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325. Sister M. Fridoline Waller
January 28, 1954

Sister M. Fridoline Waller

Sister M. Fridoline, one of the Community's outstanding primary teachers, died of cancer of the lung early Thursday morning, January 28, in the Convent infirmary. Sister's final illness lasted only three weeks. In poor health for the past thirty years, often unwell but always overcoming attacks sufficiently to return to her work in the classroom, Sister was this year stationed at Elgin. On January 2nd she came to Joliet for a check-up, and Doctor Richard Fahrner ordered her to the infirmary. After a week's stay there she was taken to St. Joseph Hospital for chest puncture and biopsy -- the diagnosis was carcinoma of the lung. She was anointed while at the hospital, and on January 19 she was brought back to the Fourth Floor infirmary. She realized her condition and remarked to Sister Peter just the day before her death, "I know I will not get well anymore. I only hope I will not have to linger too long." That night when Sister prayed the act of perfect resignation with her, she joined firmly and fervently in the recitation, her voice strong enough to sound through the infirmary. Her release was not far off. At four o'clock in the morning she moaned aloud, and Sister Lois, her night attendant, helped her to turn. At four-thirty when Sister William went in to check the oxygen, she found Sister dead.

The funeral services were held on Saturday, January 30, in the Motherhouse chapel, His Excellency the Most Rev. Martin D. McNamara presided at the Solemn Requiem Mass celebrated by the Rev. Gervase Brinkman, OFM, Rev. DeSales Snyder, O. Carm., and Rev. Alphonse Coan, OFM, were the deacon and subdeacon respectively. Assistant priest was the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Gregory M. Cloos, and the assistants at the throne were Rev. Paul Benson and Rev. George Mickovic. Rev. Joseph W. Rojemann, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Elgin, was in the sanctuary. Sister's third grade pupils with many of their parents attended the funeral. Interment was made at Mount Olivet cemetery. Father Rojemann officiated at the grave, assisted by Father Gervase.

Sister Fridoline was the former Clara Waller of St. Boniface, Chicago. At the time of her death she was in the seventy-first year of her age and the fiftieth of her religious life. She had begun her work as a primary teacher in 1905 at St. Peter's Mansfield, where she was stationed for ten years. For fifteen years she was in Columbus - at St. Mary's, Immaculate Conception, and St. Mary Magdalene's. For eleven intermittent years she was a patient or was convalescing. Her last appointment constituted her ninth year at Elgin. Several years in Chicago and Sigel schools completed her record.

Wherever Sister Fridoline served she was recognized as an excellent teacher. Exact about everything she did, she laid a firm foundation for her pupils, upon which they could build a sound educational structure. Devoted to her children, she won their devotion in return. For beginners she made their adjustment to the classroom easy and led them to love school. Always her moderate and even-tempered direction put them at ease. They understood what she required and gave what she expected. She had a knack of encouraging slower pupils and knew how to commend the better ones, with no danger of making them proud.

This good rapport carried over to her direction on the playgrounds. Sister Fridoline's supervising there continued through the years, and even in her advancing age she controlled the conduct of her classes by mingling freely and playing games with them.

And with all the valuable techniques and skills she had developed, Sister was generous, freely helping young and inexperienced teachers. Any Sister who was appointed parallel to Sister Fridoline could be assured of a proper start. She overlooked no detail. Some of the Community's best primary teachers attribute their success to the tutelage of Sister Fridoline. In them, her work and her ability live on.

With all her ill health, Sister had a certain droll sense of humor which often brightened her contacts with others and lighted her own days. This was a fight which she had earlier learned to cultivate and which she developed with many years, overcoming more and more successfully the natural somber outlook of the chronically ill. Serious spinal and leg surgery made necessary from time to time the use of weights. To these she submitted with good grace, but the valiant spirit of this Sister no weights could hamper. May she rest with God!