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Sister M. Walburga Ursich

The early hour of 4:20 a.m., Wednesday, March 12th, saw the release of our Sister M. Walburga, the former Dorothy Ursich of Joliet, who was a cancer patient in our Infirmary. Sister was in the Fifty-third year of her age and thirty-second of her religious life.

Sister Walburga was brought to the Infirmary the preceding summer, following an operation at Mansfield in June and a diagnosis of carcinoma of the liver. She was given three months to live. She later confessed that her first struggle was intense, but that the realization soon came to her that the only course was to accept what was obviously God's will. After that her resignation never wavered. In September the chaplain, having observed her in the oratory for Communion, remarked, "That Sister's face radiates peace." And peaceful her attitude was to the end. When her allotted "three months" were over, she began humorously checking upon the time she was "overdue." She spoke often of death, always pleasantly. A question she frequently put to the nurse evenings from November to February was, "Do you think it will be tonight?" She was fond of the Litany for a Happy Death, and as various symptoms came upon her, she would cite the appropriate invocation. Discolored with her ailment, she would pray, "When my pale and ghastly countenance shall fill others with compassion," or, no longer able to rise, she would petition, "When my feet unable to move shall remind me that my earthly course is drawing to an end," and Sister Peter would make the customary response, "Then, merciful Jesus, have mercy on me."

At last resignation turned to yearning. "The time grows long," she said once. And the Sunday before she died, "What I want you can't give me--Heaven." One of her last words, confided to her blood sister, Sister Engratia, "for all the other Sisters, "was: "Never turn back."

Funeral services were held in the Convent chapel Friday, March 14, His Excellency Bishop Martin D. McNamara presiding at the Solemn Requiem Mass, with the Rt. Rev. Msgr. M. J. Butala, pastor of Sister's home parish, St. Joseph's assistant at the throne. The Rt. Rev. Msgr. James F. Hebbeler of St. Peter's, Mansfield, was in the sanctuary. - Interment took place at St. Joseph's Cemetery, Joliet, on the Ursich family lot.

Sister Walburga had taught for thirty years, thirteen of which were spent in the grades. Starting in February at St. John's Joliet, as a second year novice, she was the next fall appointed to St. Joseph's, where she remained ten years, teaching first the seventh grade and then the eighth. The next two years at St. Boniface, Chicago, concluded her grade schoolwork. After a year spent at our College as full-time student, she was appointed to high school, teaching commercial subjects nine years at St. Mary's one year at St. Francis De Sales, Chicago, and the last five years at St. Peter's, Mansfield.

Wherever Sister worked, she gave her best to the task. She cooperated well with the Sisters, earning a reputation for her willingness to help. Her students respected and loved her, lamenting during her illness that her excellent work in school and her wise guidance in matters beyond the classroom should be lost to them.

As for Sister Walburga, she loved teaching, and did it with all the vigor of a zestful personality. The many letters and tributes she received from her students during her illness attested to the profound impression she had made upon them. She had also succeeded in instilling in them her own loving confidence in St. Joseph, and <sup>one</sup> after the other they confided her to his keeping.

To all who knew her favorite devotion, Sister's dying early Wednesday morning seemed more than mere coincidence. This truly happy death seemed really under the patronage of St. Joseph, and on his day, as she had hoped it might be