

April 15, 1962

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Sister M. Edwina Simko

With only a few hours' warning, Sister Edwina took leave of Our Lady of Angels and set out for the Everlasting Home. A few days' slight indisposition had preyed, when an attack of difficult breathing about ten o'clock Saturday night alerted the Sisters of her condition. Oxygen was administered and the priest and the doctor were called. Eased by the oxygen, Sister received Extreme Unction, devoutly answering the prayers, as well as the rosary and ejaculations which followed. When a lull occurred, she herself added further ejaculations, and the group again took up praying aloud.

Asked if she feared death, Sister said she did not; that she was ready to die. She continued to weaken until at 12:45 a.m. she quietly slipped away. It was the first hour of Palm Sunday, April 15, 1962. The funeral was held on Tuesday, His Excellency Bishop McNamara presiding at the Solemn Requiem at Our Lady of Angels, and Rev. Conradin Knorr, O.F.M., celebrating the Mass and officiating at the grave in Resurrection Cemetery.

Sister Edwina was the former Mary Simko of Streator. She had received the habit in May of 1893 and had made first profession in July, 1895. She was eighty-five years old at the time of her death, and had enjoyed a long full career, serving the Community sixty-one years in various positions. She was organist, grade school teacher, high school commercial teacher, superior and principal, and for a time instructor in the college education department, and dean of students. Of the twenty-two years Sister spent in Chicago, twelve were at St. Francis DeSales and six at Sacred Heart, Englewood; Ohio claimed her for seventeen years, nine at St. Peter's, Mansfield, and four at St. Procop, Cleveland. Other placements included St. Stephen, Johnstown; St. Denis, Benton; St. Joseph, Pesotum; and St. John, Joliet.

Sister Edwina was an amiable teacher, patient and motherly. She had good control without exerting any pressure on her classes, for she commanded both respect and love. Preserving always a neat and orderly classroom she carried this trait over into her teaching. She knew, too, how to brighten a class with a good story.

Continued progress for the teacher was an intense ideal with her, and she kept alive her interest in education, always striving for something 'higher' to master. She was ever a gentlewoman, serene, soft-spoken, proper but homey, with a friendly smile for all. In conversation she always had something to contribute, and loved to share her own experiences and convictions.

During her last six years at the Motherhouse she continued to keep herself occupied. She was an alert reader. Interested in world problems, she compassionated with all who suffered. For these people she prayed daily, for her prayers were a part of her work in retirement. She was, moreover, a faithful portress, friendly and competent. An artist at needle-work, she liked to think her crocheting and afghans "helped to build O.L.A."

In 1955, when Sister's diamond jubilee neared, she was seized with an attack of phlebitis and had to be hospitalized. This she accepted with her usual composure. On Jubilee Day at the hospital she received her festive crown from Mother Immaculate and wore it with the gracious dignity of a queen, enjoying at the same time the packages that were unwrapped and presented to her one by one.

Perhaps Sister's most difficult experience during retirement was the moving to Our Lady of Angels "after all these years at the Motherhouse." When January 25th came, however, she accepted this, too. At her new home, she promptly made a good adjustment, expressing only appreciation for the beauty, comfort, and care it afforded the Sisters. It was not surprising, then, that readiness was again her watchword when the end neared, and that she answered the call gladly. - It is the firm hope of all that, palm in hand, Sister Edwina entered the Kingdom, joining the jubilant procession and its exultant "Hosanna, Filio David!" And since she, following Him, 'came in the name of the Lord,' was not she, too, blessed - blessed forever!