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Sister M. Henrietta Lais

Another of our venerable Diamond Jubilarians has gone to eternity. Sister M. Henrietta died, following a two-day critical illness, in the Motherhouse Infirmary on Tuesday May 26th at 12:35 a.m. Sister took sick on Sunday, suffering gastro-intestinal hemorrhage, and was anointed. She still received Holy Communion on Monday, and Monday night asked to sit up in bed. She could not continue in that posture long, however, for she was greatly weakened. Her breathing became ever shorter and more labored, but there was no other struggle. Her death shortly after midnight was simply a sleeping away.

Sister Henrietta was the former Emilia Lais of Galion, Ohio. She was at the time of her death in the ninety-first year of her age and the sixty-ninth of her religious life. She was a blood sister to our departed Sister M. Amata.

Funeral services were held Friday, May 29th, in the Motherhouse chapel, Father Gervase celebrating the Solemn Requiem. Interment took place at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

In losing Sister Henrietta the Community lost a remarkably gay and valiant spirit. Her forty-seven years of active duty were always a happy memory to her. Her first appointment was St. John's, Joliet, where she taught first grade--to her, "the darling babies"--in 1890-91. Sixteen years at St. Mary's, Columbus, with a three year interim at St. Boniface, Chicago, was followed by a two-year period of a serious bone disease, surgery, and convalescence. Though handicapped by a stiff knee, she took up crutches and returned to teaching. She was able in time to discard the crutches; the lameness was hers for life. All these earlier appointments, the latest at St. Joseph's, Elgin, were in the grade school, her classes ranging from 1st to 6th grade.

From 1914 to 1919 Sister served as directress of aspirants. The next year she was Superior and Principal at St. Francis DeSales, Chicago. Three years saw her at Holy Family, Bayfield; then a year at the Academy switchboard preceded nine years at Des Plaines, Pesotum, and Benton. Her last four years of teaching were spent at Guardian Angel Home.

In 1937 she was back at the Motherhouse convalescing, and from 1938 to 1945 she did part-time work in the Convent refectory. For the next nine years, until she entered the Infirmary in August of 1954, she had no assigned duty.

Sister through all her years of service and retirement was the "beloved Sister Henrietta." An efficient, kind, and affable teacher, she loved her school work and she loved her children. A thoughtful, congenial person, she made life pleasant for her associates; unfailingly cheerful, with a sparkling sense of humor, she made life interesting for those about her. And her good qualities endured through the years. She enjoyed a peaceful and happy old age. In the Infirmary she was an easy patient to care for - appreciative, alert and interested in those around her, pious and prayerful. She continued reading to the end. Her good humor never failed, and always she rose to the occasion at any little jest. The

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very evening before her death, to the Sister-nurse's teasing, "You aren't Catholic?" she retorted with a vigorous "I am, too!" And to prove, she recited the Hail Mary. How well our heavenly Mother had kept Sister Henrietta in her care! How well she guarded her now! And in the hour of her death, She would be there, watching over this precious little nun who, with death approaching, could in jesting earnestness and with full trust ask Her prayers.