

SISTER M. NERI DZURELLA O.S.F. (Helen) 661



Born: November 19, 1914
Parents: Valentine and Anna (Grega) Dzurella
Postulancy: September 8, 1930
Novitiate: August 12, 1931
First Profession: August 12, 1933
Final Profession: August 12, 1936
Died: Tuesday, October 17, 1989 at 5:50 p.m. at
Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL

Ministry:

1933 - 1934 St. Procopius, Chicago, IL, Grade 3
1934 - 1935 Sacred Heart, Englewood, IL, Grade 1
1935 - 1937 SS. Peter and Paul, Chicago, IL, Grades 2 & 4
1937 - 1941 St. Stephen, Johnstown, PA, Grades 3, 4 & 5
1941 - 1947 St. Stephen, Streator, IL, Grades 5 & 6
1947 - 1958 Guardian Angel Home, Joliet, IL, Prefect - Junior & Senior Boys
1958 - 1959 St. Francis Assisi, Red Cliff, WI, Grades 3 & 4
January, 1959 St. Mary, Rock Island, IL, Grades 3 & 4
1959 - 1960 St. Mary, Rock Island, IL, Grades 3 & 4
1960 - 1961 St. Jude, Joliet, IL, Grade 4
April, 1961 St. Joseph, Pesotum, IL, Grades 1, 2, 3 & 4
1961 - 1962 St. Joseph, Pesotum, IL, Grades 1, 2, 3 & 4
1962 - 1963 St. Michael, Brunswick, MI, Grades 1 & 2
1963 - 1964 SS. Peter & Paul, Leonore, IL, Grades 1, 2 & 3
1964 - 1973 St. Francis de Sales, Toledo, OH, Grade 1
1973 - 1985 St. Francis de Sales Achievement School/LaGrange Achievement Program, Toledo, OH, Teaching the Emotionally Disturbed
1985 - 1989 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Tutor

Wake: Thursday, October 19, 1989 from 2 - 7:00 p.m. with a Prayer Service at 4:30 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial: Thursday, October 19, 1989 at 7:00 p.m.

Burial: Friday, October 20, 1989, Resurrection Cemetery.
at 9 a.m.

Survived by sister: Elizabeth Zuscik

*For those who have been faithful, O Lord,
life is not ended, but merely changed.*

On Tuesday evening, October 17, 1989, at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, our Sister Neri Dzurella entered into fullness of life with our God. Her death was unexpected. She collapsed after supper, and was still conscious when she was anointed. Surrounded by our Sisters, she gently died at 5:50 p.m.

Helen was born in Star Junction, Pennsylvania on November 19, 1914 to Anna and Valentine Dzurella. She was the youngest of four children, and remained close to her family in her concern and prayer. She is survived by her sister Elizabeth who will dearly miss her.

In 1924 her family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, and there she met our Sisters at Holy Family Parish. After elementary school she came to St. Francis Preparatory in Joliet, and at the age of sixteen entered the Postulancy. She wrote of her gratitude for her religious vocation, "I am in love with my God, and happy working in God's service." In 1983 she delighted in celebrating her Golden Jubilee of religious profession.

Sister Neri dearly loved her Sisters in community, and her Sisters speak affectionately about her kind and gentle presence among them. She once wrote, "I try to respect others, listen to them, and encourage them. I try to help in little ways to make life pleasant for others." Her actions, whether she was dusting, praying, helping in the office, tutoring, working puzzles, all seemed inspired by a loving dedication that characterized her as a person.

Sister Neri was a teacher of kindergarten to sixth grade for fifty-six years. She wrote, "My choice will be where I am sent." And often she was asked to respond to urgent needs, sometimes in the middle of a year. She was a creative teacher, especially for children with learning disabilities, often inventing techniques that other teachers also found helpful.

When we remember Sister Neri in ministry, we recall a woman who sought the most poor and powerless children. Neglected children at Guardian Angel Home in Joliet, Indian children at Redcliff, emotionally disturbed children at Toledo, multi-cultural children at Head Start in Joliet, all experienced her love and understanding. She called these children "God's special ones" and she treated them as such. They responded positively to her so that many times beginning teachers would sit in her classroom to learn how to teach little children.

Many years of Sister Neri's life were filled with pain. Her hand placed on her hip meant that the pain was particularly severe. Doctors could not help. On August 16, 1989, she went to Our Lady of Angels. She suffered intensely these past months, but tried so hard not to complain. She "offered her sufferings" for intentions any one would ask.

Sister Neri, your life is a beautiful testimony to all of us of a warm and sensitive woman who loved your God and God's people selflessly. We will miss you very much. We rejoice that you no longer experience pain, and we can only imagine you surrounded by the children in your new and unending Life. Believing in your joy we can say Alleluia.

