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Sister M. Servatia Sasarak

At the opening of the second retreat this year, the Community was shocked at an unusually forceful reminder of death, when our Sister Servatia Sasarak met with a fatal accident on her way back to Streator.

Sister was riding with Miss Anna Kakara on Route 52, when about five miles west of Troy, the trailer on an east-bound car driven by Mr. Howard Wells of Tucson, Arizona, swerved and struck their car head-on. Miss Kakara was thrown out upon the road; Sister Servatia was thrown forward against the dash-board, sustaining a fractured skull and internal injuries.

It was not long before the State Police arrived--Sgt. Robert Georgianos and Officer John Oltman. One officer called Father Daniel Murray, pastor at Minooka, who anointed Sister. Mrs. Betty Kinsella, R.N., living about three miles from the scene of the accident, came to give first aid. When the ambulance arrived, Miss Kakara begged her not to leave, and she and Father Murray accompanied the patients. Enroute to St. Joseph's Hospital, oxygen was administered first to Sister Servatia, but it was soon apparent that this aid was futile. Sister's feeble pulse stopped completely at about 9:45, and the nurse transferred the oxygen to Miss Kakara.

News of the sad accident was brought to the convent that evening about 9:30 by Police Officer William Daggett, who called to escort Mother Immaculate to the Hospital to identify the remains. Mother knew at once that it must be Sister Servatia, for she had just bidden her goodbye when the bell rang that evening for the opening of the Retreat. Sister had stopped on her way home from DePaul for Sister Honorata who was to return to Streator and Sister Hermina who was to visit there. Fortunately these Sisters had found a driver earlier, and Sister proceeded without them.

Arriving at the Hospital, Mother Immaculate accompanied by Sister Mary of the Angels was met by Father Alphonse, Father Murray, and Sister Sylvina, and was taken to the emergency room where she identified the body. Miss Kakara was in the adjoining room, suffering from shock and broken bones. Mother Immaculate made arrangements with Mr. Dames to call for the body. In the interim Father Murray, Mrs. Kinsella and the State police gave details of the accident.

Sister Servatia's death deprived the Community of a kind and charitable Sister and an efficient teacher, superior and principal. In the fifty-fifth year of her age and the thirty-ninth of her religious life, Sister had been teaching since 1916. Her first and last mission was St. Stephen, Streator. The last two of her eight years there were as superior and principal. She had three appointments to Johnstown, the last six of her sixteen years there being as superior and principal. She was also superior at Assumption, Chicago, for three years. Her other missions were St. Joseph's, Joliet; Sacred Heart (Huron Street), Chicago; and St. Francis De Sales, Toledo. Always she was an exact and methodical teacher; a conscientious religious, ever trying "to live Christ", and a patient and co-operative fellow Sister. She had a well-ordered love of books and learning and had made good progress in her courses at DePaul where she had just finished the requirements

for the Master's degree. Her thesis, with its careful research and painstaking presentation, was ready to type and submit. All this was now closed.

Funeral services took place on Monday, August 9. Rev. Gervase Brinkman, OFM, celebrated the Requiem High Mass which was presided over by His Excellency, The Most Rev. Martin D. McNamara. Deacon and Subdeacon were Rev. Ronald Dinn, OFM, and Rev. Jude, OFM, of Brazil. The Bishop's chaplains were Rev. J. Ducaji and Rev. John O'Sullivan. Assistant priest at the throne was Rt. Rev. Msgr. Gregory Cloos. Rev. Thomas O'Keefe was the master of ceremonies. Among the clergy present in the sanctuary were Rev. Julius Chvojka, pastor of Assumption, Chicago, and Rev. George Dzuryo, pastor of St. Stephen, Streator, Illinois.

Burial was made at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Joliet, Father Gervase officiated at the grave and was assisted by the Rev. Father George Dzuryo.