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Sister M. Marcella Stegmaier

Sister M. Marcella, the former Emilia Stegmaier of Chicago, passed away suddenly at 4:55 Saturday afternoon, August 1, in the Motherhouse Infirmary. Sister had taken her supper as usual when the clattering sound of dishes on the tray alerted Sister Constance, who went immediately to Sister's room, and found her dying. With but a few more breaths, she expired. The priest was summoned at once and he administered the short form of extreme unction. - Though Sister suffered from complications including cancer, the doctor attributed her death to myocarditis.

Funeral services were held in the Motherhouse chapel Tuesday, August 4, Bishop McNamara presiding and giving the Last Absolution. Father Gervase Brinkman, O.F.M., was the celebrant of the Solemn Requiem Mass. Interment was made at Resurrection Cemetery.

Sister Marcella had celebrated her ninetieth birthday just two months earlier, and had been a member of the Congregation sixty-nine years. Her long career comprimed sixtyone years of active duty in grade school, in high school as commercial teacher, and in administration as Superior, Principal, or both; and a few last years at general work. Besides her thirteen years at St. John's, Joliet, her chief appointments were in Chicago: St. Francis DeSales, eleven years; St. Francis Assisi, eight years; St. Francis Xavier, seven years; Ss. Peter and Paul, seven years. Other Illinois and Ohio missions and Bayfield, Wisconsin, complete her record.

Sister's long and active years are the keynote to her character and personality. She was industrious and energetic, and never knew to rest, even at recreation her fingers were always busy with some useful occupation, and on a drive into the country she would take her crocheting with her. This trait was all the more remarkable in that Sister was never in robust health. Her performance did not suffer on that account; she simply "kept going and kept working." To her, time was a treasure, and her native thrift forbade her to squander it.

On the other hand, she did not permit work to become an anxious or fretful obsession, for she was of an amiable disposition, made friends easily, had good conversational gifts, and was well liked. The older Sisters who knew her well were very definite about this point. She loved life and lived it with spirit. Consequently, when age and sickness took final toll, she found the retired life of the infirmary during the first few months of her stay there rather irksome; but to this she adjusted, learning to content herself with her quiet days and further, to accept with gratitude the services of others.

Like all 'the Stegmaiers,' she was well known in Chicago and had a wide circle of friends in the various parishes. Preserving always close family ties, she hoped to die in her home city and wanted to be buried there beside Sister Felicia in the last grave on the family lot. When during her final illness this hope was discouraged, she accepted the decision with good grace, once more resigning herself to God's will.

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Resignation was perhaps the last important lesson that she learned, and she worked hard at its mastery. She had a favorite "Prayer for Resignation" that she found so helpful she had it duplicated and distributed to other Sisters. - Her sudden going was considered by those who knew her best as a last blessing, for the Lord did not ask of her the ultimate in helplessness. Had she foreseen this favor, she would have thanked Him. As it was, the Sisters in reciting the Office of the Dead could with fervor chant the meaningful, "Crushed bones shall rejoice before the Lord."