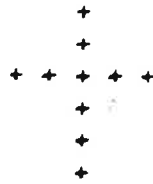


36. Sister Winifred Cusick
May 8, 1894



Sister Winifred Cusick

In the spring of 1894 when the smallpox plague smote principally the southwestern portion of the city of Chicago, Sister Winifred, formerly Mary Cusick of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the superior at St. Ludmilla's mission was stricken with the dread disease, having contracted it from one of her pupils in school. She was at once removed to the Isolation Hospital on West 26th Street, which was only a few blocks from St. Ludmilla's and in charge of the Handmaids of Christ. When informed by the doctor of the seriousness of her condition and the urgency of her removal, Sister Winifred asked but this one favor, that she might be permitted an interview with the Mother Superior. Her request having been granted, she courageously bade farewell to the Sisters and was fully resigned to meet the fate God should destine for her. Rev. George Heldmann, the chaplain of the institution, took special interest in his patient, and as no hopes were entertained for her recovery he prepared her for death soon after she arrived at the hospital. The Mother Superior accompanied by one or the other sisters from St. Ludmilla's paid a daily visit to the institution, but as visitors were permitted no further than to the premises the good sister had to content herself by viewing her visitors from afar through her bedroom window, where at the appointed hour she was sure to make her appearance, returning the mute greetings with a cheerful countenance, waving her handkerchief and showing by her gestures how much she appreciated these sympathetic visits. After some time her condition improved and she was soon to leave the hospital when spinal trouble set in, which caused her death. She departed peacefully on the 8th of May, 1894, being then in the thirty-sixth year of her age and the sixteenth of her religious life. Her remains were brought directly from the hospital to St. Mary's Cemetery, near Chicago, and were interred in the burial place belonging to the sisters of this community.

Sister Winifred was especially noted for her cheerful disposition. The Reverend Chaplain remarked that the pleasant mood in which he usually found her, even in hours of the severest pain and affliction had astonished and greatly edified him, and he often afterwards, on meeting our sisters, referred to this happy trait of his smallpox patient.