



Sister M. Bonavita Weishaar

Sister M. Bonavita closed a four-months' period of peaceful and patient suffering with a profoundly peaceful death on Friday evening, March 6th at 6:10 p.m. She was formerly Stella Weishaar of Richton, Illinois. She had been in religion thirty-four years and was fifty-five years of age.

Sister Bonavita had entered the Infirmary on November 12, 1958. She had that morning been anointed by Father Ermin at the College, having the preceding week given up her part-time secretarial work. Finding it more and more difficult to get to chapel, she had been receiving Communion in her room. Dr. Carney, who was her attending physician through the recent years of her chronic illness, said nothing more could be done for her.

Sister had before entering the convent nursed her mother, who died of the same ailment, and had later seen her twin, Sister Agathene, succumb to this disease. She knew what to expect, and accepted the prospect with perfect resignation. Throughout her stay in the Infirmary she was a co-operative patient. She possessed a firm will and was up part of the time practically every day until the last week, continuing to do things for herself.

Though she endured considerable pain, she was patient and calm, seldom accepting "pain killers," and then only at night. Prayer was her recourse in difficulties. She had enlisted scheduled prayers from various Sisters, and derived strength from the thought of these prayer periods being offered daily for her. Father Ermin, too, was faithful in visiting her, and Father Gervase attended her at her death, reciting the rosary with her family and the Sisters present.

Funeral services were held Monday, March 9th. Since Forty Hours Devotion was scheduled at the Motherhouse, the Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Raymond, Father Gervase acting as celebrant. The Rt. Rev. Msgr. E. V. Hoover was in the sanctuary. Sister was laid to rest at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Joliet, with Father Raymond H. DeMuth of Steger, Illinois, officiating.

Sister Bonavita had spent 32 years in the classroom. She began in the grades at St. John's, Joliet, in 1925. In 1930 she was appointed to commercial studies in the high school, spending two years at St. Francis De Sales, 16 years at St. Clement's, and three years at Ss. Peter and Paul, Chicago; also two years each at St. Mary's, Columbus, and St. Francis Academy, Joliet. While stationed at the Academy, she was also Superior. In 1956 she was appointed to the College of St. Francis to assist the President with the Development Program and to teach a course in history. This was her last mission.

A good teacher, Sister Bonavita taught the commercial subjects with a thoroughness, initiative, and originality that made a lasting impression on her students. Those who came from St. Clement's or Ss. Peter and Paul to the College were a good example of this. Their reaction first meeting Sister Bonavita's twin, Sister Agathene, was both amusing and edifying--they thought they had left a loved teacher and guide back home, and to their delight they found her "countepart" in their new school. Their loyalty to both was unailing.

All in all, Sister Bonavita's was a beautiful character. She possessed the solid virtues, but did not fail to practice also the lighter ones. She was a willing worker and a congenial one. She had a deep love for her calling and showed a great fidelity to the ideals of religious life; she had, too a quiet and whimsical sense of humor that brushed away difficulties and preserved a balanced point of view. Much like Sister Agathene, Sister Bonavita was yet completely individual. The affection each had for the other was a deep sentiment, not to be especially exhibited before others; but the Sisters knew that Sister Bonavita's call to eternity was the loving "Come" of the Master, with the whispered "Come" of Sister Agathene, who also waited to welcome her.