



Sister Siena Wohlleben

Another death occurred during the early part of this year, that of Sister M. Siena, formerly Josephine Wohlleben, who died at the Motherhouse on March 22, 1893, in the forty-seventh year of her age and the twenty-fifth of her religious career. She was born in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg and came to Chicago when quite young. She entered St. Francis Convent in 1868. Until 1878 she had been engaged in parochial school work when she was summoned to Joliet to act as mistress of novices, which position however she was soon to resign on account of failing health. For some time after this she taught in the academy. Her specialties were Bookkeeping, Commercial Law and German. In 1881 she was appointed local superior at the Motherhouse, which position she held until 1884, when declining health again obliged her to resign. She was a good religious and a true daughter of St. Francis.

Strange to relate, during the night before the reception into the novitiate of Sister Siena and her four companions, Sisters Stanislas Droessler, Clara Schneider, Agnes Tehle, and Celestine Sontag on April 30, 1868, Rev. Theodore Majerus, C.S.S.R., who was to officiate on the occasion had a mysterious dream which seemed to betoken the turbulent future of the community which these five candidates were about to enter, as also their final perseverance in the Order. He saw a nest of five young swallows in a burning chimney. The birds chirped and fluttered, but in spite of their perilous situation not one left the nest. The Reverend Father, when relating his dream to the newly invested novices the following day remarked that God must have something special in view for them. He predicted that they would all remain faithful members of the Order. Thus far the prophecy has been literally fulfilled, for unlike many of their associates in religion who lacked the courage to surmount the hardships of convent life in those early days, became wearied and dropped away, these five sisters have all remained true to their solemn engagements. Sister Siena was the first of their number to be summoned by the heavenly Paymaster to receive her eternal reward.

In Sister Siena's long and terrible sickness, neuritis, we have one of the many examples of suffering from bodily ailments of which it may be said that no one realizes the pain undergone, or can sympathize with the patient except those who themselves have passed through the same ordeal. She bore her trials with Christian fortitude for many years. During her last year of suffering her pain was so intense, as she said, that only her refuge into the sacred wounds of Jesus could afford her relief.