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Sister M. Leontine Mueller

Our gentle Sister Leontine has gone to God, closing a full and beautiful life in God's service and a year and a half of suffering in His Name. On this, the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, Sister laid down her own cross and won the fruit of His - life everlasting.

Sister Leontine, the former Catherine Mueller of Leonore, Illinois, had reached the age of seventy-five years in the schools conducted by our Congregation - from 1903 to 1958. For twenty-six years she served in the Archdiocese of Chicago: St. Boniface, St. Clement, Sacred Heart (Englewood), St. John's in Joliet, and St. Ann, Lansing. Other Illinois cities claimed her for ten years. At Kankakee and Aurora, besides being teacher, she was superior and principal as well. For an additional fifteen years she was stationed at St. Peter's, Mansfield, and for four years at St. Denis, Benton, Missouri.

At each of these appointments, Sister Leontine pursued the work of the Community with fond and earnest care. Her various classes ranged through all the grades from the first to the eighth. To each she gave her utmost. A quiet and gentle teacher, she was none the less persuasive, for there was character in her calm leadership. In her teaching she strove to make learning as simple as possible for her pupils. Direct in her attitude, precise and thorough in her presentation, she had the happy faculty of making lessons concrete. Nor was she content with mere passive reception on the part of the class. She motivated their study and helped them to master information through extra projects. Maps, scrap books, stamp collections, and widely varied exhibits were all utilized in the process.

Sister was also for years appointed as sacristan - a charge which she loved. This was service for priest and parish, yes; but more, it was directly for the Lord. The cleanliness of sanctuary, the excellent condition of linens and vestments attested to the quality of her work - perfect to the last detail.

In 1958, worn with years and labor, Sister was relieved of school duties, but continued to be of help as seamstress at Guardian Angel Home. In November of her second year there she was brought to the Motherhouse infirmary, wasted to a mere 89 pounds, a victim of arteriosclerosis and Parkinson's disease. She responded to care and a planned diet, gaining ten pounds in two months, but her retirement was permanent. Her last year was characterized physically by failing powers and spiritually by a fuller preparation for eternity by prayer and suffering. Even then, wanting to do something useful, she engaged in a last missionary activity - mounting and decorating holy cards.

In July of 1960, being seized with hallucinations, she was again admitted to the infirmary. Severe external ulcers broke out, indicating that her mental condition was toxic rather than psychotic. Mental anguish was now her lot, but she wished not to lose the merit of it and offered it up, as she said, "for the success of the ecumenical council and also for postulants."

Weakening progressively through the months, at the end of April Sister developed hypostatic pneumonia. On May third about noon Mother Immaculate led the prayers for the dying. Just before two o'clock Sister Virgilia's brother with another priest called and gave Sister final absolution. Minutes later Sister passed away. She had received extreme unction a week earlier and had that morning still received Holy Communion.

For the funeral on Saturday, the Most Rev. Bishop Martin D. McNamara presided at the Solemn Requiem Mass in the Motherhouse chapel. Sister was laid to rest at Resurrection Cemetery.