

**SISTER M. CELESTINE KIRSCHTEN O.S.F. (Mathilda) 658**

Born: October 22, 1909  
Parents: Joseph and Mathilda (Heno) Kirschten  
Postulancy: September 8, 1931  
Novitiate: August 12, 1932  
First Profession: August 12, 1934  
Final Profession: August 12, 1937  
Died: Wednesday, August 2, 1989 at 6:30 p.m. at  
Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL



**Ministry:**

1934 - 1936 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Student at College of St. Francis  
1936 - 1940 St. Mary, Columbus, OH, English, History, Typing and Shorthand  
1940 - 1942 College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL, Assistant Dean of Students  
1942 - 1944 Central Catholic High, Johnstown, PA, History, Religion  
1944 - 1952 Sacred Heart, Englewood, IL, English, History, Religion  
1952 - 1959 Marybrook Academy, Maumee, OH, Religion, English, History, Economics  
1959 - 1960 St. Clement, Chicago, IL, Religion, Guidance, History  
1960 - 1962 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, History, Religion  
1962 - 1967 Sacred Heart, Englewood, IL, Superior and Principal, History  
1967 - 1968 Cardinal Gibbons, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, History, Library  
1968 - 1984 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, English, History, Administrative  
Assistant, Health Director  
1984 - 1989 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, Retired

Wake: Friday, August 4, 1989 from 2 - 7:00 p.m. with a  
Prayer Service at 4:30 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial: Friday August 4, 1989 at 7:00 p.m.

Burial: Sunday, August 5, 1989, Resurrection Cemetery.

Survived by: Sister, Mrs. Mary Ann Hynes

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

On August 2, 1989, the Feast of Our Lady of the Angels, Sister Celestine was finally called to eternal life after much waiting and after much intense pain and silent suffering. Pain was not a stranger to Sister Celestine, and complaining about her condition was not a part of her vocabulary.

Mathilda Kirschten was born in Chicago in 1909 to Joseph and Mathilda Kirschten as the sixth of nine children. Her five brothers and three sisters and their families held special places in her heart, as her sister, Mary Ann, could testify. She spoke often of the beautiful family spirit that she was heir to.

With a B.A. in History from the College of St. Francis and an M.A. from De Paul, Sister Celestine was able to captivate her students through a great love for her field and accuracy of fact. Her labors were varied as she moved from teacher to assistant dean at CSF, to superior and principal of both grade and high school at Sacred Heart where she served until the high school closed in 1967. In her last years she continued her ministry with insight and compassion as Health Director at SFA, until her retirement and final eight months at Our Lady of the Angels.

She was a woman who lived her strong convictions accompanied by a concern for the individual. Whether at St. Mary's, Columbus or Marybrook, Johnstown or Florida, Englewood or St. Clement's, Sister Celestine was always supportive of each person. Her encouragement and inspiration modeled her strong faith and trust in God. In her last weeks, Sister Celestine wrote the words which were often spoken prior to the time that she found great difficulty in speaking. She wrote, "I have but one Big desire: TO DO HIS WILL. It's not always easy to recognize." We also know what the sacrifice of not communicating must have been for her, but her need to speak and her dry humor came to her aid as she related to one of the Sisters, "Did you ever think I would say I could not talk?"

Gratitude and appreciation were on her lips and in her heart throughout her life. On August 1st she haltingly said to me, "Thank the Sisters for me. The Sisters are wonderful." She never wanted to impose herself on others--nurses, aides or Sisters, but was always thankful for the tender care they extended.

Her avid reading and busy hands accompanied her to the end. Even minutes before she breathed her last, those around her saw her "tattooing in perfect patterns" in the air, with eyes closed and halfway in eternity.

Sister Celestine, we rejoice with you as you now are free of pain, and visiting with all your loved ones, with the Saints and with your God. We thank you for your fidelity to duty, your love of life, your kinship with all, young and old, frail and strong, and your tremendous inspiration and lived experience that God is All.

