

327. Sister M. Ermelinda Nelles
March 20, 1954

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Sister M. Ermelinda Nelles

Sister M. Ermelinda quietly closed her life at St. Joseph Hospital Saturday morning March 20, at 3:55, after a final illness of ten days. Sister had attained her eightieth year and had been a member of our Congregation for fifty-seven years. She was the former Anna Nelles from St. Boniface parish, Chicago.

Sister's death came rather suddenly. Though by no means well, she had for the past six years been doing part time work as portress at the Motherhouse. Wednesday of the preceding week she became seriously ill, and was taken to the hospital on Friday, March 12. The care she received here eased her condition to some extent, but it was impossible to save her. The long standing diabetes and hypertension was now complicated by bowel obstruction and cardiac and pulmonary edema - and all this proved fatal.

Sister was aware of the seriousness of the condition and was ready and resigned to die. She was anointed by Father Alphonse Coan on Monday morning, March 15. The prayers for the dying were recited at her bedside Thursday night when Sister was under sedation, and again on Friday night when she was conscious. Father Carmel, teacher at Catholic High, gave her the papal Benediction and general absolution. Sister retained consciousness and continued to say ejaculations until half an hour before her death. Mentally at ease, her chief struggle was her difficult breathing. This quieted at the end, and she passed peacefully away. Sister Miriam Edward was in attendance.

The funeral Mass was sung on Monday, March 22, at 9:30 a.m., His Excellency, the Most Rev. Martin D. McNamara presiding. Rev. Gervase Brinkman, OFM, celebrant, was assisted by Rev. J.F. Nellis, pastor of St. Joseph Church, Manhattan, Illinois, and Rev. Wilfred Cool, OFM, The Rev. Msgr. Gregory Cloos was assistant priest. Assistants at the throne were Rev. Francis Blum, O. Carm., and Rev. George Mickovic. Rev. Thomas O'Keefe was master of ceremonies.

The body was laid to rest at Mount Olivet Cemetery, Joliet, Father Gervase officiating at the grave.

Sister Ermelinda, a venerable jubilarian, had served her Community for fifty-seven years. She did domestic work at numerous missions - Sigel, Rock Island, Mansfield, Streator, Chicago, Benton, Freeport, Pesotum, Aurora, Bayfield, and Manhattan. She began her mission life, however, as a primary teacher; moreover, she had assignment as prefect and infirmarian for a number of years. Five of her eight years at the Academy she had charge of the cafeteria, and of her eleven years at the Motherhouse, she was patient, domestic, infirmarian, and portress. As portress her friendly reception of callers won her many friends - friends who afterward missed her and continued to ask for her.

Sister was of a cheerful disposition, hearty and energetic, at all times friendly and interested. In her sickness these traits were sustained. The discomfort and pain accompanying her periods of illness she accepted as a matter of course. And in the serenity of her last sickness she might have said with St. Paul, "I suffer the loss of all things that I may gain Christ and to be found in Him."