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Sister M. Nazaria Blaha

At 5:40 of the late afternoon on Monday, July 4th, time closed for Sister M. Nazaria, opening up Eternity to her. There had been much of time granted her - a life of eighty years, sixty of these spent with the Congregation. Time enough, one would say, to serve much, to amass merit, to garner wisdom--and all this Sister had done.

The former Anna Blaha of St. Procopius parish, Chicago, Sister Nazaria's apostolate was dominantly to the Czech people. She began her teaching at St. Procop, Cleveland, where she spent eight years. For the next fifty years she was, with the exception of a single year, stationed in Chicago. Here she served in her home parish sixteen years; at Ss. Cyril and Methodius, nine years; and at St. Ludmilla, nine years. At the two latter missions she was also superior and principal for six years each. Relieved of school duties because of failing health, Sister continued for sixteen years to do general work at mission convents: St. Ludmilla's, Ss. Cyril and Methodius', St. Francis Assisi; and St. Benedict's in Ladd.

Though in delicate health those last years, Sister would always ask to be reassigned and had each year gone back into the ranks of workers. When on June 22nd of last year Sister was brought to the Motherhouse Infirmary, she was suffering from chronic nephritis and rheumatic heart disease. She herself said simply, "I have no blood." Nor could ten transfusions in ten months remedy the situation. Her pallor increased, though the light in her blue eyes continued to glow and the strength of her spirit endured. She had found living in Christ good, and the savor and the grace of it sustained her.

Her confident and even joyous approach to Eternity mirrored her life of faith. Sister had always loved to pray, and she did much of it now. She had had a fond devotion to the Sacred Heart, and she never tired of teaching others to appreciate the Love-unto-death of the great Heart of Christ. From It she drew her own true charity. In the convent and out of it, she had set no limits to what she would give and had never been known to refuse anyone a service. At her various missions she had earned a reputation for being especially kind to the relatives of the Sisters. In times of sickness among them, her visits were both spiritual and corporal works of mercy. She never lost this helpful spirit. That last year at the Motherhouse, ill herself, she often read and prayed with other patients, or even diverted them with the colorful stories her keen memory had preserved from the past. She continued, too, to work for the Community's building fund, crocheting table pads - many of them, all beautifully finished, showing still the industry and exact workmanship that had characterized her.

When finally no work was possible, Sister offered to God that last great gift, her patient suffering and resignation; and to those who cared for her, her deep appreciation. "Thank you for all you did," were always her last words at night. And when her last sleep drew near, she committed herself in gratitude to God, conscious to the end, praying to the end. - Sister Peter, nurse, liked to think that it was by special favor of her loved Czech patrons that she died on the feast of Ss. Cyril and Methodius and was buried on the feast of St. Procopius. May these holy ones, with the angels, "conduct her to Paradise" and its everlasting peace and love.

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At the Solemn Requiem Bishop McNamara presided, assisted by the deacons Howard Mamon of St. Jude's and Edmund Davern of St. Patrick's. Father Joseph Shimanek served as assistant at the throne; Father William Condon was master of ceremonies. Father Angelo Zwiesler celebrated the Mass, with Father Mel Doyle and Father Alphonse Coan as deacon and sub-deacon.