This was what the Church had decreed; this, then, was what an organist, a musician should do! For the past year she had taken over the weekly rehearsals on the Friday afternoons when Sister Christian was unable to come. And though her touch was no longer as sure as in the old days, her musician's heart was still attuned to song.

Sister Petra will not make Retreat this year. She doesn't have to. In God's glorious Eternity Sister Petra is singing -- and every note is true!

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!
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